

EASA has ears to hear!

EASA has rescinded an expensive Airworthiness Directive on transponder checks which has cost general aviation dear in recent years. The Agency's move may presage a change of attitude, where consultation with industry is treated not as a necessary evil but as a genuine listening exercise which will lead to better regulation. AOPA Chairman George Done reports as follows:

"On 30th August 2006, EASA issued an Airworthiness Directive No. 2006-0265 that

concerned Modes C and S transponders. It was to address a problem of false advisory altitude reporting that had led to a loss of aircraft separation during ACAS manoeuvres. It followed on from a much earlier AD issued by the FAA in 1999 that applied to Transport Category aircraft with Mode C that was subsequently modified to apply only to aircraft above FL240. As a result of test data that had been collected in the meantime showing that the repetitive testing required for compliance was unnecessary, the FAA AD was cancelled in April 2000.



"The UK CAA issued their own equivalent AD as a result of a TCAS incident involving two Boeing 747 aircraft shortly after the FAA one. This was later superseded in 2000 by an AD that applied to all aircraft equipped with Mode C or

Mode S transponders. At a stroke, this prime example of gold-plating took in a large proportion of the several thousand GA aircraft in the UK. It was singularly unfortunate that EASA took over this AD in August 2006

from the UK CAA in good faith, thereby extending the scope to many tens of thousands of GA aircraft in Europe. The EASA AD had been up for consultation, but, probably because the wording appeared to limit the scope to transport aircraft, no comments were received during the two-week consultation period.

"The AD calls for testing every two years using a nine-point check that would maybe take an avionics engineer the best part of an hour. Four sample altitudes are to be checked for accuracy to within a 125 feet tolerance, the highest being 31,000

feet, somewhat on the high side for most GA aircraft! Over the six years that have elapsed since the AD was issued it is easy to see that the owners of the GA aircraft concerned have probably spent of the order of €10 or €20 million in compliance.

"On 21st August 2012, EASA issued a Notification of a Proposal to cancel the AD with a closure date for consultation of 31st October 2012. It seems unlikely that there will be any objections. The person we must thank for this welcome outbreak of common sense from EASA is Dan Åkerman of AOPA Sweden. Dan is an aircraft owner and has worked in the aviation business for 25 years as a systems engineer, structures designer and accident investigator, as well as having operated a CAMO for a year before frustration with Part M as interpreted by the Swedish CAA caused him to withdraw. He is the IAOPA representative on the GA Task Force that is currently addressing Part M for GA aircraft. In December 2011 he wrote a letter to Eric Sivel, EASA Rulemaking Deputy Director, raising several questions and proposing amendments to the AD. It is a matter of great cheer that EASA took the comments of the expert seriously and acted upon them, leading ultimately to the cancellation of this vexatious AD. Well done, Dan!" ■



Chink of light for pilots with diabetes

The CAA has decided to allow pilots with diabetes treated with insulin to be considered for medical certificates.

AOPA has been pressing for decades for such action to be taken, with Board member and medical adviser Dr Ian Perry having repeatedly presented data showing that when diabetes is balanced and well controlled it posed no danger in aviation.

The CAA says that over recent years there have been advances in the treatment and monitoring of the disease, allowing the control of the condition and any complications to be managed more effectively.

The decision also applies to air traffic controllers, who have up to now been debarred from undertaking operational duties.

The CAA says: "Diabetic applicants who are granted medical certificates under the new protocol will, however, be subject to a rigorous monitoring regime, including demonstrated stability of their condition,

and regular blood sample self-testing during flight or duty. This is to ensure that an individual does not begin a flight or shift with too high, or too low, a sugar level, and that a safe level is maintained."

Dr Stuart Mitchell, head of the Authority Medical Section of the CAA's Medical Department, said: "This decision will benefit many qualified pilots and air traffic controllers, who are currently restricted to non-operational duties because of their diabetes. With the appropriate level of monitoring to ensure safety standards are met, we believe it is right that these experienced individuals are allowed to contribute their valuable skills and knowledge in their chosen field."

Dr Perry, who has signed off several insulin-dependent diabetics for NPPL medical certificates, said: "This is a very welcome move, and I hope it marks the beginning of a move towards catching up with countries like Canada, where First Officers can be diabetic. There are some

750 insulin-dependent diabetics flying in the United States, and there's a case to be made that sensible diabetics are actually better looked after and less prone to medical problems than the rest of us.

