

Eleventh hour bid to save the IMC rating

AOPA UK has been given a chance to counter some of the misinformation surrounding the UK's IMC rating at a special meeting of EASA's FCL008 Working Group in Cologne on October 5th.

Two AOPA representatives have been invited to the meeting – Chief Executive Martin Robinson will go, along with Nick Wilcock of the AOPA Instructors Committee. Exactly what form the meeting will take has not been clarified, but at some point – and for the first time – AOPA UK is expected to be given the opportunity to make the case for the IMC rating, and to propose how it may be continued in the UK even after Europe-wide harmonisation.

AOPA UK carries a very strong hand into the meeting, and when the facts are known it seems impossible that the Working Group will not amend its written report to EASA, which dismisses the IMC rating and says that claims that it is beneficial to safety are groundless.

AOPA's position is backed by every safety group and pilots' organisation in Britain and every AOPA in Europe. The CAA has stated its unqualified support for the rating; even PPL-IR and Europe Air Sports, whose delegate has led the charge against the IMC rating at FCL008, say that in fact they fully support it.

The evidence is overwhelming. Bad weather is the single biggest killer of general aviation pilots, yet Britain, with its less-predictable maritime climate, is the safest of the major

European countries. Seven years ago, AOPA UK asked each of the 27 European AOPAs to bring to a quarterly IAOPA-Europe Regional Meeting its national statistics on fatalities in all forms of general aviation. The results were startling. Germany recorded about 80 a year, France 90, and Britain about 25. Although there are other factors which contribute to the disparity – the French, for instance, have their 'brevet de base' and 'VFR on top' which allows pilots to risk getting into IMC without teaching them the most basic skills needed to get out of it – the way the UK has taught GA pilots to handle IMC is seen as the greatest safety factor of all.

AOPA invited pilots in Britain, where the IMC rating has been available since 1967 and some 26,000 people have achieved it, to register their experiences of having had to use the provisions of the IMC rating and published the results in a 12-page special section of *General Aviation* magazine in February. The issue brought AOPA's biggest postbag ever; scores of pilots wrote of how the rating had helped them survive life-threatening weather

encounters. Some stated unequivocally that the IMC rating was the difference between life and death in their case.

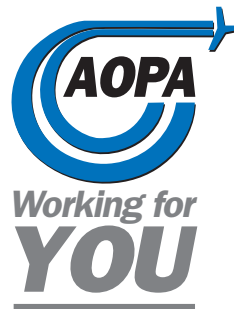
In an interview with this magazine, CAA Chief Executive Andrew Haines confirms the CAA's support for the IMC rating and says the Authority may in the past have been wrongly thought to be equivocal about it – there can be no such misunderstanding now. (See page 18).

A pernicious factor has been the

presentation of the IMC rating in Europe as a 'privilege' which UK pilots are stropky about losing. Privilege doesn't come into it – our survey showed that the majority of IMC rating holders rarely or never fly in IMC except to practice for the rating's renewal, but know they should be able to handle IMC if they inadvertently encounter it. The claim at FCL008 that the IMC rating is "an IR with 20% of the training" is completely debunked. The IMC rating grants access to no airspace from which the basic PPL is barred – it merely reduces the visibility in which he or she is permitted to operate. 26,000 pilots do not spend thousands of pounds each achieving a rating they don't use because they like wasting their money. The case for the IMC rating is a no-brainer, and its destruction on the grounds of bureaucratic tidiness would be criminally irresponsible.

Even if Europe comes around to having an Instrument Rating which is sensibly constructed and achievable in the same way as is the FAA IR, the IMC rating should not be abandoned. In America, almost 50 percent of GA pilots have an IR (compared with about one percent in Britain). That leaves 50 percent who haven't – and as John King told the IAOPA World Assembly in summer, every time the weather comes down you can be sure there's going to be a 'loss of control in IMC' accident somewhere, often fatal. The case for a rating which simply teaches VFR pilots how to maintain control of an aircraft when entering IMC and get it safely back onto the ground using whatever instrument approach is available, is utterly overwhelming.

At the October 5th meeting AOPA UK will be able to make the facts crystal clear. ■



New CAA enforcer – costs to rise?

Matt Lee has been appointed head of Aviation Regulation Enforcement at the CAA, replacing Ian Weston who retired at the end of August. Mr Lee was until recently working in airspace utilisation at the CAA.

The change comes at a time when the Department for Transport is proposing that the cost of the CAA's enforcement branch be taken out of the public arena and handed back to the CAA, which means the aviation industry will have to pay for it, along with the six percent profit the Authority is required to make on all its works (but currently doesn't). The DfT's budget has been cut by £750 million, and CAA enforcement could account for £1.2 million of that.

Ian Weston's tenure at the enforcement branch has gone some way to improving safety in general aviation by making it clear that a transponder is more than a lawyer's tool for putting pilots in the dock. There was a serious drop-off in transponder use following the infamous Elvington Case, when four aircraft infringed a Red Arrows display but only the

least culpable was prosecuted because he was the only one the CAA could identify – he had his transponder on. Under Ian Weston, prosecutions were more likely to be mounted against those who displayed culpably negligent preparation and sloppy airmanship.

Martin Robinson says: "Ian Weston displayed clear good sense, and although he was never an easy touch, he enforced the rules in a manner that tended to increase safety rather than detract from it. He is an approachable man, and I have to say, very congenial company, and we wish him well in his retirement.

"Matt Lee seems intent on pursuing the same path, which we welcome. We hope he will concentrate on taking on the persistent and egregious offenders, even to the extent of



'ello 'ello 'ello... Matt Lee

removing their licenses, as AOPA has urged in the past."

Matt himself said: "Tackling violations of the ANO is a vital part in maintaining the UK's excellent safety record. Individuals and organisations that intentionally do not play by the rules need to know that we will use all the powers at our disposal to protect the public from their actions.

"Also vital to the UK's safety record is our open reporting of incidents combined with a 'just culture'. This was championed by my predecessor Ian Weston and I intend to carry on that process, particularly with

issues involving public safety."

AOPA believes that any new financial regime on enforcement must cause the CAA to look again at whether it needs its own 'police' and →

'prosecutions' department at all. Its investigators are ex-policemen; there's no reason why serving policemen should not take over their function. The Crown Prosecution Service decides whether court action should be taken on everything from motor accidents to murder to complex fraud; why can they not take over from the CAA's legal department in deciding on prosecutions? Is the ANO so complicated it must be understood by student pilots but can not be understood by lawyers? If the aviation industry is forced to pay directly for enforcement, it must take a closer interest in how the money is spent, and suggest where cost and manpower savings should be made.

