

General Aviation

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Chairman's message

Teamwork and Duxford

I write this piece in the warm afterglow of the AOPA Bonus Day held at Duxford on Saturday 10th September that is described within the pages of this issue of *General Aviation*. Whilst the weather could have been kinder, allowing more aircraft to fly in than actually did so, it was a great event. It is always a pleasure to meet up with old friends and new acquaintances alike, and the format of the event this year made it easier to do so than first time around in 2010. It is very encouraging to discover how many of you, the members, believe that AOPA is doing a good job in keeping general aviation viable in these difficult financial times, not made any better by the changes and proposals emanating from EASA that seem almost to be aimed at curtailing the scope and flexibility of GA. When asked, at the close of the main proceedings of the day, "...was the event worthwhile?" and "...should we run it again next year?" the answers from the attendees were a resounding "yes" and "yes" to both. So it is clear that we will be doing the same next year.

Behind every event such as this one, there is always a team that has devoted much time and energy over a period of many months prior dedicated to ensuring the smooth running of the contributory activities and paving the way towards the ultimate achievement of a successful event. In this case, the team consisted of voluntary AOPA members with concomitant support from the office. On behalf of AOPA UK, I would like to place on record my huge appreciation of the efforts of Chris Royle, Chairman of the AOPA Members Working Group, Mick Elborn, James Chan and Nick Wilcock of the AMWG, Mandy Nelson from the AOPA office, and Alan Evans, air traffic controller at Duxford and main driving force behind the Duxford Bonus and Safety Days. Under Chris's leadership and coordination skills, each team member had his or her own part to play in contributing to the overall result. I have been kept in the planning loop throughout and know just how much hard work and forethought has been devoted to the project. As those members who attended Duxford, and many who did not or were not able to, know, the attendance arrangements were web based and greatly facilitated the management of the event. It was good to be able to welcome many non-members and guests, including David Roberts, Chairman of the Royal Aero Club.

AOPA is no different from many associations in that a significant part of its work is undertaken by a team of dedicated volunteers. Maybe this should not be unexpected, since membership of the association is also entirely voluntary; aircraft owners and pilots join AOPA largely, I feel, because they believe in supporting an organisation that fights for and lobbies on behalf of the activity which they enjoy, and possibly have a financial stake in, in the form of aircraft ownership or joint ownership, or through employment as, for example, an instructor, or through owning a flying club or flight training organisation. There is also the additional benefit of expert help and advice on hand on the hopefully rare occasions when things go wrong.

As a change from previous years' arrangements, the AOPA Awards for Achievement and Endeavour were presented to the winners at Duxford, the recipient's details and supporting testimonials being found on another page in this issue of *General Aviation*. The awards are decided every two years and it is always a very happy and sociable occasion with the presentations being made in the presence of friends and family members who were welcome to attend. It was particularly delightful to be able to hand over the "Friend of AOPA" trophy, a silver tankard to keep (and use...), to Alan Evans, mentioned above, who, because of the rather unfriendly flying conditions, was able to leave his tower duties temporarily. The presentation of the awards formed a fitting conclusion to a most worthwhile and satisfying event.



George Done