"There have been many cases of professional pilots in their thirties developing diabetes and having their careers destroyed when there was no real need for it. That's represented a terrible waste of resources and experience."

The organisation Pilots with Diabetes (www.pilotswithdiabetes.com) whose Flying With Diabetes (www.flyingwithdiabetes.com) related record-breaking flights have been reported in this magazine on several occasions, was formed in 2007 by military and civilian pilots who had lost careers because of official attitudes to diabetes and who wanted to prove that controlled diabetes should be no bar to flying. One of their founders, Douglas Cairns, last year won AOPA's Individual Merit Award for an epic →

flight to the North Pole in a Beech Baron. Douglas says: "Overall this is a very positive step for pilots and indeed people with diabetes. Pilots With Diabetes has been communicating with the CAA over the last five years to highlight Canada's system for commercial pilots and the USA's system for private flying with insulin treated diabetes, and requesting that similar systems be adopted here in the UK.



"It is extremely encouraging that the UK authority is introducing similar systems here, and we hope that this may help

aviation authorities elsewhere adopt similar policy."

Pilots with Diabetes celebrated the news

Chief executive's diary:

Gold for Team GA

It is always a surprise to me at how quickly my diary comes around! As the end of July approached there were fewer meetings to attend, which allowed me the time to focus on issue that have come out of the AOPA Members Working Group. As a result, Chris Royle and Mick Elborn came to the office on July 17th to discuss how they plan to act as the focal point for the AOPA Regional Reps. It was agreed that a series of meetings with the Regional Reps should take place, and it was left to Chris and Mick to decide where and when these will be held. AOPA HQ is committed to supporting the development of the Regional Reps – members should make a note of who their local Rep is so that local issues can be reported into the system.

August was also a quiet month, mainly due to the Olympic Games. However, I did attend a meeting along with other GA representatives at NATS in Swanwick to look at Atlas Control in operation. You couldn't help but be impressed by the way in which the Atlas Control staff did their job, and although there were some initial problems I understand they were quickly resolved. Even though the theoretical capacity of the Restricted Zone was said to be 120 aircraft at any one time, the busiest they got was about 55% of the maximum. It was suggested to me that the lower figure was probably the maximum comfortable level of traffic... GA can be proud of the way it stuck to the rules, proving that we took the requirements seriously. While there were a few minor infringements, it's

clear that in working together Atlas and GA played a part in delivering a safe and secure Olympic Games, which was the commitment the UK Government made. So a gold medal to team GA!

As for the impact on GA businesses, it is obvious from the reports I have received that there was a significant downturn in flying. Of course, the weather also had an impact and it is probably too early to say what the overall financial impact will be. But delivering a safe, secure games did come at a cost to some of our members.

On the 13th I had first hand experience of Atlas when I flew to Coventry from Elstree for a meeting. Both airfields were extremely quiet, traffic-wise. During the flight Atlas provided more than the basic service I had requested, which was very kind, but I suspect it was more to do with the fact that there were few GA aircraft flying that day.

In Coventry I met with an instructor member who was being interviewed by CAA's Aviation Regulation Enforcement Branch over an issue that could happen to anybody. We sometimes take it for granted that the paperwork, such as ARC and insurance, is all up to date. The pilot in command has the responsibility to make sure all necessary documents are up to date, and not to fly if there is any doubt.

On August 31st I had a day out at the LAA event at Sywell. I met various people and had many discussions – one was with



Mike O'Donoghue, Chief Executive of GASCo, which is one of the bodies that AOPA supports. We had a long discussion about GA safety and the upcoming work of GASCo, and how this relates to the work of the European General Aviation Safety Team (EGAST); Mike represents IAOPA in the EASA safety domain. EGAST brings together industry and safety experts from EASA to look at perceived safety problems and decide how to tackle them. It's taking on a new importance because EASA is saying that if we are to have less regulation of GA, then GA pilots must take a much more personal responsibility for safety. The notion that they are more concerned with my safety than I am is an unusual one, but nonetheless we will have to go along with it and come up with ways of satisfying their concerns. GASCo is very important to pilot education; most accidents happen to people who have disregarded some regulation, and adding more regulations simply punishes those who do it right. If you have any ideas or suggestions on this topic, please email me (martin@aopa.co.uk). And don't forget to look out for the GASCo safety evenings.