Will the change impinge on the CAA's ability or willingness to pursue the genuinely dangerous wrongdoers regardless of cost, while encouraging wide open king-hits on easy targets? ■

Remote rogue clarifies UAS issues

An unmanned aerial vehicle 'went rogue' and made a beeline for the White House in August, an event that has concentrated a few minds just as binding decisions are about to be made on how these aircraft will interact with, and hopefully avoid, planes with people in them.

The datalink to an unmanned US Navy Fire Scout helicopter went down, and true to Murphy's Law the machine buzzed off into the most sensitive airspace in the world, Washington DC. It flew some 23 miles at 2,000 feet, infringing the outer ring of the Washington Flight Restricted Zone before its pilot, based at the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River, Maryland, was able to re-

establish contact and command the thing to land. Luckily it didn't hit anything.

According to the US Navy the Fire Scout should have automatically landed itself as soon as the link was lost, but it did not; one presumes that some sort of system malfunction will feature in most accidents involving UAVs, or RPAs – remotely piloted vehicles – as they are now called in some circles. The Navy reports that the 'software glitch' has been identified and rectified.

The incident came as an international working group with IAOPA representation neared completion on a draft document outlining worldwide guidance for operating unmanned aircraft in the same civilian

Chief executive's diary:

Who is AOPA?

As is often the case, we begin at the end... at the time of writing the Annual General Meeting has just been held, and as well as fulfilling the requirements of corporate governance it gives us an opportunity to review the year and to look at what went well, and what did not go well. AOPA's head is often the first one to pop up over the parapet when trouble starts and as a result we tend to attract a lot of gunfire, but we're not always on the defensive; consider, as I said to the AGM, the sterling work of the AOPA Instructor Committee, which produced the IMC Rating we are now fighting to save and the NPPL which forms the basis of a licence from which all of Europe will benefit; look at the work of the Members Working Group, which has engendered the Mentoring Scheme and is promoting the Wings Scheme and the network of regional representatives; raise a glass to our Channel Islands Chairman Charles Strasser for his work on AOPA's behalf on the lifesaving scheme which bears his name, and to people like Mike Cross and his colleagues at Lee on Solent whose refusal to be beaten saved that airfield for general aviation; to Mick Elborn, who freely gives of his time and his project management skills in the interests of his fellow GA pilots, and to many more, too numerous to name, who shoulder the burden of keeping GA viable in Britain. Who is AOPA? It's not me, it's these people – and it's you, the members who pay for the work to be done.

The days are gone when the representation of GA was a relatively low-cost business centred on Whitehall and Gatwick; today IAOPA pays for lobbyists and lawyers in Brussels and must work in Cologne and Strasbourg. Last week a fairly well-known GA figure confessed to me he'd never heard of SESAR; but SESAR is fundamental to our future and as avid readers of this fine magazine will know, IAOPA has

been GA's representative at SESAR for almost five years and has ploughed more than €400,000 into making sure GA has a place in the skies of tomorrow. That money came from AOPA members all over Europe, but the benefits will accrue to all GA pilots – just as when AOPA negotiated special fuel taxes for GA with the Inland Revenue, the tens of millions of pounds that were saved benefited every pilot. So thanks for joining, thanks for your contribution, and if you can persuade another GA pilot to join and contribute, you'll help us fight the battles of tomorrow.

And there will be some battles... in Europe and in Britain. My last diary left off in mid-July; on July 20th I went to Gatwick for a meeting of the General Aviation Consultative Committee, where the CAA's head of safety Gretchen Burrett talked about the future of the CAA, how they should regulate and what they need to do. From AOPA's standpoint there are real issues with the cost of the regulation of GA. Only a small segment of GA pays CAA charges, but that segment really is hammered. The CAA may proudly claim that a microlight pilot pays them about £1 a year; why then should a Group A aircraft pilot, whose aircraft may be slower, older and less capable, use the same airspace and be put to the same work, pay extraordinary sums to the CAA through his licensing, his documentation, his engineering oversight? Why should some organisations need expensive approvals and not others? We need to have less direct regulation and devolve more onto industry, and above all, keep a sense of proportion. More people die falling off ladders each year than are killed in all of general aviation, regulated or unregulated. I've yet to look at the Ladder Regulation Authority's cost base...

The first draft of the CAA's Strategic



Review is scheduled for October, and the final production version will be out in April 2011. This will go to government – a government which is showing signs of wanting to dig its heels in on several levels on European issues. The CAA needs to ensure that EASA's regulatory changes do not themselves create safety issues and become part of the risk. We are throwing in our lot with countries which are and have historically been less safe than we are, and political expediency is in the driving seat, not safety. The European Commission and EASA want states to comply with ICAO recommendations, but there are sound safety reasons why states have filed differences with ICAO – more than 600 in the case of the UK, more than 3,000 in the case of America. As IAOPA's man at ICAO Frank Hofmann points out, ICAO delegates are not appointed for their technical expertise but usually as a reward for services rendered; slavish adherence to their recommendations (which are no more than that) is a poor basis for safety regulation.

On the 21st I was at Farnborough for a Remotely Piloted Aircraft conference organised by the consultants Helios; there's a story elsewhere in these pages about RPAs and IAOPA's work at ICAO on this subject. It's a fast-moving field and we need to avoid being in a position where we are fighting a rearguard action against proposals driven by the RPA industry and the airlines. Next day I took part in a conference call involving Dr Michael Erb, Managing Director of AOPA Germany and IAOPA's point man on SESAR, which is blowing hot and cold on GA at the moment – one minute we're in, next minute we're out. Is Single European Sky narrowing its focus onto commercial air transport? Will new rules come out for CAT which do more collateral damage to other airspace users? Michael will be representing GA on SESAR's behalf at a conference in Washington this month at which interoperability with America's NexGen will be discussed.

On the 23rd I went back to Farnborough as a tourist with my two boys just to look at aeroplanes. I spoke to some of the GA outfits there, like Diamond, but Farnborough is

Jffireland



A U.S. Navy FireScout UAS ran amok

airspace as manned aircraft. The working group, convened by ICAO, will outline precautions and a long list of other considerations that need to be taken into account before manned and unmanned aircraft can be integrated into the same civil airspace.



