

Four more for Strasser

Four new airports have agreed to join AOPA's 'Strasser Scheme' under which landing fees are waived in case of emergency or precautionary landings. Peel Airports, whose Liverpool John Lennon Airport already operates the scheme, has confirmed that Doncaster Sheffield and Durham Tees Valley will also join. In the south-west, Exeter has enrolled as the 198th airfield to support the Strasser Scheme, and in Oxfordshire, Bicester airfield has signed up as the 199th.

AOPA introduced the scheme after the CAA recommended in CAP 667 9.2(c) that airfields avoid charging for unavoidable diversions in case the potential cost deters pilots from landing immediately, leading to an accident. When the Authority refused to press the issue, Charles Strasser, Chairman of AOPA's Channel Islands Region, took it upon himself to sign up airports to an agreement to conform to the CAA recommendation. He now provides arbitration between claimants and airfields where necessary.

It is vital that the Strasser Scheme be invoked only in genuine cases as any hint of pilots seeking simply to avoid landing fees would undermine its entire purpose. In fact cases of abuse are extremely rare, and all pilots can be assured that when they're making potentially life-saving decisions in the air, sometimes under extreme pressure, cost is not an issue.



Following the addition of Doncaster Sheffield, Durham Tees Valley, Bicester and Exeter the number of UK airfields refusing to join the Strasser Scheme has been reduced to 12. All military airfields in the UK have signed up, and experience has shown they provide a Rolls Royce service to the needy. Recently, Newquay Airport – formerly RAF St Mawgan, now run by Cornwall County Council – announced that it would continue the RAF's support for the Strasser Scheme.

Charles Strasser continues to work on the small number of holdouts, which are Belfast International, Biggin Hill, Birmingham, Cardiff, Carlisle, Filton, Gloucestershire, Humberside, Leeds/Bradford, Luton, Manchester and Norwich. Heathrow, Gatwick and London City have not been approached to participate..

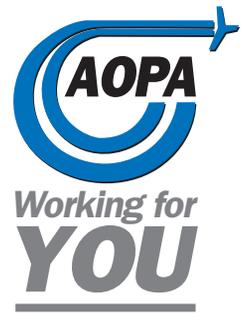
David Ogilvy writes:

There are plans to retain the former RAF airfield at Bicester as an active flying site for general aviation use. As an almost omnidirectional grass aerodrome it is well suited for light aircraft and is particularly appropriate for historic, tail-dragging brakeless types. At a time when several places are under threat of closure or are imposing restrictions on the nature and extent of GA operations, AOPA is actively supporting and encouraging this proposal. Bicester is well positioned geographically and would add useful strength to the association's efforts to establish a well-

Right and below: Bicester may be retained as an active general aviation site

spread national network of available aerodromes; one aim is to ensure that suitable flying facilities exist within reasonable reach of all centres of population, commerce or industry.

This forms a part of a broad-based project to establish Bomber Command Heritage Centre at Bicester, as history and the existing buildings make it a very appropriate site for the purpose. More information will follow as the proposals develop. ■



BOMBER COMMAND HERITAGE



Above: Exeter, like Doncaster Sheffield (below) has joined the Strasser Scheme



Nick

Paul Consterdink



IAOPA to open new Brussels front

IAOPA is looking at how to fund a full-time lobbyist in Brussels, something that has been on AOPA-UK's wish-list for several years. Following a successful meeting in the USA between president Craig Fuller, IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson and AOPA-Germany managing director Dr Michael Erb, AOPA-US is beginning the task of sourcing the right person to represent general aviation at the European Commission, the European Parliament and Eurocontrol. The lobbyist will also take responsibility for lobbying EASA in Cologne, but his or her primary focus will be on the European Commission and its transport department DGTREN, who are effectively in charge of EASA.

The first aim is to get timely information on which AOPA can act for the benefit of general aviation. The model to follow is that of AOPA in the USA, where because of its size and resources it is able to support a group of full-time lobbyists hard-wired into Congress, the FAA and all other important Washington bodies. It gets early warning of plans which will affect GA, and it doesn't wait until those plans are unveiled at meetings when it's often far too late to take action on behalf of owners and pilots.

Martin Robinson says: "Unfortunately, politics cannot function without money, and we are in the same position. The representation of general aviation in Europe must be put on a more professional footing."

Can you help less experienced pilots?

Would-be mentors can find out more about the AOPA Mentoring scheme from Timothy Nathan in the clubhouse at White Waltham on Saturday April 18th, starting at 13:00. Please email mandy@aopa.co.uk if you would like to come. Expressions of interest



are welcome even if you can't come on the day; there will be other opportunities later. Part of the purpose of the day is to hear back from you about anything we have missed in the planning.

The AOPA Mentoring Scheme aims to stem the drift of pilots away from general aviation, encourage

them to take on new challenges and help them progress up the skills ladder.

Some 75 percent of PPLs fail to renew their licences after five years, and one cause is the perceived difficulty of moving from being a newly-qualified, low-hours PPL to being a confident and capable flyer. Exemplifying the

problem is the low-hours pilot who rarely ventures beyond the local area for fear of complex and unknown airspace, mistrusts his own ability to evaluate the weather, isn't very good on the radio, can't confidently operate all the kit in the aircraft or unravel the NOTAMs, or sticks to familiar territory for other reasons. For him or her flying will soon pall, and there is a high risk that he will be lost to general aviation.

The Members Working Group recognises that his response is generally not to seek help, but to turn to other pursuits.

The Mentoring Scheme would put him in touch with more experienced pilots on whom he can call informally for advice and assistance – a sort of 'buddy system' which would give the uncertain pilot the confidence to tackle a flight he would

not otherwise attempt. At its most basic, this might be a matter of being accompanied on a land-away by someone who's been there before.

AOPA can act as a clearing-house between pilots who need a comforting presence in the cockpit and more experienced pilots who are willing to help them. Formalising this contact system makes it easier to ask for help.

This scheme addresses a 'sub-instruction' dimension which is not adequately provided for. AOPA's roster of more experienced pilots would never replace instructors – indeed, on

first contact they would be required to evaluate whether a pilot was really asking for instruction, and would refer him to an instructor immediately should there be any suggestion that this was the case. The less-

experienced pilot would remain PIC and would handle the controls. The more experienced pilot would neither log the time nor charge for it. The situation would be no different from

much work has gone into establishing the basics, not least in terms of liability and limits of responsibility

Chief executive's diary:

Late is better than never

Do you know the difference between an A320 and a C150? No? Then you could probably get a job at EASA. Since the dawn of time AOPA has been banging on about 'proportionality' – that is, sensible regulation designed to suit the needs of general aviation. Unfortunately EASA tends to make rules for Commercial Air Transport then foist them onto GA as an afterthought. The result is insanely complex and expensive requirements meant for jumbos but applied to puddle-jumpers.