September, and the diary is getting back to normal – but it was a great pleasure to fly again with fellow aviator and CEO of the CAA Andrew Haines. We flew from Elstree to Manston, Le Touquet and back to Elstree. While in Manston Andrew talked to Sue and Mark Girdler, the owners of TG Aviation, who have been in the GA business for 37 years and were able to outline for him the problems the business faces, particularly when dealing with parts of the CAA. These visits give Andrew the ability to hear and see first-hand the reality



on September 1st by staging the 'UK Diabetes Formation Flight' in which six pilots with insulin treated diabetes, all

NPPL holders, flew in a D-shaped formation to set a speed record between Derby and Southampton, overflying six

towns and villages whose first letters sequentially spell the word 'Diabetes' – Derby, Ibstock, Ashton, Flameville, Buckingham, Emmington, Twyford, Earley, Southampton.



The speed record clock started at 11:15:45 GMT overhead Derby airfield, and 1 hour, 22 minutes and 38 seconds later all six flew over Southampton Airport to set the record. Pilots taking part were (from left in picture far left) James D'Arcy, Damian Fessey, Douglas Cairns, Karl Beetson, Matt Ponsford & George Duncan. Their aircraft were an RV8, Robin DR400, PA-28, CT-SW microlight, C150 Aerobat and PA-28.

Pilots with Diabetes have organised a 'Flying With Diabetes' day at Duxford on October 20th. For details see <http://www.jdrf.org.uk/get-involved/join-in-an-event/community-events/community-events/flying-with-diabetes-day> ■

of the situation for GA in the field of training and maintenance.

With life vests donned we set off for Le Touquet. The flight was uneventful, the weather was great and our arrival was on time. After a spot of lunch and a tour of the town, armed with some bread and cheese (doing our bit for the local French economy) we departed for Elstree. And on our return I discussed with Andrew the fact that for a trip like that with multiple stops, GA is the only real option.

On the 4th and 5th I was in Brussels with Lutz Dommel, our lobbyist at the European Parliament, and Dr Michael Erb, Managing Director of AOPA Germany, for meetings in the Parliament with MEPs and some of their staff. Among the topic we covered were EASA regulation and the ground handling regulations. We also met Artur Zasada, the Polish MEP who is the rapporteur on ground handling on the Transport Committee. We were able to impress on him the differences between CAT and GA, and the need for self-handling. He confessed he didn't realise we faced such problems, and if we can pull it off, this looks like an area where we can make some real gains.

On September 10th I went to Liverpool to attend the first meeting of a GA user group at the airport there. They have a number of concerns, but the main one was fuel supply and pricing. On the following day I met with Paul Staples, the Operations Director at Liverpool, to follow up on the substance of the previous night's meeting.

I was back in Brussels on September 12th to attend the Initial Deployment Steering Group which oversees the initial implementation of SESAR. They're trying to take what is in existence already and call it 'Phase 1 of SESAR'; the IDSG will evolve

by about 2015 into the overall governance body of SESAR. It sets the timeframe and investment plans for the new air traffic management technology, including what you have to have in your aircraft – for example, 8.33kHz radios, which we would be required to fit at our own expense despite the fact that they are for the benefit of others. This is something everyone needs to keep an eye on. To deliver their goal of trajectory-based flight, continuous climb and descent, there will be a need for major airspace changes and they will affect us all. Performance-based navigation and the technology that supports it are under discussion; meeting Required Navigation Performance (RNP) will be impossible if the small, inexpensive kit GA needs doesn't exist. The IDSG will liaise with Single Sky Committee on additional implementing rules to support the implementation of Phase 1 of SESAR.

The following day I was back in London for the Department for Transport's EASA Management Board industry briefing, chaired by Mike Smethers, Chairman of the Management Board. The French-led reappraisal of GA regulation was discussed; by the time you read this it will have gone before the Management Board, and we hope for a good reaction. IAOPA had a hand in formulating the paper, and the recommendations are sensible; the question is, how will the member states ensure they are acted upon? I don't have a high degree of confidence in the EC getting EASA to adopt these ideas, but we hope for the best. It seems unlikely that EASA will row back on some of the Operational regulations that are already in the system.

