

AOPA Bonus Day takes wings



*Chris Royle,
Chairman of the AOPA
Members Working Group,
reports on AOPA's Bonus Day at Duxford*

*Some of the aircraft that flew into Duxford,
with concours winners in the foreground
Right: Judges Nick Wilcock and George Done
with the concours-winning de Havilland Rapide*

Duxford 'bonus' days have been a feature of the flying calendar for the last few years and are the brainchild of Alan Evans, part time FISO at Duxford. The idea is to promote Duxford as a destination and to encourage pilots to fly in to this historic airfield. Each day has a theme, (e.g. Piper bonus day) and the 'bonus' of discounts on landing and entry fees to the world-class Imperial War Museum.



AOPA has participated in the last two Safety Bonus Days, with members of the Members Working Group and the Instructor's committee volunteering their time to promote AOPA and the good work it does.

In September 2009, Alan proposed an AOPA bonus day for 2010. We set up a small planning team and resolved to make the day a mixture of serious and fun, with the aim of ensuring that everyone went home having enjoyed a good day out.

We really did feel that the day was going to be very special when we learned that we had succeeded in attracting two very influential speakers – Eric Sivel, Deputy Head of Rulemaking at EASA and Ben Alcott, Head of the CAA's Safety Regulation Group – to talk at a morning seminar and to participate in a post seminar question and answer session.

The afternoon's activities were planned to be less serious, with a concours competition, oldest and youngest pilots and furthest flown, all attracting good prizes. In addition, demonstrations and exhibits from a number of

AOPA corporate members would give our guests plenty to see and discuss.

Saturday 18th September dawned clear and bright, with the forecast for the whole day promising perfect flying weather. Consequently, there was a bumper turnout of 56 visiting aircraft, together with about 20 car arrivals and corporate members, putting the total number of visitors at about 160.

On arrival, guests were greeted with a welcome pack containing what we thought would be useful information for the event and also details of discounts on Classic Wings



*Lower left: a section of the seminar audience at Duxford
This photo: AOPA's CEO Martin Robinson and EASA's Deputy Head of Rulemaking Eric Sivel*



Speakers and guests were treated to a flight in the Classic Wings de Havilland Dragon Rapide at Duxford. From left beside aircraft: Guy Lachlan, Roger Hopkinson, Jeremy James, David Roberts, Martin Robinson, Mick Martin, Eric Sivel, Ben Alcott.



flights and Friends of Duxford. Apologies to those early arrivals that missed the welcome pack – we will sort this next time.

In addition to Eric Sivel and Ben Alcott, AOPA invited a number of VIPs from other aviation organisations as guests. These were Guy Lachlan (BBGA), Roger Hopkinson (LAA), David Roberts (RAeC), Jeremy James (HCGB), Mick Martin (IWM Duxford).

Seminar session

After an opening welcome from George Done, Chairman AOPA UK, Martin Robinson, CEO AOPA UK and Senior Vice President IAOPA, introduced the guests and got the session going. Eric Sivel and Ben Alcott addressed an audience of around 100.

Eric's presentation showed just how complex the EASA process is. His slides can be found on the website www.aopa.co.uk, where there is a news item about the day.

Ben Alcott explained the Strategic Review 2 of the CAA and then asked us what sort of regulator / CAA do we want in the future? It does seem that there is a desire in the CAA for a root and branch review that will produce an organisation more relevant and accessible.

Question and answer session

Martin Robinson posed pre-submitted questions to Eric and Ben. There was lively discussion on the medical requirements for the forthcoming LAPL, the future of non-EU registered aircraft, and the interrelationship between EASA and the CAA.

We intend to put all the questions to Eric

and Ben by email and publish replies on the website. Hindsight and feedback from participants shows that we may have allocated insufficient time for questions. The audience was also getting hungry, so some learning points for the future.

Competition Results

Concours

Pre 1960. First prize of £50 cash and a certificate to Mark Miller, co-owner of the 1941 DH89A Dragon Rapide G-AGJG.

1960 to 2000. First prize of £50 cash and a certificate to David Whitcombe owner of 1988 PA-34-220T Seneca III G-JANN.

2000 to Date. First prize of £50 cash and a certificate to Vic Flintham, owner of the 2010 Czech Sport Sportcruiser G-SCVF.

Furthest Flown

£100 cash prize to Stan Dauncey, who flew in to Duxford from Yearby, 158 nm direct.

Oldest Pilot

One Year Free AOPA UK Membership to Colin Tolliday

Youngest Pilot

One Year Free AOPA UK Membership to Edward Burt

Corporate / Trade Guests

Our thanks to the following, who supported the event and displayed aircraft and other products of interest to pilots.

Airways Aero Associates Ltd, displayed a Tecnam P2006T Twin and a Tecnam P2002 JF Single aircraft which are available for training through Airways Flying Club.

Diamond Aircraft UK displayed a Diamond DA-42NG Twin and Diamond DA-40NG single aircraft

Flyer Magazine

GA Buyer Europe

HeliAir displayed a Robinson R44 Helicopter

Lees Avionics displayed a PA 28 Archer with upgraded Garmin avionics and other Garmin panel products.

RocketRoute displayed their new flight planning software products.

Feedback from attendees

We asked for your feedback and we got it from a good number of guests. Thank you for this. It was a great relief to the organisers that all were positive about the event and that we should have more. You raised valid points where things didn't go as well as we would have hoped and also gave us some ideas on how to structure any future event. We have shared your feedback with Duxford and, together, we will try to make the next one even better.

Conclusion

You told us that it was a very successful and enjoyable day, with the outstandingly good weather helping enormously, and that we should definitely do it again.

Particular thanks to: Alan Evans, Mick Elborn, Mike Cross, Martin Robinson, Mandy Nelson, George Done, AOPA office staff, Timothy Nathan, John Murray, Mel Stewart, Nick Wilcock, Besso Insurance, who supported the event, AOPA members and non members who attended on the day, Our Corporate Members and Trade Guests who attended, Management and staff of IWM Duxford – and the weather gods! ■