The Part M engineering requirements are a good example. They were written for the commercial operators of public transport jets, and general aviation was caught up in the mess. EASA's promises of a 'Part M Lite' proved empty. This was part of the reason that, three years ago, IAOPA went over EASA's head to the European Commission and appealed to Aviation Commissioner Daniel Calleja y Crespo to intervene. The result was the EC's White Paper on General Aviation which recognises GA's value and uses the word 'proportionality' regularly and often. EASA still doesn't understand GA, and should read the Commission's paper.

Thus it was that on January 29th I went along to the CAA's Safety Conference at the Gatwick Hilton, where the focus was on EASA – the experience to date. The outgoing EC civil servant Roberto Salvarani spoke of developing EASA, and the value of input to the European safety system from the UK CAA. Jules Kaneepkins, the new head of Rulemaking at EASA, also gave a presentation. I said that we supported the Commission's paper on sustaining GA and asked how EASA intended to achieve

proportionate regulation.

He responded by saying that EASA would be considering how to do so in the coming months.

So EASA has existed since 2002, it's created engineering requirements, written the flight crew licensing requirements and moved on to Operations, and it's just starting to think about proportionality. Well, all we can do is cheer, because late is a whole lot better than never.

On the 30th we had the AOPA Executive Committee at Cambridge Street; we discussed the issues facing GA at this time of tight money, and talked through some strategic issues for the Association. Over the next few working days I was grounded by snowstorms and spent a couple of days working from home.

I was back in the office on February 4th, where the main issue was the problems facing FAA 61.75 certificate holders. The FAA is in all sorts of knots over this, and there are serious problems that remain to be resolved. More on this in the near future.

On the 6th I went along to the Department for Transport for a briefings and update on EASA. The Agency is still plagued by lack of proper funding which means that its work programme has to be pared to match the budget.

On February 9th I attended the ASISG, the group looking at how to reduce infringements. The good news is that risk-bearing infringements are down, the bad news is that the overall number of infringements is still far to high. GA must do



more to reduce the number of infringements. That's you and me both. In far too many cases, when I represent pilots accused of infringing airspace, it's patently clear that pre-flight preparation could have been better. We've got to raise our game.

I spent February 11th with Pamela Campbell looking through EASA FCL NPA 17a, b, and c in preparation for making responses to EASA. A is the overview, b is the guts of the document, and c is medical. We're refining out comments and there'll be more news in the next issue of GA.

On the 13th I went to RAF Henlow where I took part in a GA awareness day for police officers. This is the subject of a separate story in this issue, so all I'll say is that educating the law about our industry has to be a good thing, and could pay dividends for GA.

The next two days were again given over to AOPA's response to EASA-FCL; as I'm sure you know (what do you mean you haven't read the NPA? It's only 700 pages) there's a lot in this document and the devil is usually hidden in the detail.

On the 18th I attended the GASCO meeting at Farnborough. AOPA supports GASCO both financially and morally and is committed to improving flight safety. It has been decided that the GASCO magazine will continue to be published. As a safety organisation working to improve flight safety AOPA has an input to the process as well being a financial contributor.

On the 20th I worked on our submission to the UK government's Transport Committee which is again looking at the future of aviation. Next day I met with AOPA chairman George Done at White Waltham, where we were able to discuss AOPA strategy without the interruptions you always get when you're in the office. On the 24th I

having two friends, both qualified pilots, in the aircraft at the same time.

It's a simple sounding concept but much work has gone into establishing the basics, not least in terms of liability and limits of responsibility. It has been decided to launch the scheme for VFR flights only, and to look to extend it to IFR after a shakedown period.

All responsibility for the safety and legality of any flight will lie with the PIC, who will normally be the person being mentored. In order to be part of the AOPA scheme, both mentors and mentees must meet the following minimum requirements:

Mentors – current PPL/CPL, current medical and current class rating, plus CRI and/or AOPA Silver Wings, and a minimum of 200 hours P1.

Mentee – current PPL, current medical, and AOPA Bronze Wings.

Both mentors and mentees must register with AOPA, providing documentary evidence of these qualifications. This will be done via AOPA airfield representatives where available, otherwise through head office. Mentors and mentees indemnify AOPA from responsibility

for the outcome of the mentorship. However, AOPA will have liability insurance in case the indemnity is found to be inadequate. Additionally, both mentor and mentee must take responsibility for checking each other's qualifications before flight. In particular the mentor must check the legality of the flight.

In order to be a registered mentor, members must familiarise themselves with the guidance notes and attend a workshop.

The guidance notes set out how it must be made clear before the flight who is the Commander for the whole flight. They are very comprehensive and leave no room for doubt about who does what and when.

A typical example of a VFR mentoring flight could be a trip from a Midlands airfield to Deauville in France for lunch. This would require the mentee to plan and execute the flight with appropriate guidance from the mentor. This type of flight would give the mentee an opportunity to prepare for



subsequent AOPA Wings Scheme achievements and would certainly build confidence and keep the fun in his flying.

The mentor might be required to provide advice on everything from document review to Customs and Special Branch clearances, weight and balance, weather, NOTAMs, flight planning, correct RT, fuel drawbacks, range and endurance, lost procedures – anything that helps keep a pilot from infringing controlled airspace is especially vital at this time.

Depending on the mentor's skills and strengths he or she might provide help with farm strip flying, noise reduction, flying into

major airports, or a hundred other issues. AOPA must be satisfied that mentors meet an acceptable standard of knowledge and experience, and are in concordance with the ethos of the scheme. AOPA will arrange workshops to explain the scheme. There will be no formal flight or ground instruction, but applicants will be expected to show a good understanding of their role, responsibilities and duties to themselves, the mentees and AOPA. There will be recurrency requirements and peer reviews.

Are you up for it? The purpose is to help staunch the flow of pilots out of general aviation, something that all of us have an interest in. The scheme will be rewarding for both mentors and mentees, and may just prove equally invigorating for both parties.

AOPA member Mick Elborn has agreed to project-manage the Mentoring Scheme following an appeal for volunteers in the last issue of *General Aviation*, and the scheme now stands a good chance of being brought to fruition during this flying season.

