

Letters to the Editor

Blowing in the wind

Sir,

Clearly, any growing industry which puts tall structures near airfields should be a focus of attention for aerodrome operators, to ensure that safety standards are maintained. Wind turbines are a case in point ('GA's rapidly growing enemy?' *October 2007*). But we should not let other aspects of wind turbine development cloud our assessment of their impacts on aviation. David Ogilvy starts his article with accounts of several wind turbine accidents, none of which had any impact on aviation, nor could they have even if these turbines had been located as close to an aerodrome as regulations would allow.

Let me declare my interest. I work as a consultant to the wind energy industry, and to aerodrome operators, on the impacts of wind turbines on aviation. I am also a GA pilot and flying instructor. Leaving aside the impact on radar, which as David points out is mainly only of concern to larger airports, the impact of wind turbines on GA aerodromes is no different to that of any other tall structure such as cranes, radio masts, power station cooling towers and chimneys. All licensed aerodromes in this country must meet international standards for the control of tall structures within specified distances of the airport. If a new development is planned, the planning authority will advise the aerodrome, allowing it to make representations. If any proposal

breaches one of the established obstacle limitation surfaces for the aerodrome, the aerodrome operator would have a strong case for opposing it.

Unlicensed aerodromes do not have established obstacle limitation surfaces. However the CAA advises operators to set up similar notification arrangements with planning authorities. In addition, the CAA has a system in place which ensures that wind turbine developers consult with all known aviation interests in the vicinity, which includes, at the lower end of the scale, any unlicensed aviation activity within 3km of the proposed development. David Ogilvy refers to the risk to aircraft attempting to reach an airfield at 500ft agl in conditions of low cloud, poor visibility, failing light or against a low sun. A reality check is required here. First, there are no onshore turbines as high as 500 feet agl. Second, if there were, they would be required to be lit, exactly the same as other structures of that height. Third, all such obstacles are clearly marked on aeronautical charts and it is a pilot's responsibility to note their location and avoid them. Fourth, wind turbines are a great deal easier to see than, for example, electricity pylons and radio/TV transmitter masts. I don't recall an AOPA campaign against new radio masts around airfields. David also mentions turbulence from wind turbines as a safety issue for aircraft. Here is what the CAA guidance, CAP 764, says on the subject: "Wind turbines are generally large structures which can inevitably cause turbulence. However, although there may be some local variations as a result, given the requirements for minimum separation and avoidance of obstacles, turbulence in relation to wind turbine developments is not seen as requiring

any additional consideration than that which would normally be given. Nevertheless this aspect should be assessed on a case by case basis taking into account the proximity of the development and the type of aviation activity conducted."

For any aerodrome operators faced with a planning application for wind turbines in their vicinity, the key is, as David says, to get involved early. Talk to the planning authority, make your concerns known, and talk directly to the wind turbine developers too - if you engage with them, they are far more likely to address your concerns. But in putting forward your case, scare stories which cannot be backed up with credible evidence about impacts on aviation are unlikely to persuade the planners, and may in fact weaken or even damage your case.

**Malcolm Spaven
Temple,
Midlothian**

The legal niceties of the case pale into insignificance alongside the dangers of placing turbines close to working aerodromes. Take, for instance, the current application for a turbine just outside the circuit at Clacton. If it is built, sooner or later someone will definitely hit it. No doubt Mr Spaven will then repeat his mantra that it was the pilot's responsibility to avoid it. Not good enough. It represents a clear and present danger. Happily, at least two planning applications for wind turbines near UK aerodromes have been turned down solely because they were considered as hazards to flight safety. -Pat Malone

David Ogilvy adds: Most of the points that Malcolm makes are true in theory, but they are

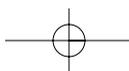


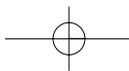
2007 General Aviation Safety Awards



The General Aviation Safety Awards are presented to individuals and organisations in the UK to recognise their good airmanship or practical skills and abilities when faced with potentially serious incidents directly related to flying. Anyone involved in UK general aviation may be nominated – pilots, instructors, engineers, aircraft operators and air traffic control staff. Nominees should be over 16 years of age and may be either individuals or organisations. Please note that only 'one-off' incidents will be considered. The selection committee regrets that it cannot consider awards for life-long service to aviation.

