

Letters to the Editor

Getting the lead out

Sir,

I have just read Pat Malone's thought-provoking article on Hjelmcø's 91/96 (*General Aviation*, February 2007). I wonder whether you could answer the following questions, or perhaps point me in the direction of someone who can.

1. Why aren't UK avgas distributors (like CYMA) tripping over themselves to try to get this fuel approved for use in the UK?
2. Why aren't the big players like Shell and BP looking at either manufacturing this 91/96 under license or bulk-buying it from Hjelmcø for distribution in Europe?
3. Why isn't the UK government falling over itself to encourage and support the distribution of this much greener fuel in the UK? After all it is not just lead-free and particulate-emission-enhanced but also capable of carrying a very significant percentage of ETBE.
4. Ditto point 3 for the EC and Europe.
5. And in the case of the EC, why isn't it being proposed that this fuel retains a tax advantage so that everyone wants to use it in place of 100LL?
6. If Europe was to move to 91/96, does anyone have a solution for elderly military aircraft that really need 100/130?

Are these questions for the CAA, or the DfT, or the DoE, do you think?

D John Akerman

The short answer to all these questions is that nobody's going to supply it until there's a demand, and nobody's going to demand it until there's a supply. Even if the CAA licensed unleaded fuel (which they haven't) it would be difficult for suppliers to handle. The current infrastructure is only able to carry leaded avgas, so you'd have to duplicate all your transport and fuelling facilities. The major oil companies aren't interested because avgas is already a minuscule market and unleaded avgas would never represent more than a fraction of it. Smaller suppliers are trying to hold the line with current avgas supplies, even as aircraft across the world move to diesel engines. They can't afford the investment. And the EC has just decided we're not paying enough avgas tax. – Pat Malone

Glorious Goodwood

Sir,

I am writing to compliment Goodwood Airfield and their air traffic controllers on an outstanding service when pilots have problems. They have been extremely helpful to me on two occasions over the past year, giving me priority landings thereby reducing stress, and when I went to pay landing fees I was told on both occasions my landings were either diversionary or precautionary, so there was no charge. Guess where I go for a great cream tea and happily pay landing fees?

The first landing was diversionary, last summer, on the way back from France to Earls Colne.

Unfortunately, EGSR and the East Coast were overcast 200ft so as I was routing via Dover I requested from London Information a diversion to Goodwood because the Southampton ATIS was scattered 2,500ft. I had to leave the plane there for a few days and did happily pay a parking fee.

The second incident was this weekend. I was on a routine sightseeing flight with some friends from my home airport of Bournemouth. I was south of Goodwood, in contact with them, and just planning to do a 180 and head home. A regular FREDa check suddenly

Goodwood House on the approach to runway 24 at Goodwood



showed my oil temp and fuel pressure gauges reading erratically, and then zero. I made the decision to think it through on the ground rather than in the air. I requested a precautionary landing and Goodwood prioritised me straight in for left base 24.

Airfields like Goodwood and I'm sure many others around the UK have really dedicated staff who provide a first class service and their

helpfulness just takes the stress out of a potentially dangerous situation.

Robert Hill

Goodwood waives landing fees for precautionary landings under AOPA's 'Strasser Scheme', which aims to improve safety by ensuring that when pilots are making diversion decisions in sometimes stressful circumstances, the cost of their decision need not be a factor.

Charles Strasser, who runs the scheme, says: "Congratulations to Robert for deciding not to continue into conditions beyond his capabilities and when having aircraft problems. Congratulations to Goodwood for honouring the Strasser Scheme and not charging for diversionary and precautionary landings. They have both contributed to helping to avoid potential accidents, thereby reducing GA fatality statistics.

"Hopefully his letter will encourage the remaining 17 non-participating airfields, Belfast-Intl, Biggin Hill, Birmingham, Blackpool, Cardiff, Carlisle, Dundee, Exeter, Filton, Gloucestershire, Humberside, Isle of Man, Leeds/Bradford, Luton, Manchester, Norwich and Teesside, to join the scheme"

Flying abroad sans ATSU

Sir,

By an amazing coincidence, the *Daily Mail* published an article on 29 January seeking to further embarrass Home Secretary Dr John Reid on lax immigration procedures. To test British procedures, the *Daily Mail* hired air taxis from Le Touquet to Oxford and Ostend to Cambridge giving false identity and passport details. On neither flight was their reporter checked by the authorities on arrival in the UK.

The *Daily Mail's* accusation is that UK immigration authorities failed to detect the deliberately false identifications provided to the air taxi companies and written into the GARs submitted for the flights. However, it will be interesting to see whether the aircraft commanders are taken to task for not verifying that the passengers they delivered matched those described in the GARs they had submitted!

As I said in my article "Flying Abroad without the aid of an ATSU", (*General Aviation*, December 2006) rather prophetically it now seems:

"...make sure you and your passengers carry valid passports. As aircraft commander it is your responsibility to ensure that your passengers are entitled to enter the country you are visiting and, as importantly, to (re)enter the UK on your return."

Tony Purton ■



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