

# Heroes of general aviation

*AOPA's biannual awards recognise people who have made a positive contribution to GA in recent years. Pat Malone reports*

AOPA's biannual Awards for Achievement and Endeavour were presented at a ceremony at Aero Expo, with four of the recipients able to be present to pick up their trophies; other awards will be given to the winners at special individual ceremonies.

There can have been no more fitting recipient of the **Lennox Boyd Trophy** than **Gerald Howarth**, Conservative MP for Aldershot, private pilot and strong supporter of general aviation in the House of Commons. The Lennox-Boyd Trophy is awarded to a person, club, group or organisation who has contributed significantly to the furtherance of general aviation, flight training, club flying or piloting standards. The trophy is a cup in a special presentation box that was originally given to the Association of British Aero Clubs by the late Rt Hon Alan Lennox-Boyd PC CH

MP (subsequently Viscount Boyd of Merton) in 1953.

In presenting it to Gerald Howarth, AOPA Chairman George Done said that the Shadow Defence Minister had held a pilot's licence since 1965, was President of the Air Display Association and a trustee of the Vulcan to the Sky project. George said: "He is a member of the Parliamentary Aviators' Group, and both through this and individually he has been tireless in his efforts in defending general aviation and conveying its value inside Parliament, and in dealing with the upper echelons of the CAA, to the great benefit of all general aviation within the UK."

As he accepted the award, Gerald Howarth remarked that he was one of four MPs who made up the Parliamentary Aviators Group – fellow Tory Grant Shapps, who flies a

Saratoga, Labour MP Nigel Griffiths, who obtained a PPL(H) while a Minister, and Liberal Democrat Lembit Opik, "who flies twins". He added: "We have an important role to play because for many MPs, it's all on the other side of the balance sheet – they deal with constituents' complaints about the intrusion of aircraft and noise from planes, and we are there to present balancing arguments."

"I am very honoured to accept the Lennox Boyd Trophy because Viscount Boyd was MP for mid-Bedfordshire from 1931 to 1960 and was Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Aircraft Production from 1943 to 1945. Should there be an election next year, and should the Conservatives win it, and should David Cameron see fit, I could effectively be his successor. What's more, both his son Mark Lennox Boyd and myself were personal private secretaries to Margaret Thatcher.

"I am also honoured to accept this award from AOPA, which is a fantastic organisation. George and Martin have achieved real success in Europe and in the UK, and I am pleased to be able to work hand in glove with AOPA for the benefit of our fellow pilots."

The **AOPA Special Award** for a pilot, controller or engineer, of other person who has



**Award winners with their trophies, from left, Gerald Howarth MP, Paddy Casey, Dan Tye and Mike Cross**



**Deputy editor Dan Tye accepted the award recognising *Pilot* magazine's work for GA**



**Gerald Howarth MP (right) receives his award from AOPA chairman George Done**

made a special contribution to safety or other areas of general aviation went to **Pilot** magazine and was accepted on the magazine's behalf by deputy editor Dan Tye. George Done said: "*Pilot* is one of the most widely read and informative monthly publications on general aviation in the UK, and over many years has been consistent in conveying important safety and educational messages in a timely manner to pilots, potential pilots and owners of aircraft alike. The award recognises this significant and longstanding contribution to the world of general aviation."

Taking the award, Dan Tye said *Pilot* had been working for general aviation for 40 years, providing a blend of information and inspiration of which the AOPA page in the magazine was an important part.

The '**Contribution to the Community**' award, given to a person or organisation who has made an outstanding contribution to the aviation community, went to **Mike Cross** for



**Mike Cross was recognised for his work to save Lee on Solent for GA**

his tremendous work in helping to keep Lee on Solent aerodrome open for general aviation. George Done said: "Mike Cross is a private pilot who owns a Luscombe Silvaire. He has been responsible for the opening up of Lee on Solent aerodrome such that it is now accessible to GA after a long period of inaccessibility, stagnation and stonewalling by the several and various authorities involved with or having had a stake in the aerodrome. Whilst receiving significant support and encouragement from the Lee Flying Association and AOPA, Mike virtually single-handedly used his manifest political skills, backed up by unshakeable persistence, to achieve viability for Lee as a GA aerodrome."