To nominate someone: (closing date 28 January 2008) contact the CAA's Corporate Communications Dept, CAA House, 45-59 Kingsway, London WC2B 6TE, Tel 020 7453 6030 e-mail press.office@caa.co.uk. Alternatively go to the safety awards webpage at www.caa.co.uk/ga_award





Left: windfarms at the end of a runway are a deadly nuisance

these emissions. And if global morality seems a bit remote from our comfortable privileged pastime, then simply think selfishly about how the deteriorating climate is ruining our flying.

If we are to use these pages to discuss wind farms then let us show the public a more responsible attitude, such as how we can operate safely around them. I learned to fly at an airfield with a wind farm along one runway, so avoiding them is not rocket science. To a pilot, a wind farm is an obstacle just like an antennae or high ground. What message does it give to the wider public about our professional skills if we are worried about flying into them? Poor airmanship is not a valid reason to object to a wind farm.

So if you wish to object to a wind farm then examine your motives and choose your ground well. Wind farms are usually rejected on the basis of visual amenity. They have never been rejected on the grounds of energy inefficiency or unviable economics as all substantiated studies indicate the opposite. But whatever your objection please don't use general aviation as a platform. Whether you like the look of them or not, each new wind farm effectively puts off the day when the public and the politicians will call time on our enormously privileged and ultimately unsustainable pursuit.

**David Baillie
Alston, Cumbria**

More nonsense is talked about human responsibility for climate change than any other subject under the sun, but this takes the biscuit. We are being told that we should acquiesce to the siting of dangerous obstacles within the environs of an airfield in order to appease the proponents of the issue of the day, and by extension that lives lost to such

obstacles should be chalked off as human sacrifices in a good cause. We would not accede to the building of a radio mast in such a position, or a slaughterhouse chimney, or a church spire or minaret for that matter – we should not be frightened to say it's the wrong place for a wind turbine, icon of the new religion. Put wind farms where you please – 'visual amenity' permitting – but at the end of a runway they are a deadly nuisance.

Not should we cover aviation in sackcloth and ashes. As Winston Churchill said: "Civil aviation is the greatest instrument ever forged for international solidarity." Those who would put an end to the mixing of peoples have no understanding of the demons they would unleash, and need to study history. General aviation produces the pilots that make this mixing possible, and does it using just one quarter of the fuel that evaporates from car tanks in the UK. As a recreational flyer, you are a minority avgas user. 'Rightly' penalise and 'justifiable' taxes are your estimations. And as to the 'deteriorating climate' that's 'ruining our flying', you must live in a different country to me. – *Pat Malone*

JAR-FCL silver lining

Sir,
While I can't argue with the generalities of your article 'JAR-FCL - it was all for nothing', you might like to consider this specific. When I did my initial medical 25 years ago I was granted a Class 3. Upon enquiring about a Class 1, I was told that my short-sighted correction requirement was outside limits, (I was -4 dioptre against the limit of -3) but the CAA might consider trading the additional pipette for a thousand hours, should I ever get there. Sooo... I got on with my PPL, put aside an aspiration for an airline job and got on with what turned out to be a very enjoyable career working outside at two really large civil aerodromes in South-East England. When the

not always put into practice. I know of cases in which a wind farm developer has failed to contact the aerodrome concerned, and currently I am involved in a situation in which a local authority refuses even to consider the safety aspects at a licensed aerodrome despite being provided with strong evidence. It is easy to think that what should be done is being done – but it is not. GA is the sufferer.

Sir,
In David Ogilvy's article on wind farms he states that "clearly it is not part of AOPA's duty or desire to challenge the need for renewable energy sources." But in the same sentence proceeds to do just that. In doing so he portrays our community as ignorant and arrogant on an issue infinitely more important than any in general aviation.

Our credentials for reducing carbon emissions are shaky to say the least. Who hasn't burnt a tank of avgas to get a bacon sandwich? If we love flying and wish to indulge our passion we must learn a great deal more humility, or one day public pressure will rightly penalise us with justifiably increased environmental taxes.

Since our carbon footprints are greater than other citizens we have a moral responsibility not to obstruct any technology that offsets





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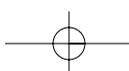
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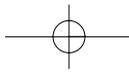
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BCPL came out, I found I could obtain this with the existing UK Class 2 medical, so I set to and did the CPL papers and the flying test, but with one thing and another, never got to do any of the aerial work that it entitled me to.