Frank Hofmann, IAOPA's representative to ICAO and a member of the working group that has created the draft document, says: "This guidance is an important step forward, but it is the detailed work still to come as a result of the guidance that will lead to rules guaranteeing safety and equitable access to airspace."

Hofmann emphasised a number of points important to general aviation operators, including:

- Operating rules for UAS (unmanned aerial systems) – this takes into account the whole →

increasingly a heavy metal show.

Things quieten down a lot in late July and early August as the holiday season starts so I get a chance to catch up with office work, plan for our AOPA Open Day at Duxford (which will be over by the time you read this) and even take a holiday myself. On the 28th I had a meeting at the CAA in Kingsway on airspace issues – same old same old, but you have to go because if you don't, sure as eggs some bright spark will want to nick a bit of Class G here or introduce a TMZ there. On August 4th I met with Mike O'Donoghue, a long-time AOPA member who has taken over as Chief Executive of GASCo. Mike is very knowledgeable, able and impressive, and AOPA will give him all the support we can. Mike has agreed to support IAOPA by attending meetings of the European General Aviation Safety Team (EGAST). This will benefit us by having a knowledgeable safety person in the EGAST meetings. There'll be a note asking whether you'd like to donate £1 to GASCo. They're worthy of our support and I'd like to see other GA organisations do the same.

On August 11th there was another meeting on Olympic airspace issues. The level of paranoia seems to be diminishing; they're no longer talking about what happens if a C152 deliberately flies into the side of a 747, but they want to think of every scenario, however half-baked, so that if something happens they can show that they foresaw it and took steps. Backs must be covered! We're trying to keep it real, and looking to ensure that disruption to the GA industry is kept to a minimum and that restrictions are temporary. There are many circles to square – apparently the Olympic Committee requires aerial coverage of several events like the marathon and the cycling, and that doesn't sit well with the 'total exclusion' diktat with which these discussions began. There's another meeting in October.

Then, in the spirit of the season, I went on holiday – a week in Sharm el Sheikh (lovely, thanks) and another in Ireland, where I met with Jim Breslin, President of AOPA Ireland. Jim runs a small but active AOPA which is getting to grips with many GA issues in

Ireland and IAOPA must give them full support. We met the Foynes Flying Boat Museum and had a very constructive discussion about the need for strong representation in Ireland, and how IAOPA can help develop a dialogue with the Irish Aviation Authority. It was almost a year since I last met Jim Breslin, and in that time he's done a great deal to develop AOPA in Ireland. He now has a database of about 500 email addresses of pilots who have registered an interest. Those who pay a subscription also get this magazine. It seems that AOPA Ireland is well on the way to establishing again an active voice for GA. I'm extremely grateful to Brian Cullen, curator of the fabulous Foynes Flying Boat Museum, who facilitated the meeting. If you're in Ireland, this museum is not to be missed. See www.flyingboatmuseum.com

The Royal Aeronautical Society meeting on flight training is reported elsewhere in these pages, and AOPA will be involved with the working group that will look at the issues professional flight training faces. While the prime target for action is the airlines, the government does have a responsibility for the transport infrastructure, of which the airlines and their pilots are a vital component, so the government must be part of the solution. The latest global survey by Boeing projects a requirement for 466,650 new commercial pilots and 596,500 engineers over the next 20 years to match the demand for new and replacement aircraft, which remains fairly strong. The airlines will need an average of 23,300 new pilots and 30,000 new maintenance personnel per year from 2010 to 2029. Europe alone will need 94,800 pilots and 122,000 maintenance personnel. Yet neither the government nor the airlines can see past their nose-ends in this matter. One day we'll look back with horror on the complacency we are demonstrating today on flight training. We face great challenges on every level – how do we attract young people into aviation, how do we train them to best effect. But where are the strategic decisions? Today, we rely on the kid finding the money, the training organisation seeing him through, and the airline condescending

to take him on if they need somebody that day. Not very good, is it.

On August 3rd, 4th and 5th I was at Sywell for the LAA fly-in, where AOPA had a stand; the weather was good and I met a lot of AOPA members, some of whom were good friends I hadn't seen for a while. On the 6th I went to Brussels for an EASA Industry Consultation Body meeting which discussed the continuing development of Functional Airspace Blocks. The discussion there, and indeed at SESAR and elsewhere, indicates that the focus on airspace infrastructure has narrowed down to the needs of commercial air transport, and I'm stressing that we must do more to cater for the needs of all airspace users in the future. Ironically, the airlines seem to be less interested in all of this than they should be; rather like pilot training, it's an issue for the future and they feel they've got more pressing matters to deal with at the moment. When you start talking about what's going to happen in 2014, 2018 and beyond, they glaze over. But setting the right baseline is supremely important to GA at the moment.

On September 7th I was at the AOPA Flying Instructor Committee meeting, at which we discussed among other things the GASCo stall-spin report which is covered separately in these pages. We also talked through our intentions regarding the meeting of EASA's FCL008 group on October 5th, to which we've been invited to discuss the IMC Rating. On the 8th I was at the US Embassy for a meeting with the American General Audit Office, which is looking at the way other countries regulate aviation, how they train pilots and so forth. They don't really have an integrated course system, and they wanted information on how we do things. They were particularly interested in why so many Europeans travel to American to get licences.

I went on to Gatwick to meet Bob Jones, head of flight operations at the CAA; Bob's a former North Sea helicopter pilot and a solid chap. We had a general chat about issues facing GA, and he knows exactly where we're coming from.

On September 9th I was at a meeting of the CAA Finance Advisory Committee at →

shooting match including the datalinks, the pilot's equipment and indeed the pilot) must take into account their potential impact on general aviation aircraft operating in un-segregated airspace. While segregated airspace contains operations subject to air traffic control, un-segregated airspace



depends almost entirely on certain Annex 2 cruising altitude conventions and mutual self-separation methods. Because self-separation methods for UAS are still in the conceptual stage and will probably require some time to perfect, there will be a temptation to impose un-segregated airspace

restrictions on manned aircraft to accommodate RPA. Since un-segregated airspace is almost entirely the domain of general aviation, we do not want this to happen.