Later that day I went to Cologne for a meeting of the EASA Advisory Board on the 14th. Again, progress is being made,

but it is slow. The fees and charges regulation was discussed, and it can be said that there is no proposal to increase any fees that are applied today to GA. At the meeting I received a copy of the report of the Certification Strategy Industry/EASA Working Group – one of scores of such groups EASA is running, this one engaging the minds of those with an interest in certification. The report says: "EASA shall implement rules, procedures and possibly organisational structures in order to support the revitalisation of the GA community." When I pointed this out to the EAB there was puzzlement – did it really need revitalising? They're really not aware of just how much the industry is suffering.

You may have read the first statement of Patrick McLoughlin, the new Transport Minister, in which he talks about the economic value of aviation to the UK. You'll have noticed that he makes no mention anywhere if general aviation. The focus in the Department for Transport is understandably on CAT, but we do ourselves no favours by plugging GA as sport and recreation, rather than as a form of transport. If you complain to a civil servant that your recreational activity is getting too expensive, he'll tell you we've all got problems – find another form of recreation. As a mode of transport GA deserves recognition across Europe, and that's where our efforts must lie.

So the summer is over and we're back at full speed; coming up I have meetings of the Industry Consultation Body in Brussels, the GA Strategic Forum in Gatwick, the AOPA AGM, and the AOPA Bonus Day at Duxford – and the diary for October is already completely full. .

Martin Robinson

GA twins under EASA attack

IAOPA is making a last-ditch attempt to stop the imposition of new regulations on private twin-engined aircraft which would make it illegal for them to land at some 900 European airfields that they have used safely for years.



EASA is extending ICAO's requirement for accelerate-stop distances for multi-engined aircraft to cover not just commercial air transport, as ICAO does, but private flights. This means that safety systems meant by ICAO to protect the paying public will now be forced upon small twins.

As a result, small twins will no longer be able to use airfields like Elstree, which does not have a long enough runway to meet accelerate-stop rules. These require an aircraft that has reached flying speed to be able to decelerate and stop before the end of the runway if an engine fails. IAOPA's Jacob Pedersen argued forcefully against the EASA extension during the consultation phase, but to no avail.

The rule will force some small twin owners, already operating under a costly and onerous regulatory burden, to downgrade to singles in order to continue using their airfields. As Pedersen

points out, this means they will become less safe for 99.9 percent of a flight in order to be more safe for a couple of seconds during take-off.

In September Martin Robinson met with Carl Heinz Florenz, a Euro MEP on the Transport Committee, and his advisers to discussed the accelerate-stop requirements and seek ways to get the European Commission to modify them. The figure of 900 airfields has been calculated by AOPA Germany using the Jeppesen database. For many of them, light twins represent premium traffic.

Companies like Hawker Beechcraft have woken up to the potential impact on sales of the European rule, for which there is no demonstrated safety need. They want Europe to adopt the ICAO recommendation, which says the accelerate-stop requirements do not apply to non-commercial piston or turbine aircraft below 5,700 kg.

Martin Robinson says: This issue also points up the lack of joined-up thinking among the members states. During the comitology stage, the French delegate voted in favour of this, while his own DGAC was arguing passionately in favour of less onerous regulation of GA. Our only recourse

now is to try to get the Parliament to reject it now, although the Parliament doesn't have a lot of say in these matters. It's a last-ditch attempt to stave it off." ■



Hawker Beechcraft, makers of the Baron, have woken up to the sales threat represented by EASA's accelerate-stop rule

GPs to issue LAPL medicals

The CAA has announced that GPs will be able to assess the medical fitness of pilots applying for the EASA Light Aircraft Pilot's Licence (LAPL) which came into effect on September 17th.

There are significant differences between the medical requirements for the UK NPPL and the European LAPL. With the NPPL, the pilot effectively self-certified his (or her) fitness to fly and was signed off by his GP. For the initial issue of a LAPL, however, the doctor is required to conduct an examination. If the pilot is more than 50 years old, an examination will always be required.