Now, along came JAR-FCL with all its attendant illogicalities, but for me, one piece of common sense. 'They' decided to change the eyesight correction requirements so that I now fell inside the scope of the new Class 1 medical. Great! But too late for me to consider an airline job. However, the silver lining is now that my former employer and I have parted company, the CAA have agreed to resurrect my BCPL, granted me a Class 1 medical and at the age of 58, I've just started a new career as a flying instructor, being paid for flying at last. It may well be that the CAA would have changed the requirement anyway, but it seems to me that I've got JAR-FCL to thank for giving my flying a new lease of life and realising a long-held ambition. I do suspect that actually it was the CAA medical department that pushed this change through JAR-FCL so maybe I should be thanking them?

Ben Ellis

Speaking as one who gave up instructing because JAR-FCL introduced a pointless requirement for a Class 1 medical, more than doubling the cost, I'm pleased that my loss has been cancelled out by your gain. – *Pat Malone*

Aero AT-3

Sir

I read Andy Raymond's article on operating the Aero AT-3 R100 (*General Aviation*, October 2007) with significant interest. Maybe it was something to do with my attentive reading skills but more likely it was because I had literally just tied-down my new AT-3 (G-DPEP) having flown some 1,355nm in 14 hours and 24 minutes from Krosno, Poland. From the outset, Andy Raymond was candid in highlighting that he tends to comment on weaknesses rather than strengths; I thought I would provide an alternative view.

I am a relatively low hour (300) PPL with the majority of my time being on the ubiquitous C172/PA28 combination. My wife is a recently qualified PPL with only one type (C152) in her log book. I will not bore you with our rationale behind buying the AT-3, the fact is we bought it. It is a delightful stick 'n' rudder aircraft and it reminds me of the Chipmunk, Bulldog or even some gliders. Importantly, it rewards balanced flight and those of us who have become a little

complacent with the rudder (remember my C172/PA28 background?) will have to sharpen up a little to make best use of the aircraft. That said, if my wife (and that is not meant to be a derogatory comment!) can already handle the AT-3 on take-off and landing with a crosswind from the left, then I think it is safe to say that any perceived lateral control issue isn't really a massive issue. I am finding the aircraft to be very comfortable and the 'sports car' type seats fit this particular 5'7", 13 stone pilot rather well, even over trips of 2.45 hours. Shorter pilots will need a booster cushion but this issue has now been addressed with the option of a slip-over cover giving about an extra 2-3" of depth to the seat back. I would recommend that any potential buyer takes at least one of these for those times when flying with vertically challenged passengers. My wife, who is 5'4" uses this seat back at all times allowing her to reach the pedals and, importantly, see more over the cowling. I would agree that the ride is slightly less sedentary than a C172 (*which has a MTOW of more than twice that of the AT-3*) but then I think it is too easy to compare apples with oranges. I share Andy's views about the Rotax engine as I cannot fathom why a sprung throttle is deemed to be more safe than the standard we find on Lycomings and Continentals. However, as long as you are fully aware as to how the aircraft (or to be precise, engine) works, then life becomes a little more easy.

We operate from a relatively 'standard' grass strip in Shropshire complete with mole hills and mini moguls. I have experienced the occasional bumpy ride on landing but have found that, like many other aircraft, if you nail the appropriate landing speed and flare using the correct technique then everything works out fine. Cutting the throttle at 3-5ft is not the way to land.

While I do not have anywhere near the flying experience of Andy, as the first private owner in the UK I am finding that this aircraft is bringing fun back to my flying. It has been a long time since I have had the urge to aimlessly meander over the North Shropshire countryside completing endless steep turns, chandelles and lazy eights. Furthermore, the aircraft will carry two of us, full fuel and a reasonable amount of baggage to most places within mainland UK at 105kts burning about

Below: Below: The AT-3 rewards balanced flight and encourages good work with the rudder



171/hr. Undoubtedly many readers will see our aircraft in the coming months. Please take the time to come and talk to either my wife (Eileen) or myself and I am sure you will quickly realise why we are so pleased with our new AT-3.

