

General Aviation

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Front cover:
Geronimo
Photo: Keith Wilson

Chairman's message

Working together

The associations and organisations involved in UK general aviation interact with each other on several different levels, the most obvious being at the various consultative committees such as those that provide the CAA with advice and an up-to-date picture of the situation in particular aspects of GA. The best example of this is the General Aviation Consultative Committee (GACC) which is attended by up to 60 representatives, including those from the CAA departments. Umbrella organisations like the GASCo (General Aviation Safety Council) and the GAAC (General Aviation Awareness Council) were set up by the GA associations themselves with the purpose of promoting safety and the functionality of and need for aerodromes, respectively, and are, again, attended by quite large numbers of representatives. Attendance at these meetings is largely shared between Martin Robinson, AOPA Chief Executive, and I, whilst making sure Martin has enough time in his diary to attend the seemingly ever increasing number of meetings that take place in Europe.



There is a level of interaction, however, that is less obvious than that above, which is when associations work together to achieve a quite specific and specialised objective. Because its AGM was held recently, the example of the National Pilot Licensing Group Ltd (NPLG Ltd) comes to mind. This limited company was set up in 2002 specifically to provide the business and financial structure behind the issue of NPPLs. The 'members' are the Light Aircraft Association, the British Gliding Association and AOPA. The representatives at meetings consist of the three Chief Executives and the respective Chairmen, the latter constituting the Board of Directors. Between the three of us, we oversee all the the arrangements for licence issue through service agreements between the three associations and NPLG Ltd. As is now familiar to many pilots, the actual licence issue and administration is done by the LAA, and the enquiry service provided by AOPA for the SSEAs and the BGA for the SLMGs. The British Microlight Aircraft Association handles all the microlight licences. The activity and function provided by NPLG Ltd chugs along in the background more or less unseen, but without it, there would be no NPPLs, and a significantly smaller community of GA pilots flying in the UK.

Another example of working together to achieve a common objective is the two level (Basic and Standard) Aerobatics Certificate Course that was drafted about two years ago in conjunction with the British Aerobatics Association, as a result of the latter seeking to adapt the longstanding AOPA Aerobatics Certificate such that it would provide a route into competition aerobatics. And again, at a recent meeting with one of AOPA's Corporate Members, the Historic Aircraft Association, an informal agreement was concluded in which the HAA would be ensured access into EASA through AOPA UK's participation via IAOPA (Europe), supplementing the HAA's existing route via EFLEVA (European Federation of Light, Experimental and Vintage Aviation). This is somewhat similar to the mode of liaison between the Helicopter Club of Great Britain and AOPA. There is often an intangible benefit to these collaborative discussions, the former being notable for the great frankness and friendliness of the discussions, something that underpins a future enduring cohesiveness.

Whilst on this upbeat note, I would like to draw attention to the list of winners of the AOPA Awards for Achievement and Endeavour within the pages of this issue of *General Aviation*. The awards are decided every two years and some of the current winners were presented with their cups and trophies on the AOPA stand at the recent Aero Expo at Wycombe Airpark, in the presence of friends and family members and other interested exhibition attendees. It is an entirely happy and very sociable event, dedicated to those recipients who, in the eyes of the AOPA judging panel, have made a significant contribution to GA over the past few years or more. This occasion was made rather special by Gerald Howarth, MP, who, being the first recipient, and having just been presented with the Lennox Boyd Trophy, made a short speech (as MPs do...) which, whilst apposite and welcome, created a degree of consternation amongst the remaining recipients, who felt obliged to do the same. And how well they met the challenge, I'm pleased to report!

George Done