- State or military UAS must abide by whatever UAS operating rules are devised to ensure safe, hazard-free operations. Because non-civil UAS operations may wish to use lower altitude un-segregated airspace, there could be a tendency for States and the military to pre-empt conventional flight rules in these areas, either on a temporary or permanent basis.
- The concept of visual line-of-sight (VLOS) control appears to be a reasonable short-term solution to UAS operations within a limited area. However, the term 'VLOS' must be better defined to establish practical limits for range and altitude separating operator and RPA, regardless of size.
- There is an emerging trend in certain States to classify RPA by weight and/or size with apparent intent to reduce operating limitations on the devices. We perceive this as a dangerous trend since the combined kinetic energy generated between even a 2-3 kg RPA and an aircraft can easily cause catastrophic collision damage.
- State and operator Safety Management Systems must serve as the ultimate guide for individual UAS operations. Without employing risk assessment and mitigation techniques for each operation, resulting safety margins may easily prove unacceptable.
- Sense-and-avoid systems for RPA will provide the key for safe operations, especially in un-segregated airspace. These must be independent, stand-alone systems that do not rely on an SSR transponder or



Above: there are thousands of UAS on the market and the industry is worth \$38 billion worldwide – some manufacturers claim a young video games player can handle 20 simultaneously

ADS-B device carried by manned aircraft, since many general aviation aircraft do not carry this equipment and would have difficulty doing so.

The introduction of RPAs into all forms of airspace is seen as inevitable because of vast efficiency and cost savings. Huge amounts of money are being poured into the industry, and holding out against RPAs is not sensible. Frank Hofmann notes that while significant challenges still exist, manned and unmanned aircraft can coexist if appropriate precautions are developed and adhered to as ICAO member countries draft regulations for integrating unmanned aircraft into civilian airspace.

The US Navy certainly recognises that the runaway UAV wasn't helpful. Admiral James Winnefeld Jr, commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command, said: "It certainly doesn't help our case any time there's a UAV that wanders around a little bit outside of its controlled airspace. We realise the responsibility on our part to include the technical capability and proper procedures. We'd just like to be able to get at it quicker."

There is tremendous pressure on authorities across the world to allow RPAs unfettered access to all types of airspace. The industry is estimated to be worth \$38 billion globally and £1.8 billion in the UK, and it is unstoppable. Thousands of different designs of RPA, fixed-

wing and rotary, are already available for military and civilian use, and some of their manufacturers make much of the fact that they can be flown by cheap-to-hire high school video games players.

In the UK, AOPA has been heartened by the publication by the CAA of CAP 722, 'Unmanned aircraft system operations in UK airspace,' which makes it clear that they will have to be able to conform to the Rules of the Air. AOPA UK has sent copies of CAP 722 to IAOPA and to ICAO.

Martin Robinson says: "The people who are controlling RPAs will not have the same incentive to avoid collisions that we have, but their equipment must have at least the same see and avoid, or sense and avoid, capability as manned aircraft. Exactly how that is going to be achieved in the Open FIR, perhaps in IMC conditions, is yet to be explained. There may be advantages for general aviation in that whatever technology they adopt for RPAs can be made readily available without cost for installation in piloted aircraft in which it might be mandated. The RPA industry is going to be a hugely wealthy one, and it will be worthwhile for it to underwrite these costs in order to overcome what is currently a significant obstacle.

"CAP 722 is a very good foundation stone for the RPA industry, and I'm very pleased that the CAA has made its position clear." ■

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Gatwick. It's clear that the CAA is just about breaking even and won't make its statutory six percent profit – or 'return on investment' – this year. I spoke about the need to match the right skills with the right jobs, which is not something they're very good at right now. The British Airways representative once again asked for more action on what they perceive to be cross-subsidies, saying GA should pay more of the charges in areas where income is said not to cover costs, like personnel licensing and some of the GA schemes. They were asking for an increase of 10 to 15 percent in charges for GA, but it's difficult to listen to some of their pleas given that they enjoy so many tax advantages over GA that they really ought to be making massive profits. The rest of the committee

unanimously dismissed their complaints.

Later that day I went with Guy Lachlan of the BBGA to meet Kirstin Riensma, the lady at the CAA who's collecting information for the Strategic Review. We had a bit of a Q and A session about future regulation, but the picture is not clear – the CAA doesn't even know what it's going to be allowed to regulate under EASA. What we need is less direct regulation, because that's what you pay for.

I dealt with problems facing a number of individual members during the period, and once again it was clear that pilot distraction is a major recurring factor in infringements. One high-time helicopter pilot who infringed the Luton zone was trying to deal with a green passenger; he eventually accepted a caution from the CAA, together with some

nav training and a flight with an examiner. The real lesson is, keep your mind on the job – especially when something is trying to take your attention away.

Which brings us back to the end, so to speak – coming up I've got a meeting on the 16th of the EC's EASA Advisory Body, I'm back in the UK on the 17th for a briefing at the DfT on EASA, then on Saturday 18th we've got the AOPA Bonus Day at Duxford. I'm looking ahead to a meeting with Jeppesen to discuss possible AOPA membership benefits, the quarterly Regional Meeting of IAOPA-Europe in Amsterdam on October 2nd, and the FCL008 meeting in Cologne on October 5th. There's a lot going on – watch this space.

Martin Robinson

Four's company

The CAA has cleaned up the rules surrounding the carriage of passengers in ex-military aircraft operating on permits to fly. The new rule states that such an aircraft may carry a maximum of four passengers, or enough to fill the number of seats fitted to the aircraft whilst in military service, whichever is the more restrictive.

The new wording, contained in CAP 632, 'Operation of Permit to Fly Ex-military Aircraft on the UK Register', comes in response to a certain amount of jiggery-pokery over the carriage of passengers, who hitherto had to be 'essential ground crew for maintenance of the aircraft away from base'. This, the CAA

believes, led to abuses in which passengers were declared as ground crew despite being neither essential nor capable.

The change leaves winners and losers. It should now be possible to put four people in an ex-military Gazelle or Scout helicopter; previously more than two was frowned upon. But ex-military transports must continue to fly almost empty.

The changes affect all ex-military aircraft with more than one seat operating under a permit to fly. All owner-operators of ex-military aircraft with more than one seat fitted will be issued with a new permit with limitations and conditions reflecting the change in policy, together with an associated certificate of validity for the aircraft.

At the same time the CAA is reminding owners and operators of ex-military aircraft

that their permits to fly do not permit the carriage of passengers in return for any type of payment. CAP 632 will be updated to require operators to brief passengers on the nature of ex-military permit to fly aircraft operations before flight. It is proposed that they will also be required to install a new, warning placard in their aircraft which the CAA says is more easily understood, to wit:

'Occupant warning. This aircraft has not been shown to comply with civil safety standards for commercial passenger flights. It is illegal to carry passengers in this aircraft in exchange for money, goods and services'. ■

Ex-military Gazelles should benefit from clarification of passenger rules



Changes to membership system

We are updating and streamlining the process of renewing AOPA membership. The first step will be with your renewal letter, which will go out with a laminated membership card embedded in the letter.

