

Letters to the Editor

Lucky country II

Sir,
I'm dismayed whenever I read GA's accounts of the dismal, and apparently incompetent, manner in which EASA proposes legislation concerning the, apparent, safety of general aviation. EASA often seems to proceed in a state of ignorance in the pursuit of irrational solutions to non-existent problems, with a willful disregard for the total consequences bearing upon all of the stakeholders concerned.

Such an approach and attitude contrasts sharply with those of the Australian authority CASA. I guess that you, Martin, George and your fellow contributing editors are familiar with the output from CASA, but, in case you are not, I append below the August e-briefing from Director of CASA, John McCormick. The following three passages, taken from this bulletin, attracted my attention to the sharp contrast between the EASA approach and the CASA approach to general aviation and air safety.

"We will make balanced judgments that are risk based and evidence driven. The task force will liaise closely with relevant standard-setting, oversight, technical and operational areas within CASA, to ensure their work is fully informed by, and meaningfully responsive to, the legitimate needs, interests and expectations of all relevant stakeholders in the general aviation sector. CASA's Director of Aviation Safety, John McCormick, said CASA was committed to ensuring its regulatory processes are effective, appropriate and rationally responsive to genuine safety-related concerns. 'It is vital that our regulations deliver the intended safety outcomes to the highest possible level without imposing unnecessary burdens on the aviation industry,' Mr McCormick said. 'In general aviation, CASA believes it is time to re-examine a number of issues to make sure the legislative changes we have made and are contemplating are necessary and proper, and to ensure our understanding of the perspectives of the general aviation sector is complete and current.'"

Robert Peacock

*EASA claims to be responding to similar imperatives, but its deeds don't match its words. Let's hope CASA follows through for you – Ed

Lean on, regardless!

Sir,
I opened the latest issue, turned to the letters page and am stunned at the

ridiculous 'elfen safety' attitude that WE MUST FIGHT.

Evan Wilkinson takes you to task for showing a chap leaning on a spinner because, as we all know (ahem), "live props are killers and we should stay away from them..." Well, really! You know, in thirty odd years of flying I have NEVER, not once, EVER, seen a propeller spring into life spontaneously: keys IN or OUT! I have seen propellers start when pilots start them, stop when they tell them and I have even see props NOT start when requested and not stop when told to do so, but I have really never, ever seen one start up with no-one in the cockpit.

PLEASE will pilots stop being scared of props? Props really are safe unless you hang on them and swing them, and even then most of them are safe! Yes, treat the space by a prop with caution and do not go there if there's a person in the business chair, but do not be scared of propellers *per se*.

That's my rant over. I am now going shopping but shall steer well clear of anything electrical because, as we all know, electricity kills people and we should stay away from it...

David Perry
CFI, AFA Middle
Wallop

Sir,
I despair and may even cancel my AOPA membership if you give space to the pedantic attitudes of the likes of 'elfn'safety' fanatics like Evan Wilkinson (letters, October issue).

The idea that leaning on the SPINNER - not the prop as suggested - is dangerous is utterly absurd. Anyone who has swung an aeroplane prop knows what a brute they generally are to start! The proliferation of high-vis jackets and safety arguments about infinitesimally small risks simply keeps people away from aircraft. Please give me some stats about when anyone was killed by inadvertently starting an aero engine, or when a pilot last ploughed into someone because they weren't wearing high vis!

Please everyone, GROW UP and stop imagining problems that don't exist (which add to our costs and regulations) or give up flying, driving, crossing roads and even living your life! Take responsibility and relax about life! Leanning on the spinner is NOT DANGEROUS unless someone with no brain, plus the key and a knowledge of start procedures is in the front seat. I'd suggest that even then you have time to get out the way...

Mr Angry of (not Tunbridge Wells)
Ludlow

Ed Lennox (10 years a member of AOPA - please get a friend to join today!)

Ludlow
Shropshire

Liver birdmen

Sir,
The Committee of the Southport and Merseyside Aero Club sends our thanks for your excellent article in the General Aviation magazine featuring the Diamond Jubilee of our flying group, which was set up in June 1951. It is surprising that this was only 40 years since the first Wright Bros type aircraft, a home-built Icarus, took off and landed back on Southport Sands on 14 May 1911.

We have received enquiries from eight pilots all within a 50 mile radius of Liverpool who are interested in joining our group. They found your article most

informative and have visited our website at www.g-gyav.org.uk.

To celebrate our Diamond Jubilee three of our youngest members visited eight airfields in a memorable day's flying. We have decided to make another annual award to recognise the achievement.

This will be presented at our Diamond Jubilee Celebration, which is planned to follow the Annual General Meeting on 6 December 2011.

AOPA has been a great help to our club over the years with its unbiased advice and support.

