



Where have all the pilots gone?

New figures obtained by AOPA show that 70 per cent of PPLs are not bothering to renew their licences after five years, indicating that the dropout rate from general aviation is much higher than had been feared.

Statistics obtained by chief executive Martin Robinson from the CAA show that only 30 per cent of pilots who obtained PPLs in 2000 renewed them in 2005. While some of the missing 70 per cent may still be active but have simply not bothered to renew their



Above: flight simulation is satisfying some of those who would once have been involved in the real thing

has lapsed, it's time to quit."

At the same time, the industry must address the question of why we are driving so many people away, even once they've obtained their licences. While much of the blame must lie with regulators who create arbitrary and mindless obstacles (like the £65 five-year PPL) and who stand at every corner with their hands out, there are many clubs out there who could be more welcoming, inclusive and careful of their customers.

Expense is a factor, but it is probably overstated. Britons have never in history had more money, or the leisure time in which to spend it. More yachts and luxury cars are bought than ever before, and the increase in the number of private aircraft purchased far outstrips the PPL issue graph. But we hedge aviation about with endless rules and restrictions, making flying a chore when it ought to be an uplifting experience.

We are also battling an ever-increasing choice of leisure pursuits, and flight simulation is satisfying some of those who would once have been involved in the real thing.

The five-year figures were requested by Martin Robinson at the CAA's Finance Advisory

Committee, on which AOPA has a seat. They show that of some 2,500 PPLs issued in 2000, only about 750 renewed them in 2005.

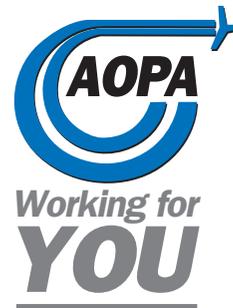
"I don't know whether the CAA cares about it, but it worries the hell out of me," he said. "It shows that the two CAA reviews of general aviation were far too rosy in their assessment of the health of general aviation."

At the same time, it has become clear that IMC rating issues are down by 50 percent on their peak, which as well as having commercial ramifications for the GA industry must have an adverse effect on safety.

*PPLs with old-style CAA licences issued before the arrival of JAR-FCL are threatened with the loss of all their grandfather rights by EASA.

AOPA has been told that EASA is going to refuse to recognise national licences, and that anyone who has to convert his or her ticket into an EASA licence will be forced to apply first for a JAR licence.

This means that a lifetime CAA licence



'We hedge aviation about with endless rules and restrictions, making flying a chore when it ought to be an uplifting experience'

Medical alert

The CAA seems finally to be waking up to the looming shortage of UK commercial pilots with the realisation that new people are not coming forward for commercial training in the numbers required to hold the line.

Sources in the CAA medical department say the number of requests for initial Class One medicals has reached a plateau, indicating that fewer people are considering an aviation career. The Class One medical is one of the first things a budding pilot seeks, because it's pointless spending your money on commercial training if you can't get one.

In another straw for the camel's back, VAT has been imposed on medicals following a European Court of Justice ruling that the UK VAT exemption for medical services was too wide.

The Court's ruling means that only medical services with the principal purpose of protecting, maintaining or restoring health should be exempt from VAT. If the purpose of a medical examination is "to enable a third party to decide a course of action" it should be subject to VAT. As the purpose of your medical is to enable the CAA to decide whether you should be allowed to fly, you pay.

The imposition of VAT took effect from May 1st.

licences, they have had more than a year, and several reminders, to do so. It is feared that the vast majority of them are lost to aviation.

The dropout rate is much higher than had previously been estimated, and AOPA has launched an emergency campaign to win some of them back. An information pack is being prepared, to be distributed by AOPA corporate members to pilots who received their PPLs five years ago, explaining exactly how they can reactivate their licences. Martin Robinson says: "Some of them may be under the misapprehension that it's difficult to get your licence back, but even if you've been out of flying for up to five years, revalidation is relatively simple. People shouldn't think that because their licence



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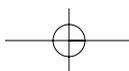
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would first have to be converted into a time-limited JAA document, forcing the holder to pay for a new licence every five years thereafter.

Not only that, but there may be a requirement to undergo some form of examination before the licence will be issued. Appendix 1 to JAR-FCL 1.005 allows that a licence can be transferred if the holder:

'Has at least 70 hours flight time in aeroplanes and demonstrate the use of radio navigation aids'. Although it has yet to be decided how this will be done, the word 'demonstrate' normally means 'testing by an examiner'.