These new-look membership cards will be valid for one year and ALL members will receive a new card every year.

You will be pleased to hear that the new-type membership card will include your membership number.

We are no longer issuing two year membership cards.

Eventually we will get on to a system of 12 months membership from the date of joining. We will notify you of that when all the niggly problems have been dealt with.

We look forward to receiving feedback with regard to the new system. –
Martin Robinson

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WIN

**AIRBOX
aware™**
airspace awareness device



Join AOPA today and enter the draw to win an aware, airspace awareness device

AOPA is working with its members to reduce the number of infringements. It is every pilot's duty of care to plan a flight and fly properly.

GA must take responsibility to reduce the unacceptable level of infringements.

It is counter-productive if pilots think a transponder identifies them for CAA investigation. Pilots should realise that a transponder could save their lives and should be switched to ALT mode.

The Airbox aware, in association with NATS, helps pilots maintain additional awareness and improves safety, more so when used in conjunction with a transponder switched to ALT mode.

Before you fly – think!

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or visit www.joinaopa.com



Global GA support worries BMW

AOPA Germany is getting support from all over the world in its fight to save one of Germany's most important GA airfields from being turned into a driving track by the car company BMW.

Hundreds of pilots from as far afield as Australia, Argentina and Canada have written to BMW expressing their disquiet at the company's plans to take over the Bavarian airfield at Fürstfeldbruck and to shut out aviation. They point out that they would be reluctant to buy cars from a company that is actively engaged in destroying a GA airport – a commercial factor that weighs heavily on BMW, especially as so many GA pilots control car fleets.

The closure of the airfield, known as Fürsti, has an international dimension because it is the only unrestricted GA airfield in that part of Germany and as such is a vital

enormous political influence in Bavaria and refused to discuss the issue with GA. Flying operations at Fürsti had to stop on June 22nd when the military abandoned the airport while civilian certification was still pending. The Bavarian Administration Court is expected to rule this autumn on the political and administrative processes which led to the current situation. AOPA Germany and Munich Flying Club are shareholders of the Fürsti operating company, which is suing the Bavarian Government over the certification process and the closure of Fürsti. They have



UK pilots have joined in questioning BMW over its attempts to turn Fürsti airfield into a car driving track and exclude GA

part of the GA network in Europe. AOPA Germany says it would be perfectly possible for GA to share the airfield with BMW – the former Cold War airbase has a runway almost 3km long, and aviation needs a small portion of it. BMW, however, wants it all.

Dr Michael Erb, Managing Director of AOPA Germany, says: "We have demonstrated that the test track BMW wishes to establish could live in harmony with aviation. BMW's dog-in-the-manger attitude is extraordinary, coming from a company with a strong aviation heritage. BMW keep their own Gulfstream and Falcon corporate jets at Munich International, which of course is not available to GA.

"A fundamental issue is that while BMW can go and drive cars almost anywhere, as an airfield Fürsti is irreplaceable."

Fürsti had the support of the Bavarian Government to be Munich's GA airport until three years ago, when BMW demanded to use the airport as a driving track. BMW has



high hopes of winning the case.

Pilots who contacted BMW received a form letter from Dr Kay Segler, Director of BMW's M division, which makes its fastest and most powerful cars, saying BMW was merely an innocent bystander and the closure of the airfield was down to a local pressure group. "The flying usage of Region 14 is not in any way influenced by BMW," he claims.

It is difficult to underestimate how much political influence BMW has in the Munich area. In a letter written to AOPA Germany earlier this year, the Bavarian Minister of Economics Martin Zeil stressed: "The plans of the Maisach community (from which the anti-airport group sprung) are insistently supported by BMW." And AOPA has seen copies of letters in which Maximilian Schöberl, BMW's head of politics and communication, wrote to the Chief Executive of Munich Chamber of Commerce saying the car company was "disappointed and annoyed" about the Chamber's continuing support for the Fürsti Airport Project. He quoted BMW's Chief Executive Norbert Reithofer as requesting a neutral position from the Chamber.

Women and Wings

The British Women Pilots Association is running an AOPA Wings Scheme workshop at Cranfield on Saturday November 20th and everyone is invited – not just women. The BWPA is a strong and active organisation which is keen to promote the Wings Scheme among its members, and is a corporate member of AOPA.

AOPA originally devised the Wings Scheme in order to encourage the development of PPL and NPPL holders through recognition of their continuing achievements by the award of AOPA Wings. The objectives are to encourage development through:

- Air touring experience
- Additional training and qualification
- The practice of good airmanship
- Broadening pilots' activities and interests
- Encouraging personal development and flight safety awareness through advanced seminars.

The purpose of the Workshop is to answer whatever questions members may have about the scheme and to give practical, one-to-one advice on how to achieve the criteria set down for the Silver wings or above. BWPA advisors and AOPA representatives will be leading the day, so come along to find out how your flying can benefit from the scheme. Bronze Wings are awarded on achievement of a PPL – bring your licence with you and apply for your Bronze Wings on the day!

Coffee will be available on arrival and a buffet lunch will be provided. Start time is 10:30 for 11 and it is expected the day will finish about 15.30. Cost: AOPA and BWPA members £10, guests £15, including coffee and lunch. To take part send a cheque payable to 'BWPA' by November 12th to: Wings Scheme Workshop, Albyns Hall, Albyn's Lane, Stapleford Tawney, Essex RM4 1RS

Dr Erb says: "The claim that BMW has had no influence in this is laughable. Decisions on airfields are not made by local communities but by Federal States. Fürsti airport had the full support of the Bavarian Federal States Authorities and politicians until BMW appeared on the scene."

In the last few weeks a number of small but powerful supporters of aviation use have been discovered – a butterfly named plebejus idas' has been discovered on the airport together with the ant 'formica fuscocinerea'. They form a very interesting symbiosis, with the ants feeding and raising the butterflies' young, and they have thrived during the years in which Fürsti was a busy airfield. Both are endangered and protected species which will make it more difficult for the environmental protection status of the airport grounds to be lifted.