The Mentoring Scheme is the brainchild of Timothy Nathan, a member of the AOPA Members Working Group, and has been strongly supported by the AOPA Executive and the Instructors Committee. A complex and ambitious undertaking, it was developed principally by Timothy Nathan with help from Steve Copeland, but progress has slowed because both are extremely busy in their working lives. Mick Elborn is a retired professional project manager, single and multi pilot with more than 500 hours, and is better placed to give the scheme the impetus it needs. ■

left home at 4.30am to catch the train to Brussels, where I attended the Air Traffic Management strategy workshop at Eurocontrol. I got home at 9.45pm – another longish day.

On the 25th I had lunch with John Arscott, the retiring head of the CAA's Directorate of Airspace Policy. I believe that John did a good job at DAP in difficult circumstances, and we wish him well for the future. Next day I met with his replacement Mark Swan, a former fighter pilot for a not-for-profit organisation – something like AOPA really, but with a rather bigger budget. Mark has flown all of the single-engined aircraft in the BMMF – his last job was flying the Typhoon – and I have a feeling that he will also prove to be a good DAP.

Early start again on the 27th – I left home at 5am for Brussels where I attended a Eurocontrol/NATO security briefing. I briefed the group on GA and how it operates, and hopefully corrected some fundamental misunderstandings; they started the day by stating that they believe GA to be a significant terrorist threat, and I hope they ended the day thinking differently. IAOPA will continue to try to influence the thinking of these groups through education. I arrived home again at 8.30pm

On the 28th I attended the British Medical Pilots Association meeting in London, where I gave a briefing to the flying doctors on the activities of AOPA/IAOPA. I think it was well received.

Now we're into March... on the 3rd I attended the BBGA conference, which is a strong and active aviation organisation. The presentations were very good, although aimed at the top end of GA. On the 4th George Done and I brought together at Cambridge Street some AOPA members who are involved in maintenance activities with two senior CAA staffers to discuss Part

M. George has written about that meeting elsewhere in these pages, but I think it was very useful.

ACEP met at Gatwick on the 5th – this is the group that's formulating the education programme on ATSOCAS and other issues. You should already have had your ATSOCAS CD, and later in the year you'll get another one on GPS – I've been chairing a sub-group looking at how best to educate pilots to the use of satnav.

On March 7th I attended the Members Working Group meeting at White Waltham, chaired by Mike Cross in the absence of Chris Royle; once again it was very positive. Things are moving ahead with the Mentoring Scheme and the group's suggestions on the website are being worked on. On the 9th I welcomed the CAA to the AOPA offices to discuss the case of an AOPA member accused of infringing controlled airspace, the London TMA. More on that later. I'm also trying to help a member who's been accused of infringing an exclusion zone around a French nuclear power station. Be aware that there's a lot of them, and they're worth avoiding if only because they're sometimes ringed with SAM missiles...

On the 11th I departed for Washington with Michael Erb, managing director of AOPA Germany, who is my deputy VP for IAOPA Europe. We had scheduled a series of meetings with AOPA US personnel, including the new president Craig Fuller and his senior staff, and with Steve Brown, a former IAOPA general secretary who is now a senior VP with the NBAA. These people have a special interest in EASA because what the Europeans do will ultimately put ideas into their own legislators' heads, but they've got the resources to head problems off at the pass.

Martin Robinson

Mode S – change of heart?

The CAA is believed to be ready to announce that it will not after all be mandating the carriage of Mode-S transponders in all UK airspace. What has brought about this change of heart is unclear, although it is suspected that budget constraints mean the military will be unable to equip all their aircraft with Mode S, which rather defeats the point.

Mode-S is likely, however, to be increasingly mandated across Europe, so if you're getting a new transponder, make sure it's Mode S.

More details will be published as they become available.

In the dark on ATSOCAS?

If you haven't received an ATSOCAS CD from the CAA, get on to them now and ask for your copy. The CDs were sent out to all PPLs and NPPLs earlier this year but some 1,000 have been returned by the postal service, meaning the CAA probably hasn't got an up to date address for you. If you are a UK resident PPL with a current medical or an NPPL holder and you haven't had the CD, email

fclweb@caa.co.uk with your address.

AOPA has been involved in the long and exhaustive industry consultation that has led to the new system, and a great deal of effort has been expended teaching civil and military

controllers – for the first time, procedures are identical for both – the new tricks. Now it's your turn.

ATSOCAS is not an update of existing air traffic control procedures outside controlled airspace but a completely new approach designed to simplify the service and reduce pilot confusion over what they're getting. Radar Advisory and Radar Information services are no more. Instead, there are four types of service in Class F and G airspace:

Under the **Basic Service**, traffic avoidance is the sole responsibility of the pilot, while the controller will pass potentially helpful information such as weather, serviceability of nav aids and conditions at airfields.

Next level up is the **Procedural Service**. As with the Basic Service, the controller probably hasn't got you on radar, but he will give 'deconfliction' advice about other traffic

that he is talking to. Again, avoidance is the pilot's responsibility.

Then there's **Traffic Service**, under which you'll get surveillance-derived information from the controller on potentially conflicting traffic. You won't get any advice on avoidance, which remains the pilot's responsibility. The controller may also pass headings or levels for traffic sequencing.

Finally there's the **Deconfliction Service**,

where the controller provides the pilot with traffic information and advice on avoidance of other aircraft (which remains the pilot's responsibility). You may also get headings or levels for sequencing purposes.

It's up to the pilot to decide which service he or she wants; if you go for Deconfliction every time, you might find yourself being vectored hither and yon to avoid every Canada Goose within ten miles of track. There's much more on the CD, and if you don't understand it yet – the system came in on March 12th – you can download the information from the ASI website at www.airspacesafety.com. ■



Pedants' corner

The CAA is claiming that any flight made in order to demonstrate an aircraft over 910kg to a potential purchaser is a public transport flight and can only be carried out on an AOC, with an AOC crew.

Taken to its logical (the term is used loosely) conclusion, that means that if somebody wants to buy your Cherokee (980kg) you couldn't demonstrate it for them without doing so on an AOC, with a commercial pilot. If a new member wanted to join a group on such an aircraft, the same would theoretically apply.