Providing he (or she) conforms to normal registration criteria the GP will not need to be authorised by the CAA, nor will any specialised training be required. If the applicant suffers from certain conditions the GP must refer him to an Authorised Medical Examiner (AME). The CAA has issued guidelines in leaflet form, and the information GPs need

is available online. (www.caa.co.uk/medical). They will be able to enter data on a CAA website and download medical certificates to give to applicants immediately an



**LIGHT AIRCRAFT PILOT'S LICENCE (LAPL)
MEDICAL CERTIFICATE**
A QUICK GUIDE FOR GPs

The General Practitioner must

- be in general practice or employed by the Ministry of Defence for general practice duties
- hold a valid licence to practise medicine from the General Medical Council
- be on the UK General Medical Council's Specialist Register as a GP
- have access to, and be able to consult, the medical records of the applicant
- not perform an assessment on, or issue a LAPL medical certificate to, applicants with a medical diagnosis that requires further evaluation for certificate issue (see below)
- notify the UK CAA of all LAPL medical certificates issued
- when revalidating/renewing certificates, review the last LAPL medical certificate held
- have a NHS or doctors.org e mail address

examination is complete.

No mention is made of a fee. It is expected that many GPs will charge one, and some have been talking in terms of £100 or more, which will negate one of the main advantages of getting a GP-certified medical. Only AMEs will be allowed to issue medicals for ICAO-standard licences.

Dr Sally Evans, Chief Medical Officer at the CAA, said: "There are around 40,000 private pilots in the UK, many of whom may be interested in obtaining this new European licence. GPs need to be aware of the changes taking place in pilot licensing across Europe as they may well affect some of their patients."

AOPA's medical advisor Dr Ian Perry, who was instrumental in writing the medical requirements for the UK NPPL, said some GPs would welcome the work, others would be less impressed. "New tricks and form-filling generally attract a fee," he said. "The DVLA guideline for HGV and other medicals is something like £90, so no doubt they would think that not unreasonable. The CAA has effectively taken back responsibility for medicals at this level, so it may be that this will in time be seen as something where cost-recovery is required."

Illegal public transport?

AOPA was contacted recently by a Corporate Member, whose organisation had received rather a worrying letter from the CAA's Aviation Regulation Enforcement Branch Department. It seems that the attention of the Authority had been drawn to an Internet tourist information advertisement offering light aircraft flights on behalf of the organisation. Such flights would, if being conducted for the purpose of Public Transport, require the organisation in question to hold an Air Operator's Certificate and the Authority had no record of them holding such a certificate.

Fortunately, it was abundantly clear from the organisation's own website that the only flights being offered were, in fact, bona fide trial flying lessons. So we were quickly able to draft a response for the training organisation to send to the CAA, in which they both thanked the CAA for bringing the matter to their attention and undertook to change the wording of the tourist information advertisement immediately, to ensure that it was unambiguously clear that no Public Transport flights were being offered.

Happily, the matter was soon concluded to the mutual satisfaction of all parties involved. However, one cannot but wonder why the 'informant' who drew the matter to the attention of the CAA in the first place couldn't simply have contacted the training organisation instead, to make them aware of the ambiguity of the original advert.

The BBGA and EBAA are lobbying hard to stop illegal charters and IAOPA supports this aim. The CAA has produced an excellent leaflet entitled 'Is my flight legal? A guide to the Air Operator's Certificate' which may be downloaded at <http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/1196/20071015IllegalPublicTransportPRCampaign.pdf>. We recommend that all training organisations offering trial flying lessons should obtain a copy and note its contents carefully.



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Bristol fees causing concern

The situation at Bristol Airport is causing increasing concern at AOPA, with excessive charges shutting out general aviation in what has become the only public aerodrome in a large swathe of the country. Several pilots have reported being charged more than £200 for landing single-engined aircraft at Bristol, without having been warned in advance to expect the enormous fees. Now, a pilot who made a precautionary landing at Bristol has been charged £132.51 even though the airport subscribes to AOPA's 'Strasser Scheme', under which fees are waived in such circumstances.

Charles Strasser is seeking an explanation from the airport and a refunding of the fee, and AOPA remains concerned that pricing policies are turning a strategically vital aerodrome into the province solely of the holiday airline and the leisure flyer. The situation has become critical because of the closure of nearby Filton which, while pricey, was nowhere near as expensive as Bristol. The loss of Bristol would mean that a large part

of the country would become inaccessible to GA – the nearest alternatives are Staverton, Dunkeswell near Exeter, and Kemble.

The 'Strasser Scheme' incident arose when a PA-30 out of Staverton for Guernsey started venting fuel from a leaking filler cap. The pilot was talking to Bristol at the time and told them he was electing to return to Gloucester, and ATC at Bristol suggested he land there instead. As it was the nearest airfield, and knowing that Bristol subscribed to the Strasser Scheme, the pilot did so.