CAA licence holders who have been able to avoid some of the burdens shouldered by JAR licence holders will be less than happy at the prospect. Apart from the additional expense of paying for a new licence, it introduces a new offence that didn't previously exist, but which could prove costly – flying with an out of date licence. The direct penalties may be small, but in the case of an accident it would invalidate insurance. And the five-year expiring licence seems to have no safety benefit at all. ■



Southampton shakedown

AOPA's Charles Strasser has taken up the case of a member who was charged £181.37 in fees after making a precautionary diversion to Southampton because of bad weather.

Airports owner BAA has confirmed to AOPA that all its airports other than Heathrow and Gatwick subscribe to the Strasser Scheme, under which landing fees are waived in case of precautionary or emergency landing. But officials at the airport told the pilot they would not waive their charges because he had not declared a Mayday.

Pilot Richard Battersby was flying from Leeds to Guernsey on an IFR flight plan. When he left at 13.30 GMT the Guernsey TAF showed acceptable conditions for a landing up to 18.00, at which time a deterioration was forecast down to close to minima. His scheduled arrival time was 15.40. Overhead the Isle of Wight he got the Guernsey ATIS which showed conditions to be below minima. The same applied to Jersey, his designated

alternate. He spoke to Guernsey, who said a clearance was possible but not likely. He therefore decided to divert to Southampton.

At Southampton, he was told that since he did not declare a full emergency, the full landing and 'handling' charges for his PA31 were payable. These included £57 for the landing, £45 for the handling fee for arrival, £45 for the handling fee for departure, and £25 plus VAT for 'transport'. Mr Battersby had no alternative but to hand over his money. Two hours later there was an unexpected clearance at Guernsey, and he was able to depart.

In a letter to Mr Christopher Butler, managing director of Southampton, Charles Strasser points out that not only does the Strasser Scheme not require a Mayday call, but in this instance such a call would have been an abuse of procedure.

He goes on: "In February 2003 Mike Hodgkinson, the then CEO of BAA, confirmed that BAA is prepared for its airports at Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Southampton

Chief executive's diary:

Naviation, navigation, navigation



The headline represents the three most important issues I've been dealing with this month. The Airspace Safety Initiative Steering Group, whose work is reported on elsewhere in this issue, aims to cut the number of infringements of controlled airspace, and I'm heading a sub-group looking at problems caused by GPS – primarily what I call the GOTO issue, with pilots taking a direct track to their destination and not looking at the map closely enough.

Practising what I preach, I also entered the TopNav competition, as usual with AOPA chairman George Done. Now I'm not one to complain, but since we won a trophy two years ago we've been pretty brutally handicapped. The maximum we could score this year was 150 out of 200, so we'd have to have a near-perfect score to stand a chance. It was my turn to fly this year, and George's to navigate – not that I'm preparing an excuse or anything. We won't know the results for several weeks.

I start this diary where I left off last time – on May 21st, when we had a NATS-GA discussion on various matters, including navigation. NATS was getting a lot of heat about the AIS website and the supposed difficulty of using it, but I think it's been greatly improved thanks to the work put in by our own Mike Cross, and one tends to find that those who are rudest about it are those who don't use it. One of our number complained that he had difficulty plotting things as lat and long, but I just put them into Google Earth and get them plotted for me without having to do any work! Probably wouldn't help me with

TopNav though.

On the 23rd I was at Lasham for the GasCo AGM. There's a move afoot there to have spin training put back in the PPL syllabus, and I'm against it. We used to kill a lot of people in spin training, and I don't think we're killing them now. I want to see comparative figures, and I also want to know where spin accidents are still occurring. If, for instance, it's turning finals, then that's not an issue that spin training could address, that's a speed issue.

Two days later I went to the DfT for a briefing on EASA. It looks like EASA's fees and charges regulations have been forced through despite the opposition of the industry advisory body on which IAOPA has a seat. GA will pay disproportionately high fees for certification services. Where are the airlines' cross-subsidy arguments now?

I was at Turweston on May 31st for discussions with the CAA and the NPPL steering group. We're going to have to wait to see what EASA proposes before we know how the NPPL marries up with EASA's Light Aircraft Pilots Licence, and we can make no realistic moves on national PPL instructors until we know.

I was back at the DfT on June 1st for a Single European Sky briefing, and that weekend I took the kids to Biggin Hill air show, along with 50,000 other people. Air shows are the second biggest spectator sport in Britain after football – who says there's no interest in aviation? Spectating is hugely popular, but why do we make participation so difficult? The show was opened by the Typhoon, which gave a

fantastic display. I'm sure some of the youngsters in the crowd looked up and decided it would be them in that plane one day.

