

Letters to the Editor

IMC v EIR

Sir,

I refer to the article 'IMC – now it's down to the CAA' (*General Aviation*, October).

I get the feeling that EASA does not understand what risk assessment is all about. They are prepared to give pilots a rating that will allow them to fly in IMC for the en-route section of the journey but not allow them to do an instrument approach at the end. What is suggested is that the take-off must be in VMC, then transition to IMC for the en-route section of the flight, and that their destination forecast is that they will get there in IMC for the landing. They do not appear to understand that anything may happen on such a flight that necessitates an immediate change of plan and that one needs to land where the conditions en-route require an instrument approach.

Of course there is a safe legal answer to



that problem. To complete any flight that will involve the en-route being in IMC the forecast must be such that the departure and destination is in VMC and that although the en-route is flown in IMC the cloud base is such that a descent can be made at any point in the journey to VMC conditions without breaching the IFR conditions of height above ground or obstacles within the designated area. In other words the whole of the flight could be conducted in VMC below cloud. So what's the use of such a rating?

I am a pilot that remembers the early days of the IMC rating when we were allowed to make an instrument approach as long as it was not an approach to an airfield in a Section 36 Special Rules Zone. We could fly IMC in the Special Rules Area but not the Zone. Being based at Leicester both East Midlands and Birmingham were out of bounds for a real

ILS in IMC. I believe the nearest airfield not being in a Special Rules Zone with ILS facilities was Newcastle! The nearest place at the time for any form of real instrument approach was the NDB at Coventry, or subject to their being open, a PAR at RAF Cottesmore.

I remember an incident when aircraft were flying at Leicester and a sudden roll of cloud appeared, and within minutes the airfield was completely IMC. (I had never seen the like of it before, or since). The pilots requested a landing at East Midlands and were informed that whilst they would not be prevented from making an IMC approach the facts would have to be reported to the CAA. They got down some other way!

Fortunately the change to D airspace changed all that.

I note that the article states that some emergency instrument approach training is being introduced into the syllabus, but what use is that if pilots cannot continue to use that skill and maintain a satisfactory standard?

In reality I feel that the EASA proposal is flawed and should not be introduced in Great Britain, but that the present IMC rating is kept in place, not only for existing holders but also for new applicants. What name is given to it is immaterial; the basic rating facilities should be retained.

Gort Measey

Future shock

Sir,

I have read Nick Wilcock's article on NPPL and LAPL in your last edition with interest and appreciate his efforts to spell out the latest developments.

I assume his comment that instructors and examiners should get into the books to provide a service to members was written tongue in cheek.

As I understand it, private pilots may be able to operate in this country with up to six different types of licence, but this isn't yet certain.

We may or may not be able to continue to instruct students on the IMC rating but we don't yet know for how long and whether a grandfather clause will be permitted.

LAPL is coming soon but will I be able to instruct on it with a PPL or do I have to keep my professional licence current?

What do I advise my member who is flying on a Medical Declaration to do after 8 April?

I look forward to your next magazine in the hope that someone will have discovered the future.

**John Preece
Cambridge**

The advice for instructors to 'get into the books' is merely a plea for them to keep up to date with freely available information

published in AICs, on the CAA website and shortly in CAP804, the forthcoming replacement for LASORS. AOPA will of course keep the www.aopa.co.uk website news page updated with pertinent information as soon as it becomes available, but instructors and examiners should really be keeping themselves up to speed as well, so that they can assist with answering members' queries. Bad weather for flying = good weather for study!

Yes, there will indeed by half a dozen different private licences with differing requirements during the transition from the present system to the joys of Eurocracy.

The CAA is currently formulating a conversion report to enable FIs with the 'no applied instrument' restriction removed to continue to instruct for the IMC rating.

A PPL/FI will be able to instruct for the LAPL, but the original concept of the 'LAFI' has now been dropped. Thus a LAPL holder will not be able to instruct 'on' a LAPL.

Although ORS4 No.865 expires in April, the CAA has recently indicated that it will be re-issued, but for a limited period only. Hence any pilot using the exemptions of ORS4 No.865 to fly using a PPL with a Medical Declaration will need to keep a close eye on things. An NPPL holder will be able to continue to use the NPPL on EASA and non-EASA aeroplanes until Apr 2015, but thereafter the NPPL will not be acceptable for EASA aircraft. Until Apr 2105, it will be possible to convert a NPPL to a LAPL; however, we understand that there are a number of medical issues still to be fully agreed with EASA. – Nick Wilcock

Say again?

Sir,

It's good to see the pragmatic approach to the Olympic restrictions that you reported on in October's GA. I do hope that the military air traffic controllers that will be controlling movements in the restricted zone will be as clear as their busy commercial equivalents are, rather than the usual unclear transmissions we get from the military. After all, we wouldn't want any misunderstandings, so we end up seeing our taxpayers' weapons under the belly of a Eurofighter, would we?