Mike Cross himself paid tribute to other members of the Lee Flying Association, in particular the vice chairman John Butts, and to his fellow award winner Gerald Howarth MP, who contributed to an adjournment debate on Lee on Solent. The airfield is now, he said, in a position to have visitors going in, although onerous restrictions remain.

The 'Friend of AOPA' tankard, awarded to a person or persons who has or have made a special contribution towards the work of AOPA, went to **Paddy Casey**, the driving force behind Aero Expo and other such shows. George Done said: "Paddy is well known for being the organiser of Aero Expo, the annual general aviation exhibition, now based at Wycombe Air Park. Over many years he has been extremely supportive of general aviation through his promotion of flying, the GA industry and particularly membership organisations such as AOPA, to whom he has dispensed great hospitality and generosity."

Paddy stepped up to collect the award, he said, on behalf



**Paddy Casey's Aero Expo has created a valuable shop window for general aviation**

of all the staff and volunteers who make Aero Expo possible.

Other winners who will receive their awards individually include:

**Controller of the Year**, awarded to a controller, FISO or ATC team who has or have provided especially good service to pilots: **Gordon Reid**, NATS. The citation says: "Gordon Reid is employed by NATS as an area controller and possesses a recently acquired PPL. He chairs the 'GA Partnership' which has been established with the aim of improving the relationship between NATS and general aviation by increasing the understanding on both sides of the interface and resolving issues around controllers and airspace. Gordon's determination to achieve these objectives is recognised in this award."

**Individual Merit**, awarded to a pilot or individual who has made an outstanding aviation achievement: **Timothy Kirkhope**, MEP. "Timothy Kirkhope has been a Member of the European Parliament since he was elected in 1999, and also a private pilot, having gained his PPL in 1983. His flying interests have allowed him to speak with



**AOPA award winners putting their tankards to good use**

authority on general aviation and he was responsible for organising the Hearing on General and Business Aviation in the European Parliament in September 2008. The subsequent resolution of 3rd February 2009 on an 'Agenda for Sustainable Future in General and Business Aviation' that was adopted overwhelmingly by MEPs with 524 votes in favour, 74 against and 6 abstentions has been described in the aviation press as the best news for GA in a generation, as it will guide the EC and member states to adopt a raft of principles which would preserve, foster and promote GA across Europe."

**Instructor of the Year**, Awarded to an instructor who has made a special contribution to the training of student pilots for the PPL or NPPL, or to private pilots for added qualifications: **Rod Brown**, Denham. "Rod Brown is a flying instructor of many years experience employed by Cabair at Denham. He has a passion for flying which is passed on to his students and his calm manner in training engenders great confidence in his students. He has been a long-standing supporter of AOPA, and is a recognised authority on Chipmunk aircraft."

**Friend of AOPA: Tim Scorer**. "Tim is a practising lawyer, with specialist knowledge in aviation. He has provided first-aid legal advice on behalf of AOPA to a huge number of pilot and aircraft owner members over a great many years, and the award is in recognition of this invaluable service."

**Best Aerodrome**, awarded to the aerodrome that has been an outstanding place to visit, offering value for money and helpful service: **Marshall Airport Cambridge**.

"Marshall Airport Cambridge recently changed its name, and is better known to most as simply Cambridge Airport. Many regional airports are now unwelcoming of GA aircraft, but Cambridge is becoming unique in that it regularly handles a large general aviation activity in amongst significant 'heavy metal' traffic that has included Tristars, C130s, B747s, and DC10s flown in for engineering work by Marshall Aerospace. Several flying groups and clubs are accommodated on the airfield as well as many privately owned singles and twins, and it is significant that the Tiger Moths of the Cambridge Flying Group are and have been based there for many years."

**Customer Care**, awarded to the flying school, club or individual that has provided outstanding customer care, as recommended by students or private pilots: **James Crabbe**, **Shoreham Airport**. "James Crabbe manages the Sussex Flying Club based at Shoreham Airport. He was instrumental in setting up the Shoreham Airport Operators Association (now a Corporate Member of AOPA) under the AOPA umbrella about 18 months ago to protect and represent the interests of users of the airport following the collapse of Erinaceous, the previous owners. Through his efforts, the continued viability of the users, including aircraft owners, flying clubs and other businesses based at Shoreham has been preserved." ■