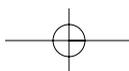
From the 4th to the 7th June I was in Prague for the EASA/FAA Safety Conference. It's clear from the discussions that EASA is paranoid about VLJs, with some EASA staff worrying about "the sky being dark with light jets". The conference was a useful chance to do some networking, particularly with people from the USA.

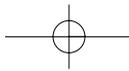
On the 8th, 9th and 10th I was at Booker for Aero. The show seemed to be successful, and we wish it well for next year. On the 15th we had a meeting of ASISG, the Airspace Safety Initiative Steering Group which is looking at things like infringements, Mode-S and so forth. This is an important group that is being taken extremely seriously by the powers-that-be. It reports directly to CAA chairman Sir Roy McNulty, NATS chief executive Paul Barron and the Chief of the Air Staff. GA must take it every bit as seriously. Class G airspace is not the private preserve of GA, and the only answer if airlines insist on using it is technology.

On the 20th I had the AOPA Executive Committee, and on the 24th the Members Working Group, which is seeking to make progress on the mentoring scheme and other issues. The two main thrusts of the group are increased safety, and measures to keep people active in general aviation.

We had the NPPL Ltd AGM on the 25th – this is the PFA, BGA and AOPA group that administers the NPPL. The finances are solid, although the number of people applying has levelled off. Again, we need to see where EASA is going with the LAPL, and what transition arrangements can be made for UK NPPL holders.

On the 26th I had a meeting with Lloyds Merchant Bank, who want information on the general aviation market in relation to some of their customers businesses, and who are particularly interested in VLJs. I





Right: if you don't call 'Mayday', Southampton may charge you for a precautionary landing

and Stansted to comply with the CAA recommendation CAP 667 9.2(c) and to join the 148 civil and 36 military airports already participating in the AOPA list at that time.

"The circumstances in this case, which I have investigated, indicate that his landing was a genuine precautionary weather diversion as defined in CAA CAP 667 9.2(c). I would therefore ask you to arrange a refund of his landing fee. The handling agent charges, under the circumstances, seem excessive. It would be appreciated if you could also use your good offices to get the handling agent to waive their charges."

The Strasser Scheme is designed to ensure that pilots who are making diversion decisions, often in difficult circumstances, should not have the additional worry of excessive costs, but should feel able to land anywhere in the interests of safety. It is fully supported by the CAA, which says in CAP 667 9.2(c):

"There were a number of fatal accidents where a timely diversion or precautionary

was back at the CAA at Gatwick on the 29th for a meeting on light AOCs. I'm looking for someone who is directly involved in AOC work to sit on a working group that could make useful changes to the way the CAA works. Anyone interested can email me, martin@aopa.co.uk.

Next day I was at Blackbushe for the Bushe Bash, and although we had rain it was nice to meet some of the people there – better luck with the weather next year, chaps. I was in Brussels on the 5th for a meeting on airspace harmonisation, where the Commission said it had decided to knock on the head proposals from Eurocontrol for three classes of airspace, N, K, and U, and to persist with ICAO designations. The problem is that even within those classifications there is a lot of local interpretation. France, for instance, has a Class F-Plus category, while the Germans have this strange device whereby an airspace class can change if there is an IFR movement in it, then revert without anyone being any the wiser. A pilot has to know what he or she is getting into, and harmonisation should mean what it says.

TopNav was on the 7th, and on the 10th we had ACEP, the Airspace Communication Education Plan. This is a sub-group of ASISG (ibid) which is looking at ways to communicate the problem and potential solutions to the pilot community. As mentioned earlier, my group is looking at the downside of GPS misuse.

Looking ahead at time of writing, the alphabet soup drifts before my eyes. GACC on the 18th, SRSAC on the 24th, HMCR on the 26th – that's to discuss hoped-for progress on the fuel duty issue. Then there's Eurocontrol on the 27th and the Mode-S transition group on the 31st. I'd like to think I could skip some of these, but the only immutable law in aviation apart from gravity is that of Murphy, and you can't turn your back for a minute.

Martin Robinson



landing could have avoided an accident. In the UK there is a 'culture' of pressing on and hoping for the best rather accepting the inconvenience and cost of a diversion. This 'culture' needs to be changed, firstly by educating pilots and secondly by persuading

aerodrome owners that there should be no charge for emergency landings or diversions. *It is recommended that all aerodrome owners be persuaded to adopt a policy that there should be no charges for emergency landings or diversions by general aviation aircraft.* ■

Do you have a licence?