Are you considering buying a new car? Perhaps you'd like to add your voice to those of the pilots who have told BMW of their concerns. You can email BMW customer.service@bmw.com or kundenbetreuung@bmw.de. Please send a copy to info@aopa.de ■

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Sandown closes



Sandown airfield on the Isle of Wight closes from October 1st, at the end of a long-running saga during which the grass field has been gradually run down by its property developer owners.

All flight operations are henceforth prohibited, and groundwork operations for the development of the site as a holiday park is expected to begin within days.

The owners, Wharf Land Investments, had previously denied there were any plans to shut down the airfield, but suggested when it bought the site two years ago that it might be turned into what it describes as a 'high quality leisure park' at Sandown. Wharf Land Investments is chaired by the disgraced former Tory Cabinet Minister David Mellor, who was forced to resign from John Major's government.

Company sources said initially the land may also be developed for housing, but a feasibility study commissioned by the local council indicated it was unsuitable for large-scale industrial or residential development.

AOPA, with others, has fought to save Sandown, but it is now a lost cause. The closure leaves Bembridge Airport as the only landing ground on the Isle of Wight. Fortunately, Bembridge is welcoming and relatively inexpensive, and is owned and run by Britten Norman as an aviation facility integral to its operations. ■



Manston TMZ proposal criticised

AOPA is concerned at proposals to establish a Transponder Mandatory Zone around a wind farm in the Thames Estuary in order to allow ATC at Manston to differentiate between aircraft and the strange radar returns they sometimes get from wind turbines.

Although the proposal only affects one relatively small offshore area, it could be seen as establishing the precedent that transponders are required for flight in the vicinity of wind farms, which are proliferating all across the country.

As Mike Cross asked at the September meeting of the AOPA Members Working Group: "Is this the thin end of the wedge? Will it become necessary for every wind farm? Are we effectively creating an exclusion zone around wind farms for those aircraft with no transponder?"

"It is primarily a matter of convenience for the radar controllers. At Stansted, the TMZ was imposed as an alternative to putting on an extra controller, which would have cost them money. We should speak out against the enforced introduction of transponders in all aircraft by the back door."

AOPA member Roy Targonski is among the many who have responded, saying: "I fly a vintage non-transponder equipped aircraft and this would stop me using a large swathe of airspace. The imposition of the TMZ on the low level Stansted zone has already impacted on my choice of routes around the south, channeling non-transponder equipped aircraft into the very narrow band of airspace south of Stapleford and north of London City. Far from improving safety, I think it has made the situation more dangerous. I can see the same thing happening if the Manston TMZ is approved – more choke points and reduced safety. It is not necessary, and one must wonder what the hidden agenda is."

Have your say at TMZconsultation@manstonairport.com. The consultation closes on November 8th.

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Birmingham joins Strasser Scheme

Birmingham International has become the latest airport to join AOPA's 'Strasser Scheme' under which landing fees are waived in cases of genuine emergency or unplanned diversion.

The breakthrough follows the award of the CAA's 2010 Safety Award to Charles Strasser, Chairman of AOPA's Channel Islands Region, for his work in putting together and maintaining the scheme which bears his name.

It leaves just eight of Britain's 212 airfields refusing to subscribe to the scheme – Belfast International, Biggin Hill, Cardiff, Carlisle, Bristol Filton, Leeds Bradford, Luton and Manchester.

In total, 204 airports and airfields, including all MoD and government facilities, have signed up for the Strasser Scheme, the purpose of which is to remove the cost of landing as a

factor in decision-making when pilots are faced with problems in the air. A timely decision to divert and land can often break the chain which leads to an accident, but when pilots are making decisions under stressful circumstances, worries about high landing and handling fees can often be given disproportionate weight.

The CAA identified the problem in CAP 667 9.2(c), which recommends that airfields not charge GA aircraft making genuine emergency or precautionary diversion landings.

Twelve years ago Charles Strasser undertook the task of signing up airfields to an undertaking to follow the recommendations of CAP 667 9.2 (c), and he has since spent thousands of hours monitoring its operation and arbitrating in case of disagreement. It is vital that the Strasser Scheme not be brought

into disrepute, and any suggestion that it is used to avoid a legitimate landing fee would undermine it. We are grateful to all those airfields which operate this potentially lifesaving scheme, and each one has been awarded an AOPA Safety Certificate."

Charles Strasser is now hoping to sign up the remaining holdouts. He has written to Sr Carlos del Rio, Managing Director of the Spanish company Abertis Airports S.A., which owns three of them, Belfast International, Cardiff and Luton, explaining the Strasser Scheme and asking him to reconsider the company's position on emergency diversions. ■

To spin, or not to spin

In training circles we seem periodically to revisit the question of whether spin training should be mandatory in the PPL syllabus or, as has been often reiterated and is now almost folklore, whether spin training loses more lives than it saves. The General Aviation Safety Council (GASCo) have recently produced a study of fatal stall/spin accidents to UK registered light aircraft from 1980 to 2008. This detailed study does little to solve the conundrum, and as we found at our last Instructor Committee meeting re-ignited the very different views held by instructors.

During the 29-year period there were 359 fatal accidents to UK registered aircraft under 5,700k max gross weight and of this total 130 were deemed to be due to the pilot failing to maintain control, resulting in a stall or spin. These were trawled and twin-engined aeroplanes, warbirds, jet powered aircraft, microlights and the Slingsby T67 were excluded from the main analysis, leaving 103 fatal stall/spin accidents for more detailed analysis.

For a more meaningful examination as to which types produced the most accidents, whilst there is no real accurate database for hours flown, with estimations it is interesting to look at the rate of accidents per 100,000 hours and in this respect at 3.9 the T67 four-cylinder model was by far the highest (interestingly the six-cylinder model had no accidents). The early C150s are zero but the C150K/L/M models were one in 100,000 whilst the C152 is 0.04 and the PA28 taper wing is also zero.

Whilst the analysis is detailed, the Instructor Committee felt that there were a number of accidents included, although fortunately few, that were the result of pilot intoxication, display flying and aerobatic practice, or which occurred at low level in the early stages of take-off or the late stages of landing and against which no amount of spin training would be proof, that were perhaps outside of the normal ambit and should have been excluded from the review.

The heartening conclusion one can read in to the final analysis is that spin/stall accident rates are, thankfully, low or non-existent for many common types flown and although there are a list of nine recommendations, all eminently sensible, one is left with the impression that we are doing reasonably well. There is nothing that points to a lack of formal PPL/NPPL spin training resulting in an increasing number of accidents.