Philip Shepherd

Letter to the CEO

Dear Martin,

May I take this opportunity to thank you personally for all the legal support you provided to me in the lead up to, as well as throughout and on completion of the CAA interview. I can quite honestly say that without you I don't know which way I would have resorted to clear my name. I am pleased that I have good friends to rely

on, namely James Peplow who gave me the advice in the first instance to contact your good self.

Surely, my case is a classic example to be broadcast to the wider general aviation community and particularly to instructors and pilots working in an ever increasingly financially cutthroat market that you can never be sure when you may need to rely on the legal services of AOPA.

I would like to write more extensively about the case for other AOPA members to read and pass on to other pilots who may be deliberating before joining, to explain the benefits of belonging to the association, in particular the legal advice provided by your good self, which would no doubt have run into hundreds if not thousands of pounds, but would prefer to wait until the case is fully over.

Having been told today that I no longer face prosecution by the CAA, may I once again thank you for supporting me and taking on my case, sifting through all the paperwork and advising me appropriately. Your services are greatly appreciated and I will certainly be recommending you and AOPA to my fellow pilots and instructors and any other persons joining the aviation community.

Clive Sturdy
Southsea,
Hants

Landing of plenty

Sir,

I'm sorry mate but I just can't let Robin Hill's reply to me go unanswered:

With respect to Robert I will make the following observations which I believe demolish support for landing fees at GA airports:

- 1) I have yet to see ANY GA airport publish a profit and loss statement which supports the viability of the charges that are imposed for aircraft landing at their airports. There is NO evidence that the imposition of such fees make the airport "viable". The opposite is the case.
- 2) Robert erroneously mixes landing fees with parking and permanent fees for having an aircraft at a home base – he draws attention to boat moorings as the equivalent. He talks about a £7,000 per annum charge for a 36ft yacht. The fundamental difference is that the yacht mooring facility is a business in itself and that charge is a reflection of the cost to build the facility and to maintain it and to produce a return. I challenge the comparison between the mooring and a space on land which is an airfield. In any case I'm not talking about fixed establishment fees. I'm talking about landing fees – the two are not linked and so any comparison is a furphy. (Australianism for a work of fiction – Ed)
- 3) Parking a car is optional, there are choices – landing an aeroplane is devoid of choice – other than don't go there in the first place.
- 4) I shudder at the 'entrenched culture'! How many 'entrenched cultures' can one bring to mind that beggar belief and support? Dare I say it – Nazism was an 'entrenched culture' – did that make it right?
- 5) The real business world is awash with examples of establishments that don't charge for the privilege of walking through the front door of the shop. The large supermarket chains, the factory outlets, the shops on the high street and on the corner – none of them charge fees to enter, they instead do their utmost to get you to their establishments so that you will then open your wallet and buy something. Those establishments make money from the rentals that they collect from their tenants or from the goods and services that they provide.
- 6) Landing fees prove myopic thinking and simply fail to enable progressive business entrepreneurship.
- 7) Of course there is a vast difference between an airport that is privately owned and one that is owned by a

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For a registration form email mandy@aopa.co.uk. Please note you MUST be an AOPA member to participate in the Lottery.

Community, i.e. a Council. One is and can be a complete business enterprise, the other is a community asset which should rightly be funded by that local community from the ratepayers. It becomes a community decision to either keep the airport for all the benefits that flow from it or sell it off for housing. My considered view in the Australian scene is that the cost to an individual ratepayer to have an airport as a community asset is about (in your money) £6-10 per ratepayer per year. An infinitesimal cost when spread thus for a facility of such importance and usefulness.

Of course I'd be delighted to come to the UK to provide master classes on airport operation for the betterment of GA but alas, Britain has gouged GA for so long and so deeply with the "silver spoon" that it is impossible to afford to fly in your country or anywhere else in Europe for that matter.

My great concern is that the shocking examples that have been set in your part of the world have been adopted by a growing minority of myopic airport owners here in this country who have simply not learned anything and persist in raising fees because they think that that will increase their revenue which is decreasing because of the imposed landing fees in the first place. Crazy really.

Tony Taggart
**Moorabbin, Victoria,
Australia**

Old, bold...

Sir,

It's always a pleasure to read another of David Ogilvy's tales of aircraft of old.

I have never flown the Ercoupe but I did meet one in the air in slightly unusual circumstances in the early 1960s. I was an instructor at the Lightning Conversion Squadron based at RAF Middleton St George, now called 'Teeside Intercontinental' or something like that. We had a few other types on base including a squadron of Javelins, a couple of Meteors and a Chipmunk. By chance I was a qualified flying instructor on all these types.