The CAA may have 'lost' an unknown number of pilots' licences during a computer upgrade, but it is unable to say how many are missing.

The bizarre situation came to light when an AOPA member phoned the Authority to ask whether he could fly a Dutch-registered C172 he had just bought into Britain on his UK licence. Quite apart from telling him he couldn't – duff gen, as he discovered when he called AOPA to double-check – the CAA checked his details on computer and told him he didn't have a licence. "I have it in my hand," he replied, "and I've flown several thousand hours."

The CAA official explained that during a computer switch-over from a DOS-based system to Windows, an unknown number of licences seemed to have vanished into the ether.

Problems could arise following an accident if the insurers were to check with the CAA and discover that it had no details of the pilot ever having a licence. Next of kin might find it impossible to prove that the pilot was flying legally.

Have you fallen off the edge of the CAA's world? Call them and check – quote your licence number and make sure your details are on file, and are up to date.

Now the good news

The CAA is dishing out ICAO-compliant language proficiency certificates gratis and unrequested to PPLs who have an RT licence in order to meet an ICAO requirement on English language skills.

ICAO has ruled that every pilot should achieve Level Four ability in English, which means they should be able to conduct a normal conversation in the language. This is a much more onerous requirement than currently exists, and while it poses few problems for us here in Britain it is nothing short of a disaster for GA pilots in non-English speaking countries. In its wisdom, ICAO has ruled that general aviation should not be exempt, even if pilots never leave their own countries. The extent of the problem can be gauged if you imagine you had to qualify in

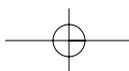
conversational Serbo-Croat if you wanted to continue flying.

There have been suggestions that even in Britain, pilots would have to be tested on English, and re-tested at regular intervals. But the CAA has begun 'qualifying' pilots on the assumption that any pilot with an RT licence is able to attain the standard.

One pilot who recently submitted his licence to the CAA for a change of address got it back with an ICAO-compliant language stamp in it. He had not requested it, nor was he asked to pay for it.

AOPA is trying to clarify how the CAA is handling pilots who have no RT licence – those who qualified during the years in which the separate RT ticket was dispensed with.

EASA says the proposed sub-ICAO Light Aircraft Pilots Licence will be "flexible" in its approach to language – another reason why European pilots will forsake the full JAR licence for the less onerous ticket. ■





Ausweis, bitte!

German authorities seem increasingly to be subjecting UK general aviation aircraft in transit to meticulous ramp checks, and members are warned to be sure that all their documentation is in order before flying there.



The experience of Channel Islands pilot Angus Clark at Munster airport illustrates the situation. Angus was returning from a fly-in at Olsztyn in Poland in his Robin DR400 with two passengers when he was put through the wringer after stopping at Munster to refuel.

Angus says: "It was a full ramp check, and I mean full, even down to evidence of a weight

and balance check. The description on the individual's card was 'Civil Aviation Supervision' and he was employed by the Munster District Government.

"He checked all the aircraft and crew documents, including Aircraft Registration Certificate, Certificate of Approval of Radio Installation, C of A, Noise Certificate, Aircraft Radio Licence, Insurance Certificate – specifically to ensure that German requirements had been met – he checked that the Flight Manual was present in the aircraft, the currency of the VFR charts we were using, my Pilots Licence, Medical Certificate, Pilot's Radio Licence, evidence of Weight and Balance check and Aircraft Journey Log Book.

"The check was conducted with good humour but my passengers and I agreed that

this would quickly have evaporated had things not been right. I have no doubt that we would have been grounded had the key documents not been present and correct.

"The checks seemed to be standard practice at Munster as the inspector referred to checking another UK light aircraft, where the pilot also remarked that it was the first time that he had been checked. I suspect he has little to do, so probably every aircraft gets checked. He said that I would be OK next time as my details would now be on his records."

One further potential problem to bear in mind – conditions for Angus were VMC, but landing in poor weather on the basis of a UK IMC rating would not have gone down well with the authorities and could lead to grounding. ■

AOPA Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the British Light Aviation Centre Ltd, trading as the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association of the UK, will be held on Friday 14th September 2007 at the Royal Aeronautical Society, 4 Hamilton Place, London, W1J 7BQ, commencing at noon. The formal announcement and agenda of the AGM appears on page 18.

Any member wishing to elect another member to the Board of Management must provide notice in writing at least 35 days in advance.