A copy of the report can be obtained from GASCo via their website www.gasco.org.uk and is a sobering, recommended read. – Geoffrey Boot

Got a deal with the council?

With legislation on wind turbines about to change, the CAA is keen to ensure that all semi-official airfield safeguarding arrangements that may have been made with local planning authorities should be codified and placed on a central register.

Back-of-a-fag-packet understandings between aerodromes and local authorities will no longer cut the mustard when the government introduces Permitted Development Rights for domestic installations of small wind turbines in England. This will mean that householders will be able to install wind turbines on their properties without the need for planning permission.

One of the requirements will be that such a turbine should not be located on 'aviation safeguarded land'. To allow members of the public to check whether a proposed installation would be on such land, the government is developing an internet-based service so they can input their postcode and find out.

So if your arrangement isn't official and you don't want a forest of windmills on climb-out, get on the right side of the blanket now. The CAA is working with the GAAC to establish the true picture – details of what you have to do can be found on their website www.gaac.org.uk – look under 'Fact Sheets'.

Flight logging change for IRs?

The CAA has apparently changed the rules on logging time for Instrument Rating candidates in a way that puts UK students at a disadvantage to the rest of Europe.

Flight Academy Blackpool recently applied to the CAA to become an approved IR training centre. The application was approved provided that FAB conformed to a new flight logging requirement.

FTOs throughout Europe, UK included, currently permit their IR students to log chocks to chocks time in their logbooks, which go towards the minimum hours training requirement, which is 50 hours for a CPL holder, or 55 hours for a pilot without a CPL. Some FTOs simply log chocks to chocks, while others take airborne time and add 15 minutes to each flight to take into account the time spent taxiing and waiting at the hold. Whichever route is taken, the end result is that the student can effectively log the total training sortie time, rather than just the airborne time.

JAR-FCL guidance refers to airborne time only, and the CAA seems to be re-interpreting the rules to strike out a convention which has been in existence for many years. Enquiries among FTOs indicate that chocks to chocks is generally accepted as the way it should be done.

Flight Academy Blackpool has been informed that they may only permit their students to log airborne time, which seems to be at odds with every other FTO in Europe, UK included. When FAB contested this with the CAA, saying that it put them at a competitive disadvantage given their students would effectively have to fly more hours, they were told that it follows JAR-FCL guidance and they had no choice in the matter. When it was pointed out that other UK FTOs conducting IR training didn't have the same restrictions, they were told that other UK FTOs would have to start logging airborne time only for IR courses, and that it would come into effect following each FTO's annual audit by the CAA.

If the CAA proceed with this interpretation then UK schools will once again find themselves at a competitive disadvantage compared with their European counterparts.

Medical declaration changes

The CAA has now re-issued the exemption applicable to non-NPPL holders who use a medical declaration rather than a JAA medical certificate. The exemption is ORS4 No. 816 and can be viewed at www.caa.co.uk/docs/33/ORS4_816.pdf. It applies from September 1st 2010.

One significant change is that, with immediate effect, pilots operating under ORS4 No. 816 will no longer be able to revalidate or renew an SEP Class Rating; instead an SSEA Class Rating (and SLMG and/or Microlight Class Ratings if such privileges were previously exercised on the SEP Class Rating) will be required. Pilots who are able to hold JAA Class 2 medical certificates, but have chosen instead to hold medical declarations, should bear this in mind should they wish to revert to the SEP

Class Rating at a later date.

Pilots operating under ORS4 No. 816 with two or more Class Ratings (SSEA/SLMG/Microlight) are also able to take advantage of the 'consolidated revalidation requirements' originally introduced for the NPPL:

Holder of a licence with 2 or 3 ratings (SSEA/SLMG/Microlight):

(a) Within the period of validity of the rating on any of the classes of aeroplanes held, have flown as pilot:

at least a total of 12 hours including 8 hours PIC;

at least 12 take-offs and landings; a total of at least 1 hour of training flying with an instructor. If this has not been completed all ratings will be endorsed 'Single seat only'.

(b) Within the 12 months preceding the expiry date of the ratings held have flown, as pilot on any of the class ratings held: at least 6 hours flight time.

(c) Within the period of validity of each class rating held, have flown as pilot: at least 1 hour PIC on each class held; or undertaken at least 1 hour of flying training on each class held with an instructor entitled to give instruction on aeroplanes of those classes.

Note that if (c) has not been fully completed, you will be required to renew the relevant Class Rating(s) by GST.

This means a total of 12 hours in 24 months (eight as PIC and a total of one hour must be training flying with an instructor). Six of these hours must be in the final 12 months. All these hours can be on any of the classes, but a minimum of one hour either as PIC or with an instructor must be flown in each class.

– Nick Wilcock ■

CAA wants to talk money

The Civil Aviation Authority has begun a new consultation on its fees and charges for 2011/2012. The Authority claims its efficiency measures have reduced its operating costs by 30 percent over the last nine years, which is little consolation to those in general aviation who have seen their charges triple, quadruple or even more because of the infamous Joint Review Team, which transferred costs from airlines to small operators.

During the current year the CAA expects to take in some £68 million, and it intends to raise that to over £72 million in 2011/12. Its costs in the current year are projected to give it a profit of about £50,000, which is far short of the six percent profit it is required to squeeze out of us by the government. General aviation regulation is projected to make a loss of £72,000, and the CAA is under pressure from the airlines, particularly British Airways, to raise charges to GA to eliminate that 'cross-subsidy'.

With the exception of AOC charges, fees last year were frozen because of the economic downturn. The CAA says it recognises the economic burden that currently falls on the industry but adds that the government is slashing everything and says more money is needed now for investment in 'IT, skills and people' which will save money in the long run. Increased VAT and National Insurance costs are not wholly offset by efficiencies. The Authority intends to raise charges to AOC operators by 3 percent, and overall licensing costs will rise by the same amount.

One new fee will fall on foreign companies who are providing English Language Proficiency training, which must henceforth be licensed by the CAA at an initial cost of £3,500. While this won't affect the UK, it will hammer GA in countries like Italy, where private companies are already charging extraordinary sums for English exams.

The consultation document can be found at <http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?gid=1351>. If you want to comment, the closing date for responses is December 10th.

New regime at Lee

Hampshire Police, operators of Lee on Solent airfield, have agreed to throw in their lot with neighbouring forces Surrey and Sussex in aviation matters, and the three constabularies are planning to share two helicopters. The decision means that Hampshire's Britten-Norman Islander fixed-wing aircraft will go, which means it no longer needs Lee on Solent airfield.