The situation came to light when an AOPA member who is involved with an executive charter business contacted the CAA to return their AOC because they were selling their aircraft, a small business jet. The CAA told him that under Article 157/7 of the ANO, a potential sale constituted a "valuable consideration", so effectively he couldn't surrender the AOC until after the sale had been completed because the aircraft could not otherwise be demonstrated to a potential buyer. This, he was told, applies to all aircraft over 910kg.

AOPA believes this is a ridiculous interpretation of the rules and has approached the CAA to have the situation clarified. Chief Executive Martin Robinson says: "Quite apart from the silliness of it, there are so many ways to circumvent it that it must bring the law into disrepute. Privately some CAA personnel have told me they fully agree and the situation is untenable, so I hope to have the ruling rescinded in this case.

"The worrying thing is that there is a deep vein of pedantry running through some sections of the CAA, and while we might find it funny, it's not a joke for the pilots and owners who find this stuff in their post."

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Part M – the CAA is listening

A most constructive meeting was held in early March in the AOPA office in order to discuss progress and current difficulties with the establishment of Part M, the EASA maintenance regime that all certificated aeroplanes must abide by. Six people

contributed, two from the GA maintenance industry, two senior personnel from the CAA on the maintenance and airworthiness standards activity, and George Done and Martin Robinson from AOPA representing pilot owners. Problems have arisen because Part M was devised with large commercial air

transport aircraft in mind, and application to GA aircraft appeared 'heavy' and disproportionate. The promised Part M 'Lite' from EASA never materialised.

Roger Kimbell, of J & J Aircraft Services at Sibson and a long standing supporter of AOPA, and John Eagles, of Air Stratus Ltd at Oaksey Park and Chairman of the Technical Committee of the Association of Licensed Aircraft Engineers (ALAE), were able, without undue formality, to raise the problems that have to be addressed by maintainers in applying for Subparts F and G of Part M that refer to the actual engineering maintenance activity, and the administration necessary involved in the

aircraft airworthiness record keeping, respectively. Specific problems raised concerned aircraft groupings by type, which currently follows a rather random pattern (e.g. approvals can be given for just one specified type such as a PA28-140, or, with almost complete generalisation, 'all Piper single engine aircraft'). This leads on to when a variation to the approval is requested, e.g. to add another type, the fee charged of £1,380 for the Subpart F and the same again for a Subpart G (one organisation could have both approvals) may be okay for a commercial airline adding a Boeing 777 to the list, but is quite disproportionate when the applicant is a GA aircraft maintainer. Another reported problem is the perceived difference in standards applied up and down the country by CAA Surveyors, who vet the Subpart F and G applicants.

The two CAA participants welcomed the opportunity to hear about the problems in detail from the horse's mouth, so to speak, and promised, in their senior roles, to do what could be done to improve the situation as soon as reasonably possible. Part M has been a huge distraction for maintainers, who have, and have had, to find time (unpaid) and money to put the necessary systems in place. Owners of certificated aircraft have received letters from the CAA highlighting the requirements of the new regime, and should be aware of the need to find a Subpart G organisation (CAMO, or Continuing Airworthiness Organisation) if their current maintainer has not applied for approval. Owners now under the care of a CAMO have generally had to cough up of the order of £1000 per aircraft to cover the setting up and continuing costs of this new administrative requirement.

The constructive nature of the meeting, and the receptiveness of the CAA to engage with the problems as presented, has provided motivation to organise similar meetings on a quarterly basis, until the job of sorting out the difficulties is complete. – *George Done* ■



AOPA supports Aero Expo

AOPA is once again lending support to Aero Expo, to be held at Wycombe Air Park on June 12th, 13th and 14th this year.

If you plan to fly into WAP you need to register on the Aero Expo website (www.expo.aero) in good time – slot numbers are limited and some of the best ones have already been taken. There's a landing fee of £10 for singles and £20 for multi-engined aircraft, but entry to the show is free for fly-in pilots and their passengers.

The Queen's Birthday flypast on Saturday June 13th will establish restricted airspace to the north of the airfield, so be sure to check the notams. Gliding at Wycombe has been suspended for the show.

Aero Expo organiser Paddy Casey says the show is shaping up extremely well despite the

financial downturn. "We've signed up more than a hundred exhibitors, and we're particularly please to incorporate Heliexpo Europe – a dedicated helicopter section – this year. We've got every conceivable aspect of general aviation on show. If you want to learn to fly, this is the place to come to find out how. If you're already a pilot, whatever your level of experience there's something for you here. We'll have the latest aircraft available – light aircraft, pistons and turboprops, gliders and powered gliders, engines, propellers, avionics, accessories, spare parts, maintenance, safety, fuel, oils, tyres, flight training schools, simulators, pilot supplies, insurance – you name it, it's here."



Apart from British exhibitors, companies from France, the USA, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, and even New Zealand have booked stands.

If you're an AOPA member, how about volunteering to help

man the AOPA stand for an hour or two on one of the show's days? As an exhibitor you'd save an entry fee. Contact mandy@aopa.co.uk if you can help. ■

Channel Islands email

Calling all Channel Islands members; Charles Strasser only has a relatively small percentage of the AOPA CI region members' email addresses on his list, so if you haven't had any updates from him recently, please send your contact email to strasser@propilots.net. Charles, AOPA's Channel Islands chairman, now sends out monthly email bulletins as well as his survey of fuel prices and other pertinent information.



Bears in the air

The Association of Chief Police Officers has begun the process of training 900 police officers across the country specifically to deal with general aviation as part of anti-terrorist operations, and AOPA is closely involved in their education plan. At the first training seminar, at RAF Henlow, AOPA's chief executive Martin Robinson and Terry Yeomans of the BBGA gave lectures to policemen on what GA is and how it operates.

There are positive and negative aspects to the plans. On the plus side, airfields, flying clubs and pilots will be able to get to know their local GA officer, and he or she should eventually be able to speak the language of the GA industry. The police have always been keen to co-opt pilots as their 'eyes and ears' at airfields, and having a single point of contact should make life easier for everyone.

On the negative side, police officers say they may be stopping pilots at random under Prevention of Terrorism legislation and searching aircraft without first being required to have a well-founded suspicion that someone's up to no good. Initially the police said they intended to partially dismantle aircraft during searches, but at the seminar Robinson warned that they would be breaking the law if they took so much as a screwdriver to an aircraft. He urged that such searches be made only where there were genuine grounds for suspicion – otherwise pilots would be alienated and the process would become counter-productive.