A set of accounts will be provided in advance of the meeting on the AOPA website www.aopa.co.uk together with brief personal details of the members offering themselves for election and re-election. These data will also be available at the AGM.

Following the formal business of the meeting, the Chairman will summarise the highlights of the past year in a short presentation, after which there will be a break for lunch. At 2 pm there will follow a meeting

of the three AOPA committees that report to the Executive Committee, namely, the AOPA Members Working Group, the Flight Training Policy Group, and the Instructor Committee. The main purpose is to allow the members to meet each other, present an overview of the scope and work of each committee, and to discuss several overlapping topics of mutual interest. AOPA members who have attended the AGM but who are not on these committees will be welcome to sit in and listen or contribute. It is hoped to start the meeting with a short presentation on a topical issue from a keynote speaker.

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available from 11.30 am and at 3.30 pm, when the meeting is scheduled to finish, and lunchtime refreshments will also be available. In order to plan for the number of expected attendees, and for security reasons, it is essential that members who intend to attend either or both of the two meetings let the AOPA office know in advance, either by telephone (020 7834 5631), email (info@aopa.co.uk), or by post to AOPA, 50a Cambridge Street, London SW1V 4QQ. ■

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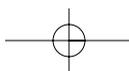
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Grass strip initiative

AOPA's Instructor Committee is looking at a proposal for a two-hour grass strip qualification to address increasing safety concerns.

As more pilots are forced out of regional airfields with big tarmac runways, they are using grass strips without knowledge or experience, leading to a noticeable rise in the number of safety-related incidents. (See 'They Really Do Mean It', page 46).

The idea for a short course of instruction comes from Philip Cardew, CFI of Cornwall Flying Club at Bodmin, which has grass strips of 610 and 480 metres. Philip, a former Navy pilot, is concerned at the number of pilots visiting Bodmin who seem to be only dimly aware of the traps a grass field sets for the unwary.

He says: "It's rare to pick up an accident summary report without finding incidents involving small grass airfields, such as take-off aborted too late, hitting the hedge, trees or wires, landing too long or fast. As an examiner, I almost invariably find that pilots who trained at an airfield with hard runways land long and hot, or perform a flapless take-off."

Mr Cardew suggests the Ground Syllabus for the qualification could require pilots to refresh performance data from the owners manual for the aircraft they are using, including take-off run (TOR), take-off distance (TOD), and landing distance, use of flap, best rate of climb (Vy), best angle of climb (Vx) and short field technique.

It would also require calculations of cross



wind and the factorisation of data from the latest AICs for soft ground, long grass, wet grass, and runway gradient. It would stress the importance of minimum allowable RPM and engine Ts & Ps before commencing take-off and study steep versus shallow approaches at minimum threshold speed to achieve a precision landing. The importance of assessing take-off weight and landing weight for length of strip, would be discussed, as would an assessment of obstacles on take-off and approach paths and best braking technique for minimum landing run or aborted take off. A practical exam of about 20 questions could be set, with students having the owners manual and AICs available.

Bodmin's longest runway is a 600-metre grass strip, and all its runways have gradient issues

The flying syllabus would include (after suitable calculations) demonstration and practice of short-field take-off technique, 'no-go' speed and distance, practice aborts, short field approaches and precision landings, with stress on the importance of going round if necessary.

The Instructors Committee was meeting on July 26th to discuss the initiative, which may count as an achievement towards the AOPA Wings Scheme. ■

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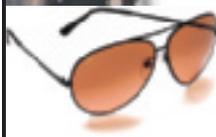
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Four more years

The changeover to Mode-S transponders is throwing up a number of anomalies for which AOPA is seeking clarification.

It is clear that some people are not au fait with the situation regarding the requirement for Mode-S. The first thing to stress is that there is no urgent need to install Mode-S in your aircraft. There is a transition window of at least four years. Even if you have no transponder at all, you can continue flying exactly as you are at least until 2012.

If you have a Mode-C transponder, you will continue to be able to use it in airspace for which a transponder is required to fly VFR, at least until 2012.

The CAA is keen to get rid of Mode-A transponders, and AOPA

understands it will discourage their use after September 2008. This may lead to the odd situation in which an aircraft with a Mode-A transponder may be required to switch it off and fly in stealth mode in the interests of safety. AOPA is seeking clarification.

It is likely that during the four-year transition window, it will become increasingly difficult to get permission to cross controlled airspace.

At a recent conference on airspace in Brussels AOPA asked the European Commission whether there would be any harmonisation of Mode-S requirements across Europe. "We'll look into it," was the reply.