At the same time, the other main leaseholder at Lee, the South East England Development Association (SEEDA) is facing abolition because of the government's 'bonfire of the quangos'. This fluid situation presents opportunities for general aviation to fill the vacuum, and the Lee Flying Association is moving to do so.

The obstacles are significant, but Lee Flying Association has some very active members and a solid track record in keeping general aviation going at Lee. They could always do with more members – it costs £30 and it won't be wasted. See www.eghf.co.uk.

'Mandatory' recommendations

AOPA in Sweden is working to combat a perverse national interpretation of EASA regulations which could spread to wherever in Europe there are bureaucrats who need to be

seen to be doing something. The Swedish CAA is interpreting EASA requirements literally and insisting that all recommendations from type certificate holders be treated as mandatory, introducing a whole new level of costly, bureaucratic and pointless work. For the Piper PA-28, for instance, there is now a

mandatory check of battery water every 30 days, lubrication of rubber door seals every 30 days, cleaning of fuel bowl every 30 days, change of engine oil every four months and much more, regardless of time flown. This poses horrendous problems for owners; engineers are not willing to undertake pointless

jobs that take 15 minutes but require 45 minutes of paperwork, and at many remote Swedish airfields there is no resident mechanic – pilots must fly one or two hours to get to an engineering shop, and if this must be done every month for a nonsensical job the situation becomes intolerable.

The problem is severe for Piper owners because of the number of recommendations the company makes; unable to introduce good sense to its regulator's demands, AOPA Sweden is discussing with Piper a new approach to such information – in effect, to get Piper to stop pumping out recommendations. Piper says many of its recommendations are just good practice, but when exacerbated by perverse regulators they can become a game-stopper.

Some of the Piper recommendations AOPA Sweden's Lars Hjelmberg points up are:

- Checks of battery box and cables every 30 days. "Other manufacturers make no such recommendation. Why must this be done on a Piper? What's wrong with the Piper installation?"
- Is battery check of fluids necessary with the new gel type of batteries? How shall density of battery liquid be a problem on gel batteries?
- Why will dirt collect in the fuel filter when the aircraft is parked for 30 days in a hangar and not flying? Is not dirt a function of volume of fuel passing a filter, and should not be based on calendar time? If fuel is filtered before filling the aircraft, as per API standards, why is this necessary in Pipers?
- If a mechanic's shop is allowed to have an open barrel of engine oil for 12 months, why may not the same oil be in the sump of the engine for more than four months? Piper obviously considers it makes its recommendations for good reasons of safety, but if they are to be mandated for all it makes Piper's aircraft less attractive to buyers and a solution must be found. ■



Can we ditch fixed ELTs?

The efficacy of fixed ELTs is once again being called into question following the death of a former US Senator in an air crash in Alaska. The ELT in the de Havilland Beaver failed to activate because of aerial damage, and search aircraft spent four hours trying to locate the wreckage. Four people survived.

For five years IAOPA has been opposing ICAO proposals for fixed ELTs in all aircraft on the grounds that they rarely work, often cause installation, C of G and other practical issues in some aircraft and are largely a pointless waste of money. Instead, AOPA urges all pilots to invest the same money in the best PLB they can afford.

Long experience with fixed ELTs shows that they are terribly inefficient. If they survive a crash, their signal is too often masked by terrain. In cases of ditching they go to the bottom with the aircraft and cannot transmit. If they float, rescuers can find the aircraft but not the people. IAOPA's representative to ICAO, Frank Hofmann, took ICAO delegates to Toronto Airport after the crash of an Air France A340 there to demonstrate that none of the six automatically-activated fixed ELTs aboard the

aircraft actually activated. When Steve Fossett was killed, the search for him went on for more than a year and his ELT was so much deadweight.

Perversely, fixed ELTs tend to activate in hard landings or turbulence, which are a problem even with the newest ELTs. PLBs, on the other hand, stay with the pilot and passengers and can be moved to provide a stronger signal if necessary. Many countries have filed a difference with ICAO by permitting PLBs in place of fixed ELTs.

It's simply not the case that GA pilots are unwilling to invest in technology. In parts of the world where fixed ELTs are mandatory, many pilots have also paid for PLBs. The ICAO insistence on fixed ELTs throws up some bizarre anomalies. For instance, a PLB is acceptable for a British-registered aircraft in the UK and for a Dutch-registered aircraft in Holland, but in theory you cannot cross an international boundary without a fixed ELT, so Dutch aircraft



PLBs are preferred to fixed ELTs

should not fly to Britain without them, or vice versa.

There are several good alternatives to a fixed ELT, such as the SPOT II Satellite GPS Messenger that will track their position by satellite, the Spider Tracks S2 Aircraft Tracking System, or GPS transmitters for use in an emergency.

None are approved devices, but many pilots carry them anyway. A small furniture removals company can track a Ford Transit anywhere in the world; surely aviation can do better than fixed ELTs. The rapid advance of technology often means that approvals come after obsolescence.

Search and rescue is a dangerous business that costs many lives, and the easier we make it the less costly it will be. AOPA believes that for private flights, pilots should be free to make their own choices. ■

AOPA hits 700 not out

Since records were started in 1988 AOPA has handled 700 planning and operational problems relating to general aviation aerodromes and airstrips. In the past year alone, issues have included wind turbines (10), guidance on proposed new flying sites (4), obstructions on approaches/climb-out paths (3), proposed CAS/TMZs (3), training from unlicensed aerodromes (3), planning problems re shared use of buildings for aircraft and agricultural equipment (2), size and suitability of airstrip (2), planning contravention notice (1), and hangar size/suitability (1). In addition, we received numerous queries relating to volcanic ash but these are not included in the figures.

Whereas a few years ago threats of aerodrome closures headed the numerical list, today wind turbines have risen to greater heights, often literally. In most instances these have threatened the safety of operations and, in extreme cases, could lead to enforced closure.

Without doubt AOPA can claim to have had more involvement with GA aerodromes than any other organisations in the UK – and possibly in the world. An unfortunate truth is that many people fail to appreciate the scale of the problems facing GA regarding flying sites – by failing to join the Association that fights for their future. Despite that, AOPA has made influential inputs on a wide range of issues and intends to remain the front of the front line. – David Ogilvy



General aviation flying sites are under threat from property developers, nimbys, wind turbine companies and many other external influences

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