"Their main concern is money-laundering for terrorist purposes," Robinson said. "While experience tends to indicate that people who move large amounts of cash clandestinely do so in the sort of quantities that rule out GA as a carrier, a reasonable-sized briefcase could hold quite a bit of money, so the police believe general aviation has become an issue for them. But there was a lot of positive feedback at the seminar from Special Branch and the police, and they understand the issues we have.

"Unfortunately they only have the resources to stage one-day training courses so there's a limit on what they'll learn. We've suggested that their first step should be to make themselves known around their local airfields, so the education process can continue. But don't be surprised if your plane is targeted for a search; and give us a call if you need help, because the police are using AOPA as a focal point on this." ■



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EASA undermines 'third country' licences

Part of IAOPA's response to the EASA consultation on flight crew licensing takes issue with proposed requirements which would make it virtually impossible to fly here on a third-country licence.

IAOPA's response to the EASA Notice of Proposed Amendment (NPA) says: "Regulation (EC) No 216/2008 (the Basic Regulations),



Article 7, provides for "acceptance of licences and medical certificates issued by or on behalf of, a third country for pilots of third country aircraft that are being used by an operator established or residing in the Community". However, the provisions of Article 12 of that document make it clear that

universal acceptance of a non-member State's certificates is not possible without a bilateral agreement. Further, the NPA (Annex III) suggests that a true act of *acceptance* is not really possible for a private pilot licence holder from outside the Community. This is because the Annex requires a complete skill test, an air law and human performance exam, fulfillment of EASA type and class rating experience requirements, a Class 2 ICAO medical certificate and at least 100 hrs time in the aircraft category for the privileges sought. These requirements do not constitute acceptance, rather they are a total re-testing, equivalent to the initial issuance of a pilot licence.

All of the above requirements indicate that the concept of acceptance in the spirit and

intent of ICAO Annex 1 is not possible under the proposed rules. While ICAO provides no detailed guidance regarding this process, many States require just the presentation of a current pilot licence and medical certificate, and perhaps a brief air law examination for the issuance of a new State certificate. Under the proposed rules, a near-complete re-issuance of the PPL licence will be required for third country pilots.

This acceptance process will impact thousands of pilots who either operate under a foreign pilot licence or will request acceptance of a foreign licence. Some estimates to accomplish this procedure exceed €1000 per person. States, such as Malta, do not issue their own licences, relying on other ICAO signatory States to issue them. This means that Maltese airmen must effectively be completely re-tested for a private pilot certificate to be able to enjoy the piloting privileges they have enjoyed for many years."

In its comments on the issue, IAOPA says:

- If a State has issued a licence and medical in accordance with ICAO Annex 1, that licence should be sufficiently similar to the accepting State's requirements (EASA) to preclude the excessive procedures cited in Annex III.
- This will be a very expensive and time-consuming process. In fact, the requirements are so onerous as to discourage pilots from attempting acceptance. Furthermore, it is doubtful that

sufficient flight training organisations and flight instructors exist to effectively recertify thousands of pilots affected by this proposal in a timely manner.

- The issue of validating a foreign private pilot's licence on a temporary basis to enable a pilot to act as pilot in command of a European State registered aircraft is apparently not mentioned in this NPA. If that is true the validation standards and process will be left up to the member States' aviation authorities which would seem to be at odds with the intent of the proposed extensive acceptance process.
- The only possible relief for this acceptance process appears to be a bilateral agreement between EASA States and non-EASA States. If every non-EASA State sought pilot licensing equivalence bilaterals, the time and cost involved in generating and approving these agreements would be prohibitive. Therefore, the bilateral process for pilot licence acceptance is impractical, leaving only the time-consuming and expensive EASA proposed acceptance process.
- The regulatory impact assessment for the FCL proposal series, NPA 2008-22f, provides a large number of "statistics" regarding civil aviation in Europe to be used in justifying the actions taken in the various FCL NPA series. However, many of the numbers of airmen, aircraft, hours flown and accidents are based on unfounded statistical inference, extrapolations and outright estimates. Given the significant impact that this series of proposals will have on the general aviation community it is difficult to justify them on the basis of flawed statistics. IAOPA and other organisations have urged the European Commission to gather accurate and timely statistics regarding general aviation prior to significant regulatory actions are taken; this has apparently not yet been accomplished. ICAO provides that States should recognise each other's qualifications, provided they are satisfied they are at least equivalent to their own. IAOPA says: "The meaning and intent is clear: ICAO standards and recommended practices, agreed to by all signatory States, are designed to facilitate international air transportation among signatories. EASA is apparently ignoring this concept with its draconian acceptance process. "The real problem with these issues may lie with the basic regulations stated in EC 216/2008. However, the net effect on international civil aviation, regardless of root cause, is negative and corrosive. Bilateral agreements among States and their supra-national organisations as an alternative to meeting the additional acceptance requirements proposed in this NPA are time-consuming, unnecessary and serve to further weaken the utility of the ICAO Convention. The willful departure from the treaty that has bound civil aviation for more than 60 years has and will continue to vitiate an effective international accord. "IAOPA strongly opposes the foreign private pilot licence acceptance process proposed in this NPA. Rather, a valid third-country private pilot licence should be readily 'accepted' by EU State authorities with few additional requirements. ■

Dutch ELT mandate

The Dutch have mandated the carriage of fixed ELTs in all aircraft coming through their airspace, which taken together with their stance on Mode-S – compulsory above 1200 feet – makes Holland one of the least GA-friendly countries in Europe.

AOPA UK's Mike Cross has written to the Dutch authorities asking why, when PLBs are acceptable in most countries, they are not acceptable in Holland. Definitions of PLBs in ICAO annexes 6 and 10 are different – where Annex 6 lumps them with ELTs, Annex 10 fails to do so – but the Dutch are adamant that only a fixed ELT which contains the 24-bit address belonging to the aircraft in which it is installed will do.

Their AIC on the topic says: 'PLBs are no ELT, so they are no alternative, especially not for aeroplanes and helicopters with an ELT mandate. A PLB will not be activated by impact and is not crash-proof. Moreover in the databases of rescue co-ordination centre (RCC) there is no connection between an aircraft with information about the maximum number of occupants and the specifications and registration of the aircraft.'

In his letter, Mike Cross points out the true situation regarding registration. "

"PLBs are required to be registered with the appropriate Rescue Coordination Centres.

Registration includes contact details of a responsible person. Should it be activated the RCCs have all of the information they need to find out what the wearer is likely to be doing."