David Phillips, Sherlowe

Miles and Parnall

Sir,

David Ogilvy's article about the Parnall aeroplanes makes fascinating reading. My father (FG Miles) did the original test flying on the Elf in the Summer of 1929, having tested the earlier Imp (G-EBTE) in the Spring after it had been re-engined with a Pobjoy. Apart from a problem with exhaust fumes coming back into the cockpit – which made him feel dreadful after a couple of hours flying – his main comment was that the unusual swept-back configuration led to some unusual handling.

The Elf (G-AAFH) was, apparently, a much nicer aeroplane. He commented that it was good, sound and solid but a bit too heavy to



Above: FG Miles thought the Parnall Elf was good, sound and solid

Below: the success of the Magister didn't sour the Miles Parnall relationship



compete with the DH Moth and the Avro Avian.

My father liked the Parnalls and got on well with them. I can only hope that the success of the Magister didn't sour that relationship; probably not.

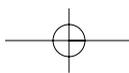
Jeremy Miles

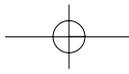
It is good to hear from Jeremy Miles. His father, usually known as FG, together with GH, were two famous people in the British aviation industry, as designers and producers of the wide range of Miles monoplanes built over many years at the long-closed aerodrome at Woodley, near Reading. Several of these Miles types have been covered in handling reports in past issues of this journal. – *David Ogilvy*

Say again?

Sir,

This is a response to 'Say Again' in *Letters to the Editor* (*General Aviation*, October 2007). After retiring from long-range commercial flying and being now involved in instructing/





examining as a hobby, several things have struck me as needing some attention. One in particular is the problem of PPLs who have gained their licence only to gradually lose their taught skill. Firstly there is of course forgetting what has been taught and the gaining of bad habits, plus loss of confidence, including R/T.

So many PPLs fly infrequently, leave the circuit, won't talk to anyone, return and gradually lose confidence, often to the extent of quitting altogether. I have been associated with

Wellesbourne Aviation for a couple of years, and have written a PPL Enhancement Course to try and prevent this slippery slide. It is split into three stages.

Firstly, there is general handling to polish and re establish confidence in all sorts of exercises, including side-slipping; FREDAs; use of VOR; I/F; and introduction to grass operations etc. I vary this stage depending on the student, what he or she requests and what I think is needed. I don't put too much emphasis on stalling etc, as the idea at this stage is to improve operation to take the pilot away from ever getting in that situation.

The second stage is the one which relates to your correspondence. This is a route around the Birmingham and East Midlands CTZs, to provide confidence in using the R/T and to integrate all the navigation aids and operation in and around controlled airspace, namely:

DR nav and plog; map reading; VOR; NDB if available; GPS; and the use of R/T. Use of FIS; RIS; can we use RAS?; operation of two frequencies simultaneously (eg Halfpenny Green and Birmingham radar). Practise PAN Call. Request to transit class D airspace etc.

I have written out the entire R/T exchange between aircraft and controller including all the responses, so the student can pre-study, and know what to expect. I tend to operate the R/T initially and the student flies the aircraft, changing over until confident, then encouraging the student to do it all.

I do make the point very early on that one needs to convey a degree of professionalism to the controller, which results in a much more cooperative response. It is understandable that a busy controller dealing with commercial traffic is not going to show too much tolerance and confidence in an amateur making mistakes and hesitating. Interestingly the common courtesies of 'good morning' and 'goodbye' are an indication to the controller of a level of competence and professionalism.

Stage three is a consolidation trip along the same lines, with either a flight to Blackpool through the Manchester low level corridor or a flight to somewhere like Rochester in an orbital flight around the London CTZs. I know that other clubs have devised similar courses, and for different reasons, but this one is aimed at the sort of problems the 'Say Again' article has raised. I wouldn't go as far as saying it is a solution but it does attempt to tackle a weak area in PPL development.

John Richards

Common language

Sir,

The following was in today's Avweb. IAOPA WINS LANGUAGE REPRIEVE

The International Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association has successfully lobbied the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to delay by three years implementation of

onerous language proficiency rules it says would severely limit VFR flight in much of Europe. Under the ICAO proposal, all pilots would require to demonstrate a high level of proficiency in either English or the language of the country in which they are flying. In an interview with Avweb at AOPA Expo in Hartford, IAOPA General Secretary John Sheehan said the rule makes sense for IFR operations but not for recreational flyers. 'For VFR people it doesn't make any sense,' Sheehan said. 'I don't think [VFR] requires a

The common courtesies of 'good morning' and 'goodbye' are an indication to the controller of a level of competence and professionalism

high level of [language] proficiency.'