The pilot says: "On landing, the lady at Bristol Flying Centre confirmed they were members of the Strasser Scheme but said they had introduced new rates, and we got presented with a bill for £132.51. I protested, and they suggested I contact AOPA. I paid by credit card."

The invoice includes some mystifying components. Landing and Approach fee amounts to £35.40; Air Traffic Control charge is £18.72. 'Tech Stop Handling O-2T' comprises £34.50. Weekend Supplement is another £15, 'Police Service

Agreement' at £1.80 per tonne is £3.60, and 'credit card surcharge' is £3.21. Add the VAT, and it's £132.51.

Charles Strasser wrote as follows to the Chief Executive of Bristol Airport, Robert Sinclair, attaching email exchanges over the incident:

"Bristol airport has for a long time been one of 207 UK airports who have agreed to the potentially life saving CAA recommendation to waive fees for genuine emergency and precautionary weather diversion landings for GA aircraft under three tonnes. I was therefore quite surprised to receive an email from a GA pilot who made what clearly was a sensible emergency landing at Bristol and, despite protestations, was charged £132.51. You will see below my email exchange with him, from which it emerges that even your ATC suggested the landing and offered help.

"I would appreciate your looking into this occurrence and get the Bristol Flying Centre, who presumably are your contracted mandatory handling agent, to refund the fees charged and to honour your commitment to the AOPA 'Strasser Scheme' in future."

After a reminder, Robert Sinclair wrote back to say the matter was being looked into. At time of going to press no further reply had been received. ■



Change in the Channel Islands

Charles Strasser OBE, for many years Chairman of the Channel Islands Region of AOPA and an indefatigable fighter for general aviation, has decided to take a back seat and relinquish the stick to a younger pilot.

In August, Richard Hawkin took over as Chairman of the Region. Charles had previously stepped down from the AOPA Board – he was made a Vice President – to make way for a younger man, although he intends to continue to run the AOPA scheme which bears his name and which has proved such a blessing to countless GA pilots, members or otherwise.

Announcing his decision Charles said: "I intimated some time ago that, for the long term future, it was my intention to hand over the chairmanship of the AOPA Channel Islands Region to a younger GA pilot. Luckily I have found a volunteer, eminently qualified and an enthusiastic GA aviator, as well as already an active member of the Channel Islands Advisory Board. So effective from August, with the agreement of AOPA UK, Richard Hawkins will be the new Chairman."

Charles will stay on as a member of the Advisory Board in the islands, and will continue to fly. "I was 85 in April and intend to keep flying my Seneca II as long as I can pass my medical and, to me more importantly, pass my annual Instrument and Multi Rating tests," he said. "I just did that last week.

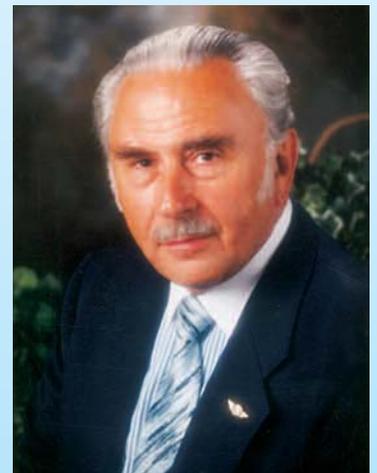
"There is now a US-based organisation, of which I am a European member, called UFO. This is short for United Flying Octogenarians and as the name suggests is for pilots over 80. Apparently there are over 6,000 on the FAA register and UFO already has 1,200 of these as members, including a few from outside the US.

"Since the 'Strasser Scheme' now involves me only in the occasional arbitration of a pilot having been charged a fee when he thinks he should not have been, I intend to continue to look

after it for the foreseeable future. This also includes still trying to get the (now only five remaining) non-participating airports to join."

Charles received the CAA's 2010 GA Safety Award for setting up and running the Strasser Scheme, which aimed to sign airports up to a commitment not to charge fees to aircraft which made an emergency or cautionary diversion to them. The CAA itself had pointed up the issue of pilots who were faced with problems in the air, yet feared to land at the nearest aerodrome because they faced enormous bills. Pilots who are making safety-critical decisions in stressful circumstances now know that thanks to Charles Strasser, they can get the aircraft on the ground without worrying about the financial consequences.