At the moment ICAO simply recommends use of a fixed ELT, as opposed to mandating it, so states can choose whether or not they comply. Different European countries take different standpoints. The French issued AIC A 10/08 in May last year, which includes "2.11.2.1 From 1st January 2009, all aeroplanes and helicopters shall be equipped with at least one ELT of any type, or failing that, one PLB with built-in GNSS receiver, that received a COSPAS/SARSAT type approval number, except for series 700 of Cospas-Sarsat numbers identifying the special-use beacons not meeting all the technical requirements and all the tests specified by Cospas-Sarsat."

For many years IAOPA has been opposing ICAO's demands for compulsory fixed ELTs because they don't work. In-service experience shows that they are often broken in crashes, and if they are activated at all their signals are masked by terrain. IAOPA's representative at ICAO, Frank Hoffman, gave ICAO members a presentation showing that in the most recent major crash on their doorstep, that of an Air France A340 at Toronto in 2005, none of the three independent ELTs on the aircraft worked.

AOPA prefers PLBs and urges members to buy the best PLB they can afford. If they go down in the water, the signal stays with the pilot or passenger, not the aircraft. The CAA is not yet prepared to mandate ELTs because not all aircraft can fit them, but it's likely that other countries will increasingly comply with ICAO recommendations on carrying such beacons. There are no ICAO-approved PLBs, so it's possible that a ruling on ELTs will effectively make them unusable after 2012. The debate continues. ■

Aero bigger than ever

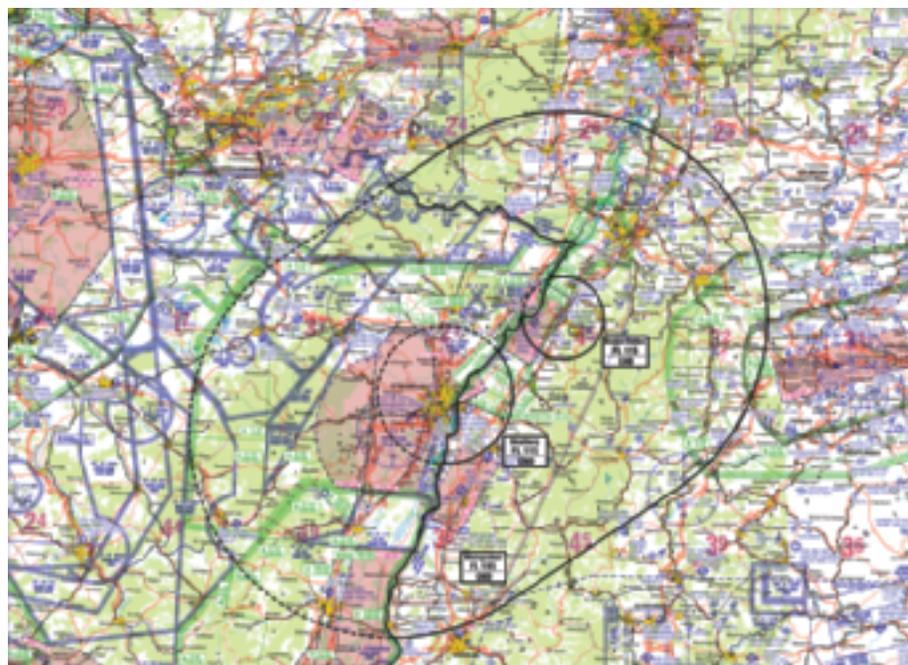
Pilots flying to Aero Friedrichshafen must beware of a huge restricted area covering a large swathe of eastern France and south west Germany from April 1st to April 4th in order to 'protect' the NATO summit in Baden-Baden and Strasbourg.

The restricted area is massive, 90nm by 60nm, and falls under the jurisdiction of both France and Germany, which complicates the pilot's job of finding out where it begins and ends and what exemptions are available. AOPA-Germany has made attempts to shrink the size of the area but the German authorities have declined to amend it.

For details of the area, see the German DFS website http://www.dfs.de/dfs/internet_2008/module/pilots_and_operations/englisch/pilots_and_operations/news/airspace/ and click on 'Airspace protection measures for the NATO summit from 1 Apr 2009 until 4 Apr 2009'. You can download maps of the area as PDFs.

The German authorities are obviously aware that the NATO summit coincides with Aero

Below: a restricted area 60nm by 90nm bars the way to Friedrichshafen



Expo and ask that pilots flying to Friedrichshafen be particularly aware of the restrictions. The DFS says: All pilots who want to conduct flights in the area where the airspace protection measures are in place are asked to note the following: 1. Prior to your flight, please check the notams. You can do this by calling the AIS-C (tel. +49 (0)69 78072-500). 2. Once an hour, the flight information service will broadcast the latest information concerning the activation of the areas. For this reason, please maintain listening watch on the FIS frequencies. 3. Switch on your Mode S transponder. You may then receive information relevant to your flight."

To fly in to Bodensee-Airport at Friedrichshafen for Aero you need prior permission, which is available online – see www.aero.fly-away.de

Some 570 exhibitors are attending Aero, which covers every conceivable facet of general aviation from ultralights and models to business jets, gyrocopters helicopters – the latter being heavily featured for the first time. Helicopters have been given their own exhibition hall. Experts will be on hand to tell

the uninitiated how helicopters fly, and there's an elaborate simulator designed to test your motor functions.

Aero will this year fill ten halls, compared with seven in 2007. Project manager Thomas Grunewald says they've had a strong increase in interest from eastern Europe, notably the Czech Republic, while despite the economic situation the United States has realised the potential for the European market to pick up some of the slack that's developed at home.

The list of speakers includes the new Eurocontrol Director General David McMillan, Dr. Norbert Lohl, Certification Director of EASA, the newly elected president of AOPA and IAOPA, Craig Fuller, and Alan Klapmeier of Cirrus and the US General Aviation Manufacturers Association GAMA.

The show lays great stress on environmental flying, with an 'E-flight Expo' looking at aircraft with electric motors, new solar technology, advances in battery technology and innovative propulsion concepts.

From this year, Aero becomes an annual rather than a biennial event. ■

Young pilots' tour of France

AOPA normally receives an invitation on alternate years to nominate one young pilot who is an AOPA member to take part in the prestigious Young Pilots' Tour of France over 10 days in mid July.

Applicants for the Tour must be under 23 at the beginning of 2009, must provide the aeroplane (from their club or other source) and get to and from the start and finish points at their own expense.

However, the successful applicant will have his or her expenses – such as board and lodging, fuel, oil and aviation charges paid during the Tour.