Can somebody explain how it actually helps pilots flying in the UK to delay this legislation? Its difficult enough trying to transit an American MATZ when the controller comes from Georgia or Louisiana and has only been in the UK a few weeks - although to be fair similar problems can be experienced flying in the North East?

I mistakenly expected that safety came into the equation somewhere.

Bill Fisher

AOPA UK has been fully behind the campaign to water down the ICAO language requirements for VFR flight. The new proposals have been outlined in this magazine over the last two years, and while they do not affect UK pilots, they will have a disastrous effect on GA in many countries. Pilots will have to demonstrate an ability to conduct a 'Level 4' conversation in English before they will be allowed to begin to learn to fly. Level 4 is far higher than the current requirement for professional pilots, and effectively means learning the language. To gauge the effect this will have on GA in some countries, imagine that a requirement was introduced for you to have achieved a conversational level of Serbo-Croat before you could fly, even if you never left the circuit at Headcorn. While such language requirements may be sensible for professionals, they are not valid for VFR flight.

– Pat Malone

Jersey 'VAT'

Sir:

Could I correct something in the October issue of your magazine – on page 15, the article headed Channel Islands 'VAT' move. The only Channel Island that is introducing a 'General Service Tax (GST)' is Jersey.

**Ray Plant
Manager, Air Traffic Control
Guernsey & Alderney**

My apologies for the error. Don't forget, your AOPA membership entitles you to a five percent discount on fuel in Guernsey and Jersey – Pat Malone

Vive la France

Sir,

Reading the October *General Aviation* and the woes of Southampton's costs, the lack of Lee on Solent, both places I have been flying from for over five years – and now Kemble is under threat! I now fly out of Bournemouth – a great airport and very friendly ATC. My alternate is Goodwood - proven supporters of Strasser.

My wife and I spend most of our flying time in France. Limoges costs €4,45 short stop, Lannion €8.02 overnight, Angers €11 overnight, La Rochelle 7,50 overnight, Joigny €0, Villefranche €0. Need I go on? Most

airfields have ILS, welcome GA with open arms and just can't do enough for you. When will the UK wake up to the fact that visiting GA will spend money on meals and hotels in the local economy? It's the same with yachting. French mooring fees are about 25% of those in the UK. French towns see their airfields and marinas as a way of getting visitors to spend money in their localities.

It's a familiar tale but our officials and politicians never seem to listen because our voice is small. AOPA is doing a great job lobbying in Whitehall and Europe, they deserve all our thanks.

**Robert Hill
Fareham**

Chop the prop

Sir,

Can you either publish an article outlining the total myth that magneto-equipped aircraft can always be considered safe, or stop publishing pictures of pilots either leaning on the prop or within its arc!

Polly Vacher seems to have few other poses (*General Aviation*, October, page 35).



Above: Polly, stop posing with props

Steve Fossett went several times around the world only to possibly have succumbed to a simple accident, I wouldn't like to see it happen to Mrs Vacher.

Tim Desbois

London LARS

Sir,

I read the London LARS article in October issue of GA Magazine with some interest.

On Friday 14 September I had my first introduction to London LARS on 123.25, being referred to them by Thames Radar when transitting south around the NE corner London City's TMA. I was given a squawk and the service was very attentive. However, just over a month later on Friday 19th October transitting Lydd to Shoreham, a call on 123.25 brought the response: 'This service is not available due to staff shortages. Call Farnborough Radar on 125.25.'

If staff resources are already a problem with only half of the London LARS service in operation, what chance is there of the other half being introduced 'early in 2008'?

Something else has puzzled me for some time. One is often told that an ATC service is 'limited due to the volume of traffic'. I have always found this a bit worrying because it suggests that when things get difficult ATC sort of gives up. If flight safety is to mean anything, should not the ATC service be beefed up to meet 'the volume of traffic'?

**Tony Purton
Denham** ■