Charles's decision to step back brought forth a tribute from no less a figure than Mike Collett, of Air Atlantique fame, who wrote: "I am very sorry to hear that you will be retiring as Chairman of AOPA(CI), where you have been doing a fantastic job. You get your teeth into issues and don't let them fade away. I don't think there is anyone in Europe who fights a cause so tenaciously, and your stepping back is going to be a sad thing for GA, and CI GA in particular. No one can replace you. You have achieved a lot by being justifiably confrontational, and I fear that there may never be



Above: Charles Strasser intends to continue to run the AOPA scheme which bears his name

Lutz bats for GA in Europe

IAOPA's new lobbyist in Brussels is Lutz Dommel, who as well as running a European affairs company in Brussels is a general aviation pilot who has had shares in several aircraft.

After studying political sciences, philosophy and public law he began work in 2002 as a management trainee with German Railways in Frankfurt and later joined the office of a German Member of Parliament as head of office in Brussels. From 2007 onwards he advised companies as well as state- and non-state actors on EU affairs, strongly focusing on informing and influencing members of the European Parliament.

As a general aviation pilot he began flying gliders and later continued with microlights, acquiring his PPL in 2005. Lutz enjoys flying Cessna, Mooney and Walter Extra, mostly from the airfield of Aachen-Merzbrück near the Belgian-German border.

His primary assignment in Brussels is to

ensure that general aviation is on the radar screen of the European Parliament's decision-makers and that IAOPA is recognised as a major player whenever aviation issues are discussed. On upcoming issues such as EU OPS for non-commercial complex aircraft or the so-



Above: Lutz Dommel, International AOPA's new lobbyist in Brussels, is a general aviation pilot who flies a Piel Emeraude (left)

called airport package, he is working to safeguard the interests of all of general aviation, in close co-operation with IAOPA.

AOPA Chief Executive Martin Robinson said: "Lutz is hard-wired into the European Parliamentary structure and has an impressive range of contacts among MEPs and their staffs. He is able to get the message of general aviation to important

parts of the government structure that are otherwise very difficult to reach. I'm confident he will enable IAOPA to be uniquely effective in Europe on behalf of general aviation." ■

anyone in GA as confrontational as you, again. And I am not just thinking of the CI now.

"So, well done for doing a fantastic job, and enjoy the little extra time you will have now you don't have to keep following everything up. If I know you, you will still be pointing out things that you feel are wrong or could be improved so you might end up with rather less extra time than you thought. I certainly wish that you'll stay very active in AOPA."

The man who fills Charles's shoes is Richard Hawkin, who has

been around aviation all his life. Richard says: "I grew up close to an airport, which was always a source of fascination to me and undoubtedly sowed the seeds for what was to come. On leaving school I wanted to become a pilot but pilot supply was subject to boom and bust and I happened to leave school at the wrong time. A school friend told me all about air traffic control, and that they taught you to fly. I couldn't resist it, and have never looked back on my choice. Air traffic control became my career and, throughout all that time I flew – perfect.

"My work as an air traffic controller started at the London en-route centre, then at West Drayton. I enjoyed working there but could not resist the temptation of an ATC job in Jersey. So in 1974 my wife Eveline and I moved to the island.

Right: Richard Hawkin, has been around aviation all his life



Retirement from ATC in 2007 gave me more time to fly. For the most part, it has been pure pleasure flying. In more recent years I've got involved with bigger toys. I currently fly a Cessna Citation CJ but still love flying VFR in a PA28, doing my best to map read and trying not to forget the all-important basics. Actually, the two make a really good combination. I have a PPL with instrument rating, multi rating and various type ratings. My hours to date are just over 4,200.

"My involvement with AOPA has been relatively recent. For many years, I just didn't appreciate that my great pleasure, flying, might be under threat from many directions. I suspect that many pilots are still thinking the same as I did – just having fun and not seeing the potential for problems. But I did see the light, and understood that GA was not wholly appreciated or understood by many others players both inside and outside the world of aviation.

"Without bodies like AOPA to fight our corner, we might now be struggling even more to come to grips with ridiculous legislation, exorbitant fees, and much more. Locally our own AOPA Channel Islands has achieved great things under the leadership of Charles Strasser. He will, without any doubt, be a very hard act to follow. I will do my best. I can at least take heart that Charles has agreed to remain on our advisory board, so help will never be far away. I look forward to doing my bit."