Applicants are called in April on alternate years, but any young member interested should apply to AOPA as soon as possible. Applicants will be dealt with on a 'first come first served' basis.

In return for being nominated to participate in the Tour, the successful applicant is respectfully requested to provide a short article for *General Aviation* with appropriate photographs if possible.

We have yet to receive confirmation from the *Fédération Française Aéronautique (FFA)* that they will be holding a Tour this year, but we are hopeful that it will be going ahead as scheduled.

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What price recession?

*Flying clubs and aircraft sales outfits in the GA sector are as busy as ever, but there are some bargains to be had, as **Pat Malone** reports*

Visitors to White Waltham on March 7th for the AOPA Members Working Group meeting were surprised and gratified by the fact that you could hardly get to the bar for customers, the zone was as busy as a hive of bees, and as AOPA chairman George Done says in his column on page 4, the flying club had booked 14 trial lessons for the day.

Those who make it their business to test the temperature of the GA industry have been waiting with some trepidation for the flying season to start and are pleasantly surprised at the level of activity that has been maintained despite implosion in the financial markets. Sales are brisk, but with the pound having tanked against the dollar and the euro, many more aircraft are leaving the country than are coming in. But for those who are financing purchases, capital is still available, albeit at higher rates than last year, and for reasons unknown, there seem to be more students around this spring than last.

Owners who bought an American aircraft like the Cirrus or the Robinson in the past couple of years are finding that if they sell, they can almost make their money back in sterling terms because of the exchange rate difference. In the case of helicopters, there are very few good low-hours Robinson R44s left for sale in the UK because of strong interest from foreign buyers. Sean Anderson Brown of Wellesbourne-based HeliAir says that of the 22 second-hand Robinsons he has sold since last summer, 17 went abroad, in addition to almost all of the 11 new Robinsons he sold in the same period. Anderson-Brown says: "You simply can't get helicopters less than three years old and in good condition for sale abroad. I think I've just bought one of the last ones, and it's leaving the country."

Graham Potter, who sells for Patriot Aviation

at Cranfield, says he's circularising owners asking if they want to sell and has foreign buyers lined up for good R44s. Mark Souster of London Helicopter Centres has exported half a dozen aircraft in the last six weeks, and has more in the pipeline.

The situation is similar with fixed-wing aircraft, particularly Cirrus SR22s and SR20s which have been finding a ready market, particularly in Europe. Aircraft sales expert Derrick Ings says there seems to be a ready market for all sorts of GA aircraft in eastern Europe, despite the financial straits some of the former Eastern Bloc countries are finding themselves in.

"At the beginning of the year I didn't expect to sell many aircraft in the first months of 2009, but I've been pleasantly surprised by the level of inquiries and sales," Derrick Ings says. "Prices are firming and even rising slightly as the supply of aircraft diminishes. There are still some bargains to be had, but they are few and far between.

"There are owners who need to sell, and in the main they are pricing their aircraft realistically and the market is moving. Those who are cash-rich and comfortable have been buying bargain aircraft, but the shortage of good aircraft is beginning to make itself felt."

New and used American or European aircraft coming into the UK are small in number because of the exchange rate, which has worked in our favour for several years but is now a drag on the industry. As an example, a fully-loaded Robinson R44 that would have cost £245,000 a year ago would cost £313,000 today, on the exchange rate alone.

Weak pound means R44s and SR22s are finding a ready market abroad



A buyer who needed to raise a \$100,000 deposit would have had to find £50,000 in June 2008; today the same deposit would cost him £71,000. For buyers of Citation CJ2s and 3s, which start at \$3 million, that's an enormous new challenge.

The Irish market has been a lot harder hit than the UK. There, a lot of new money got into general aviation recently, not really knowing the facts of GA life. A great deal of property money went into aircraft, particularly helicopters, and when the Irish property market went over the weir late last year, there was a scramble to sell. HeliAir alone took 26 Irish Robinsons onto its books in the month of November alone.

Finance

As far as aircraft finance is concerned, there is lending going on but the landscape has changed. The number of players at the top end is contracting sharply – leasing companies like GE and AIG have got themselves into horrible trouble – and even in the sub-\$10 million market some companies have retired hurt. In particular, the banks in which the US or UK governments have taken a stake and who have large amounts of toxic debt have adopted much stricter credit criteria.

Ironically, the fact that there are fewer lenders in the field has meant that those who remain are busier than ever. Some are picking up business from owners who ordered aircraft in the belief that they had finance in place, only to have their bank pull the rug. Other owners find themselves under pressure from their banks to reduce their home mortgage when it comes up for renegotiation and are refinancing their aircraft in order to cut more expensive mortgage borrowings.

The lenders who seem to be in the best position are the smaller independent specialists. One of the better-known, Close Brothers Aviation Finance, is a quoted company and recently posted impressive half-year results. These are the sort of companies who still look on aircraft as an asset, rather than simply asking how much cash you've got. But wherever you go for money, you'll find it costs more. Banks are lending less, and the price has gone up. ■

Members Working Group issues

The AOPA Members Working Group meeting at White Waltham in March covered a wide range of topics from the AOPA website to the Mentoring Scheme, with some progress being made on all fronts. In the absence of Chris Royle, Mike Cross chaired the meeting.

We couldn't get further with Wings Scheme proposals because the Instructors Committee meeting at which they were to have been discussed was snowed off, so that'll come up again next time. Website requirements are to be discussed separately by a sub-group comprising Timothy Nathan,

Greg Dolph and Martin Robinson.

The Mentoring Scheme was discussed at length – a separate story appears in these pages, so if you want to participate in this as a mentor, we hope you'll be able to come to White Waltham on April 18th.

We're looking for members to help man the AOPA stands at Aero Expo and at the LAA Rally, so if you're going there, why not volunteer to spend an hour or so with us? Aero Expo is at Booker from June 12th to 14th, the LAA Rally at Sywell from September 4th to 6th. Contact mandy@aopa.co.uk if you can pitch in.

AOPA will also be at the Duxford Safety Bonus Day on April 11th, so come and see us if you're visiting that laudable event. (See 'Briefings' for details.)