The weather on the day I met the Ercoupe was not unusual for the area with 8/8 low cloud, drizzle and miserable visibility in the smelly yellow 'fog' generated by Billingham refinery. We were trying to think of ways to occupy our students when I got a call from Air Traffic to say they had somebody calling on 121.5 who was lost above cloud and short of fuel, could we help? Although we had GCA, ILS and CRDF (Cathode Ray Direction Finding) equipment we did not have any search radar and relied on TACAN and GCI radar stations for our initial approach. The lost pilot was

apparently either unable to hear or to understand the messages from ATC trying to assist. ATC said they thought the aircraft in distress was a light GA type. We hit on the idea of using the Chipmunk to intercept the distressed aircraft and lead him back to Middleton. I jumped into the Chipmunk and set off on the reciprocal bearing while climbing through the murk. Once through the stratus, and guided by bearings from ATC, I soon spotted the aircraft and recognised it as an Ercoupe apparently heading towards Norway. I closed in and approached carefully. The pilot looked very surprised when he finally spotted a Chipmunk sitting off his wingtip. I told him I would lead him back through cloud to Middleton. After a fair bit of confusion and some ragged formation flying we broke out of the murk over the approach lights.

I wonder if that pilot recalls his visit to RAF Middleton St George when we were all grounded by the weather.

What fun we had in the olden days!

John Stewart-Smith

Air racing

Sir,

It may seem grumpy and unfriendly to comment on Geoffrey Boot's otherwise excellent feature article 'Your name on the Schneider Trophy?' (*General Aviation*, February 2012) but he needs to be challenged on an incorrect statement of fact. He wrote that "the handicapped concept was first encapsulated in the famous King's Cup air race in 1932 when rules were drawn up that would allow aircraft of different performance to compete on a level playing field". I should like to refer him to the publication *Flight* of 29 December 1949 (see www.flightglobal.com) and an article by B.J. Hurren under the headline: 'The Old Firm – Air race handicappers who have made history'. The article includes the following:

"The 1914 - 1918 war ended the stick-and-string racing days and the story moves to 1920, when the Royal Aero Club assumed control of handicap racing."

The article goes on: "To remove the handicappers from the suspicion of commercial interest the Club asked the Air Ministry and Messrs Ogilvy & Partners to nominate official handicappers..." Later it states that handicappers "moved into action for the Aerial Derby of 1920".

When the first King's Cup air race was staged in 1922 there were three handicappers on duty (see *British Racing and Record-Breaking Aircraft* by Peter Lewis).

Lastly I must declare a personal interest as I started air racing in 1924 and won the 1972 British Air Racing Championship. By the by, bamboozling the

handicappers was on those days second only to winning an air race!

Frederick O. Marsh

Geoffrey Boot replies:

Having known Fred for many years I would defer to his superior knowledge of air racing and am pleased to note that he is reading AOPA's humble publication General Aviation.

Information about the early days of air racing is not easy to come by and I note that Fred's reference is Flight of 1949 but I'm sure that handicapped air racing may well have evolved before 1932. However, maybe it is just common hearsay. I do believe that the rules that we operate under nowadays were evolved and codified in 1932. Whatever the case, handicapped air racing is a fine British institution and continued almost singly in the world by the Royal Aero Club Records Racing and Rally Association.

Live issue

Sir,

I refer to the two letter in the December issue of *General Aviation* concerning 'Leaning on Props'. Would David Perry (CFI) and Ed Lennox (CFI) care to look at the AAIB 12/11 Bulletin, page 32, in which it reports on the runaway start of a Beagle Pup with no one in the cockpit and no key in the mag/starter switch! No-one should assume that a magneto is dead just because there is no one in the cockpit and the key is removed. I had a Piper twin Comanche fire up in the exact same circumstances; fortunately the fuel was off and the engine only fired very briefly without damage to anything or anyone. I realise there is a big difference between leaning on a prop and turning it over but one can lead to the other. Treat all props as 'live' and you can't go wrong.

Yours safely,

Maurice Howse

Loop the loop

Sir,

The two mysterious extra loops on the inside collar of your flying suit (*General Aviation*, February 2012) are intended to retain a flying scarf – either the bit of grey rag we were issued with, a red and white chequered one if you were a member of 56(F) Squadron (;-)) or a white silk job if you want to look like Biggles.

Indeed, the label inside my old grey 1968-issue 'Suits Flying Mk 9' states 'SCARF. The scarf should always be fitted in the loops at the back neck.' Like many things, old flying suits seem to shrink with storage over the years, so it no longer fits me!

The metal D-ring on the front is for the oxygen mask attachment when not wearing a life jacket.

Nick Wilcock ■