GA wows the crowd at Paralympics

As it had in the Olympics, general aviation played a starring role in the opening ceremony for the Paralympics, with a Tecnam P2006T twin flown by a disabled pilot performing a night flypast with fireworks streaming from its wingtips. Unfortunately TV coverage of the display was skimpy and most viewers around the world would not have realised it happened. The Tecnam was provided by

Fairoaks-based Gama Group and was flown by Dave Rawlins, a former British soldier who was badly injured in Afghanistan. With him in the cockpit was former Concorde Captain Tim Orchard, who is Tecnam's dealer in the UK. Gama Engineering performed the challenging tasks of converting, flight testing and certifying the pyrotechnic dispensers to the wingtips and installing LED strip lights on the wings and fuselage of the Tecnam.

Critical to the success of the flight, says Gama Engineering's Managing Director Harry Lees, was the support of the UK based charity Aerobility, which has since 1993 offered disabled people the opportunity to fly aeroplanes. Aerobility was a critical part of Dave's rehabilitation and gave him the confidence to achieve his PPL last year. Dave Rawlins is to join Gama's operations team at Farnborough this month.



Slater shoulders airfields burden

Steve Slater has taken over David Ogilvy's airfield protection portfolio and is now the man to turn to for 'first aid' assistance when airfields are threatened. As previously reported in *General Aviation*, David is stepping back from his AOPA roles, and Steve has agreed to shoulder the airfield burden.

Steve will be operating under the auspices of the General Aviation Awareness Council, which was set up by AOPA 14 years ago to provide a forum for all GA interests to co-operate. He featured in *General Aviation* in April, when we carried an article on his meticulous rebuild of a replica 1914 Royal Aircraft Factory BE-2c biplane, the oldest purpose-built military design in the world.



Steve's aerodromes workload is significant. The erection of wind turbines is a growing threat in almost every part of Britain, sometimes for full-scale wind farms but in recent times more often for individual turbines, which landowners are being encouraged to buy by stupendous subsidies. Noise, footpaths and rights of way, closure for development or exploitation of gravel or other resources, and tenancy issues are causing problems for aviators everywhere.

Steve trained as an engineer and became involved in sports promotion and journalism through competing in and organising motorsport events in his native North East of England. Sportswriting and promotion eventually became a full-time career, and his motor industry sponsorship clients included Ford, BMW, Cadbury's, Exxon Mobil, Chrysler and Rolls-Royce. For the past 12 years he has been the voice of Formula One motor racing for the ESPN Star Sports television station, the sport's main broadcaster in Asia; in some countries he is something of a celebrity – he could be described as 'India's Murray Walker'.

Steve's other passion is flying, vintage aircraft in particular. He has worked as a researcher and author, and has owned and flown some rare vintage types.

Steve operates a rare 1947 Topsy Trainer. A pre-war design, Steve's aircraft was part-built at the outbreak of the Second World War and spent the duration in the rafters of the Fairey Aircraft factory at Slough before making its first flight

from the Great West Aerodrome, now better known as Heathrow. Steve's report of a recent and unfortunate engine failure in this aircraft will appear in a future issue of *General Aviation*.

Steve is the Chairman of the Vintage Aircraft Club, and writes a monthly column for the leading aviation title *Aeroplane Monthly*. He is also the author of the Haynes Manual of the Tiger Moth.

Steve initially became involved with airfield planning issues in helping keep alive and intact Bicester Airfield in Oxfordshire, where his Topsy Trainer is based. Last year Steve agreed to take over from David Ogilvy, who has spent years working to assist AOPA members who need initial advice on airfield planning issues.

Steve calls his work the 'initial Elastoplast solution; it isn't necessarily a definitive response, but if a member needs help Steve can advise on appropriate initial actions and recommend appropriate sources of professional legal, planning or safeguarding expertise. If further support is needed Steve can provide a letter on behalf of AOPA and the General Aviation Awareness Council informing planning authorities or other agencies of their statutory responsibilities and the importance of general aviation to their community, and quoting similar case 'best practice' precedents.

Steve can be contacted at 01494 776831 or ss@kingpinmedia.co.uk, but remember please he is a volunteer not a planning professional. Also don't call him while a Grand Prix is in progress, you won't get a reply. ■

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