Martin Robinson gave the group a run-down on the situation with Mode S, with ATSOCS and with ACEP, the education programme on airspace use. He explained the Association of Chief Police Officers' plan to teach policemen how GA operates – see separate story in these pages. There was a long discussion of the proposed Stansted Mandatory Transponder Zone, which Martin Robinson characterised as an effective way of extending controlled airspace on the cheap – NATS would not have to put any controller resources into it. "Stansted should be honest and say they want more Class D airspace and are prepared to put

Airfield reps roster builds

A network of 24 AOPA area representatives has now been set up, and AOPA member Andy Rehorn, who has taken responsibility for the area reps, has had contacts from more than a dozen who are keen to help at their airfields. Bournemouth is the latest addition, and airfields from Bodmin in Cornwall to Fife in Scotland now have a local AOPA 'point of contact' to help facilitate a two-way exchange of information between AOPA and pilots.

The idea, which came from the AOPA Members Working Group, is that local representatives can disseminate AOPA information while giving pilots a direct line into AOPA and providing early warning of issues that threaten airfields or clubs – information which often arrives when it's almost too late. In recent times Andy has been overwhelmed with work because he's been studying for his commercial exams – now successfully

completed – and he is able to devote more time to the project.

At the moment each local representative looks after a notice board carrying AOPA material from application forms to a monthly news bulletin. Experience will show how best the airfield reps should be used, but already they have signed up a number of new AOPA members.

Our most northerly rep at the moment is Alan Laing, from Fife Flying Club at Glenrothes, a beautiful field not far north of Edinburgh. Alan has given talks to the Club about what AOPA is and why it needs and deserves pilots' support, and plus the point in every newsletter he produces for the Club.

Alan was sidelined from flying by a transient medical complaint and didn't get into the air again until the advent of the NPPL, which was proposed and written by AOPA. Now he has

earned his AOPA Silver Wings. At Fife, he has been instrumental in establishing projects designed to keep people flying, notably a 'buddy system' which teams low-time pilots or students up with experienced men and women to take on more challenging flights. This is a local version of AOPA's Mentoring Scheme, which is in the process of being set up nationwide.

Alan says: "We had a club night in October and I did a ten-minute talk on AOPA, and there was a lot of interest - I don't know if we got any new members out of it, but at least a few people came up and spoke to me afterwards."

Thanks to Alan and people like him, Fife Flying Club is thriving and provides new challenges for its members on a regular basis. Alan's newsletter can be read online – see www.fifeflyingclub.co.uk.

If you'd be interested in being the AOPA representative for your airfield or region, contact Andy Rehorn via andy.rehorn@gmail.com. – Pat Malone (Bodmin AOPA rep) ■



Time to join the partisans?

As the burden of EASA regulation builds, the question is being asked: at what point does regulation become so onerous that it is widely ignored, compromising safety?

It would be a disaster if GA in Europe were to follow the path of general aviation in Russia, where what the Russians call 'partisan flying' is a major problem. In Russia, the burden of regulation is great, a hangover from the days of Soviet bureaucracy which created such sclerosis in society that nothing functioned efficiently. In addition, the number of 'authority figures' who can prevent you from flying is extraordinary. Most airport officials, police officers, even the met man can refuse you permission to fly. A Russian GA pilot says: "Bad forecast can stop you from getting a permission for takeoff. And forecast is almost always bad – just out of precaution they, for example, throw in thunderstorm with PROB30, even if current METAR is CAVOK."

It's difficult to gauge the extent of the partisan flying problem because obviously there are no statistics. "All the information is on anecdote level or personal experiences," says our Russian source. "The further from Moscow you go the more people ignore the rules and get away with it. But in this case they are completely on their own, without any help from ATC or weather services and so on, with obvious impact on safety. Insurance also becomes a problem."

Not too many airports are sufficiently accommodating to allow partisan flying, which



means helicopters have become increasingly popular. More than 100 Robinsons have been sold in Russia in the past three years. Our Russian pilot says: "People have been buying R44s in quantities, so you can takeoff and land anywhere without dependency on airports."

"If you fly fixed wing, and you can bypass airport authorities or find somewhere to take off,

you are usually okay. ATC in general don't care, even if they see you on a primary radar. If you don't do things like violating prohibited or restricted airspace, you are okay.

"People do get caught, however. I am aware of such cases only when they do really stupid things, like flying over president's residence – and in a prohibited airspace – or land at big airport without permission and so on. These things have been done.

"I'm not aware of any near misses having happened where partisan flying has been a factor. Perhaps even the opposite is true. If you fly officially under ATC control (and even VFR flight must be controlled) you are supposed to be on a low altitude airway (MVL), which in my opinion increases collision hazard. If you don't care about the rules and fly 'direct', what are the chances you'd meet anybody over a vast space like Russia?"

The fact that Russian GA is tiny reflects both the fact that it didn't exist 20 years ago, and the fact that the regulatory boot stamps hard on its neck – but there are always people who will fly, whatever the obstacles. EASA should be aware that everybody has their breaking point, but not everybody will go quietly away.



in the resources to serve it and to allow access," he said. "The proposed TMZ would do nothing to improve the safety of VFR traffic."

There had been no regulatory impact assessment, he said, of the effect on such airfields as North Weald, Audley End, Andrewsfield, High Easter, Rayne and Wethersfield.

Members considered that in part, the high number of infringements around Stansted was due to the fact that Stansted was the least helpful air traffic control unit anyone could think of, and many pilots passing the zone had long since given up trying to get any sort of service from Stansted.

At the same time, Martin Robinson said, most of the infringements he dealt with were

down to poor pre-flight planning, and it was up to GA to raise its game in this regard. "We must do more to drive infringements down," he said. "We should all be telling pilots that if they believe they've inadvertently got into controlled airspace, get onto 121.5 straight away."

Progress with responses to EASA-FCL and EASA-OPS was discussed; EASA accepted they could not deal with the 14,000 responses they've had to EASA-FCL in the time available, so they've lengthened the response time but kept to the implementation deadline, which Martin Robinson said was wrong-headed. Rushing these things led to bad law, and we'd had enough of that out of EASA already. The priorities must be safety and understandable regulation, and

timetables should not be sacrosanct.

IAOPA is petitioning ICAO over the rescue and fire-fighting requirements laid out in Annex 14, which applies to all aerodromes; it was important, Martin said, to get ICAO to adjust its requirements to free up states to make decisions they want.

Finally, AOPA chairman Prof George Done, who deals with engineering issues on members behalf, gave an update on Part M, and a meeting arranged by AOPA at which engineers could put their concerns direct to the CAA – George has written a brief story about this meeting elsewhere in these pages.

The Group agreed to meet again at White Waltham on April 18th; if you're a member and you want to attend, please notify mandy@aopa.co.uk beforehand. ■