Chris Wylie

Jersey's PPR

Sir,
As was highlighted in your October 2011 edition, whether we like it or not the aviation industry continues to be a highly regulated business. Just like aircraft manufacturers, Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) have to provide assurance to the regulator that they can introduce new equipment without prejudice to safety. PPR was part of Jersey ATC's safety assurance to our regulator, Channel Islands Director of Civil Aviation (DCA), as we used a new ATC system for the first time in peak summer traffic.

PPR was part of the Summer Traffic Management Plan that also saw changes to the rostering of our limited controller resource, introduction of standard routings and greater monitoring of peaks in IFR traffic. We also developed a plan to continue to work on improvements to the



new system. However, any plan has to be balanced against the complexities of the airspace that we have to operate in.

Consultation on PPR started with briefings to AOPA(CI) in April 2011. At a very constructive meeting we listened to concerns raised and agreed to changes in the initial plan. This included dropping PPR for departing and transiting aircraft. We then provided briefings for Jersey and Guernsey Aero Clubs. Following further meetings and correspondence we agreed to provide a telephone help desk. We also promised to provide weekly reports on how the system was working and when PPR would likely be phased out.

We did receive some initial negative comments about the proposal but once introduced the PPR system worked very well. Out of a total of 1568 reservations over 1000 of them were made through the web booking system. I believe it is a credit to the GA community that there were very few incidents of pilots not booking a PPR reservation.

As a result, PPR helped deliver a manageable traffic environment, increasing awareness while smoothing out the traffic peaks. I would again like to pass on my thanks to the GA community for supporting us through the summer.

Formation flights

At the time of the incident the Channel Islands ANO regulation, as endorsed by the DCA, prevented civilian formation flying in Class A airspace. This was not a new procedure as indicated in the article. Obviously, Class A airspace also means no VFR permitted, so Special VFR is a way of providing a clearance into the Control Zone. Special VFR traffic must be separated. The controller concerned acted appropriately and in accordance with the Special VFR and Class A rules.

The reason that the formation was allowed more flexibility when flying between Guernsey and Alderney was due to Class D airspace.

At the time of the incident and with the assistance of the DCA we were revising the rules. We now have a new procedure that allows Jersey ATC flexibility on accepting formation flights, which reflects changes to the UK Manual of Air Traffic Services Part 1. If any one intends to fly in formation or as a group into the Zone, we do encourage pilots to contact ATC prior to departing.

I did provide this feedback to AOPA (CI) when I was made aware of the incident in July 2011. However, notwithstanding the statements above, Jersey ATC is always willing to learn from any incident. This particular incident will be part of our education and lesson learning process.

Airspace Change

It has long been recognised that the current airspace and instrument flight procedures of the Channel Islands Control

Jersey from 30,000ft looking East



Zone does not provide a good baseline for the modern management of air traffic. Therefore, a complete re-design project was launched in December 2010. The project is looking at all aspects of the control zone, including airspace classification, so that efficiencies and improvements in procedures can be realised for all airspace users. The change proposal follows the UK Directorate of Airspace Policy process and is expected to be completed by spring 2013.

It is fair to say that during the last 10 months the relationship between ATC and the GA community in the Channel Islands has been turbulent. However, since this summer great work has been carried out to develop a stronger and more constructive working relationship. The catalyst for this was the formation of the Channel Islands ATC-GA Working Group, which involves many representatives from the GA community (including AOPA (CI), Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney Aero clubs and independent flying groups), the DCA and ATC Management from Jersey and Guernsey. One benefit already realised is the group has produced some useful detail that will be fed into the airspace design project. The group is now working hard to continue to ensure that the Channel Islands are an attractive place to visit for GA.

In summary, sometimes things aren't quite as difficult or negative as they first appear. I can confirm that the airspace around the Channel Islands does make it a challenge for visiting GA, but with careful planning and a quick chat to ATC a visit is relatively straightforward and very

rewarding. My experience of the Aero Clubs, demonstrate that they are very friendly and helpful; landing fees and fuel are relatively inexpensive and the Channel Islands are a stunning and beautiful place to visit. Most importantly, though, you will always receive a safe, professional, and 'first rate' air traffic service.

**Damon Knight
Manager
Jersey ATC**

** I think Damon's resume of the 'PPR for the CICZ' episode this summer is a fair appraisal of the facts in defending the ATC position.*

There is no merit in re-opening old wounds and I will therefore restrict my comment to emphasising that had it not been for the persistent and vigorous protests by AOPA CI Region, direct and through the media, none of the "easements" he mentions would have come about.

Furthermore, as a result of both our efforts, we have achieved the change from the turbulent to the co-operative relationship he mentions in his letter. ATC have initiated the ATC-GA Working Group under the chairmanship of our DCA. AOPA CI has initiated a Flight Experience scheme for Air Traffic Controllers by GA pilot volunteers.

Hopefully this start will continue in a genuine co-operation and consultation of all matters affecting both ATC and GA.

**Charles Strasser,
Chairman
AOPA CI Region ■**