The advice is:

If you have no transponder and are planning to put one in, make it Mode-S rather than Mode-C.

If you have Mode-C, turn it on and select the Alt function. Mode-C activates TCAS as well as radar. More information as decisions are made. ■

Instruments of change

Two separate attacks on the complexity of the PPL-IR are bringing to a head the battle to make the rating more accessible to private pilots.

In Europe, more than two years of work by a JAA sub-group to reduce the Theoretical Knowledge (TK) requirements for the IR are now being presented to EASA.

In the UK, a CAA-industry working group on the PPL-IR has made a dozen recommendations to improve the rating and make it achievable for more PPLs.

The JAA group has already had its initial recommendation, that the IR course be split into two modules to allow

candidates to spread the cost, accepted and implemented. The sub-group has picked through every phrase of the TK requirement and has marked out everything that should be removed, a mammoth task given the mountain of arcana in the syllabus.

The JAA assault on the IR was begun at the Licensing Sectorial Team by AOPA's Pam Campbell in 2005. It was supported by LST head Fergus Woods, and should stand a good chance of succeeding at the next stage because Fergus Woods has been made Head of Standards at EASA.

The UK effort was started by the CAA in 2006 and reaches similar conclusions to those of the JAA group – effectively, that the PPL IR is over-engineered to the point where safety is

compromised because so few PPLs can attain it.

The CAA-industry working group, on which AOPA was represented by Steve Copeland, recommends that the syllabus should include only the TK that is relevant to the non-commercial operation of single pilot light aircraft under IFR. The number of hours should be reduced from a minimum of 50 to the ICAO-mandated 40, the requirement for classroom training should be removed, and the CAA's practice of making TK tests available only at Gatwick, once every two months on a weekday, should be abandoned.

Further, it recommends that competency-based training be introduced, that JAA or EASA provide a more consistent syllabus, that IMC rating time count towards an IR, that non-CAA examiners be authorised to conduct IR flight tests, that tests be possible on a candidate's own aircraft. ■



New aerobatics level

AOPA has launched revised guides and instruction syllabi for the Basic Aerobatic Certificate Course and introduced a Standard Aerobatic Certificate Course.

In collaboration with the British Aerobatic Association, AOPA has updated the original AOPA Aerobatic Certificate Course and introduced a more advanced level, the Standard Aerobatic Certificate Course.

These two courses have been issued with the approval of the BLAC Board of Management and the AOPA Instructor Committee.

By introducing a second level of aerobatics, it is hoped that this will encourage more pilots to go further to improve their aerobatic skill and safety when handling suitable aeroplanes in more advanced manoeuvres.

The documentation for applying for these courses is available from the AOPA office. *Pam Campbell*



An overdue demise

The CAA has told AOPA that it will finally be rescinding the requirement for aircraft to carry an ADF in order to comply with the requirements for IFR flight in UK controlled airspace.

Britain is one of the last developed countries in the world to drop ADF, and many aircraft owners have faced difficulties importing glass-panel aircraft which were never designed to carry antiquated kit.

According to CAA staff who spoke to AOPA on the stand at Aero Expo at High Wycombe, the Air Navigation Order will be amended to delete the requirement in 2008.

ADF is a pre-war vintage direction-finding system which was a great asset in its day but was superseded first by VOR and much later by GPS. Relatively inaccurate and troublesome, it suffered from many defects. Coastlines would bend the signal, it tended to go wonky at night, and would point unerringly at the nearest thunderstorm, usually when it was needed most. Apart from some of the purists, few will lament its passing.

Peace dividend

As conditions in Northern Ireland edge ever-closer to normal, the CAA has been asked to remove a number of long-established restricted areas which were imposed to protect military traffic and installations.

Nine prohibited areas and two restricted

areas will disappear from August 1st. The prohibited areas cover parts of Lisburn, Omagh, Londonderry, Armagh, Ballykinler, Dungannon, South Armagh, Enniskillen and Magilligan, while the restricted areas are in Belfast and Ballykelly.

At the suggestion of AOPA's Channel Islands chairman Charles Strasser, AOPA is investigating whether there is any continued justification for the special requirements for

flights from the Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Eire and Northern Ireland to the UK under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000. It ought now to be as easy for GA aircraft to fly between those areas as it is to fly from France or anywhere else in Europe.

Initial inquiries indicate that a relaxation would be opposed in some quarters because Schedule 7 provisions also affect money-laundering and fiscal crime. ■