

Time to get your IMC rating now

AOPA's campaign to preserve the IMC rating has begun to bear fruit, with EASA agreeing that holders of the rating may continue to exercise its privileges for life. While it has welcomed the concession, AOPA believes the IMC rating is so important to general aviation safety that it should continue to be available to all UK pilots, present and future, and there will be no let-up in the fight to preserve it.

In the meantime, AOPA expects an upsurge in the number of pilots taking the IMC rating course. It is now clear that anyone who has an IMC rating when EASA takes over responsibility for licensing in April 2012 will benefit from the proven safety net it represents for as long as they fly. While the IMC campaign continues on behalf of future generations of pilots, there is no guarantee that EASA will not kill it off, so the message is simple – get yours now.

EASA is effectively being forced to abolish the IMC rating in the interests of European harmonisation. Some European countries do not allow flight in IMC outside controlled airspace, and EASA is not in the business of harmonising airspace requirements. So on the face of it, there is currently no mechanism by which the IMC rating can be retained. An industry group called FCL008, set up to discuss all aspects of instrument flying in Europe, failed to convey the true nature of the IMC rating or mount a defence of it.

As a result of AOPA's lobbying, EASA agreed to a special meeting in October in Cologne to discuss the IMC rating. Invited were Cliff Whittaker, Head of Licensing and Training Policy at the CAA, Mike Dobson, Head of Standards at the CAA's Personnel Licensing Department, members of the FCL008 group, and Martin Robinson and Nick Wilcock of AOPA UK. Unfortunately EASA now says that we cannot quote their officials by name without submitting their comments to the EASA press office for vetting. We will therefore not name them – suffice it to say, however, that they were knowledgeable, senior decision makers.

Mike Dobson and Cliff Whittaker expressed the CAA's strong support for the IMC rating, and in a surprise move, the EASA representatives agreed that it was not within EASA's power to abolish any right or privilege already enjoyed under a national regulation.

Cliff Whittaker questioned them closely on this topic until there could be no doubt as to the meaning – as long as you had an IMC rating when EASA took over, they couldn't take it away from you.

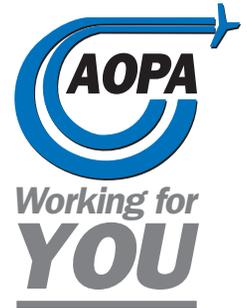
This is such an important and wide-ranging concession that it needs to be evaluated and understood. IAOPA has asked its Brussels

lawyers to unearth the precise law which makes this provision – it's certainly not aviation law. But it could offer a solution to some of the intractable problems that EASA presents, not least that of the Basic Commercial Pilots Licence, under whose provisions some 700 of Britain's most experienced flying instructors currently work. These people stood to lose their jobs unless they undertook a full CPL course, but if EASA cannot remove their privileges, the situation may be retrieved.

EASA's Notice of Proposed Amendment covering instrument flying is due in January 2011, at which time the precise details of its

intentions on the IMC rating will become known and the next steps can be taken. After the Cologne meeting Martin Robinson said: "We welcome the concession, having previously been told it was not possible to grant grandfather rights under EASA, but we will

not allow it to take the steam out of the campaign to retain the IMC rating for the safety of all UK pilots present and future." ■



'it was not within EASA's power to abolish any right or privilege already enjoyed under a national regulation'

Why the IMC rating must be saved

AOPA's campaign to preserve the IMC rating for all pilots is unaffected by EASA's concession of grandfather rights to existing holders, which is only the first of several steps which must be taken if the Agency is to live up to its promise, made in 2008, that the IMC rating would still be available in the UK even if other European countries could not adopt it.

The IMC rating is a fantastic safety win for Britain, better than anything available elsewhere in Europe, better than anything the Americans have got. It teaches low-time pilots to maintain control of aircraft in cloud, and to get their aircraft safely back on the ground. In more than 40 years of successful operation it has saved the lives of countless British pilots. It is one of the major reasons why Britain's GA fatality rate is so much lower than elsewhere in Europe and America, despite our

challenging maritime climate. AOPA's accident studies, based on figures provided by AOPAs in other European countries, show that while some 90 pilots a year are killed in France in all forms of GA, and about 80 a year in Germany, the figure for the UK is between 20 and 25. The UK CAA has in the past claimed that GA safety in Britain is four times better than other parts of Europe, a figure AOPA does not dispute. It would be criminally irresponsible to kill off the IMC rating.

In more than 40 years of successful operation it has saved the lives of countless British pilots

The background

The IMC rating came about in 1967 when AOPA Chairman Ron Campbell and Peter Skinner, a Director of AOPA and Instructor Committee member, were driving back from a conference. Conversation turned to ways of improving the safety of general aviation pilots. Few PPL holders aspired to the Instrument Rating, and there was a vast gulf between the basic PPL(A) and the distant IR. The cost, the time required, the need to learn a lot of theory that was of limited practical use militated against obtaining an IR, even for those pilots whose flying patterns or ambitions would benefit from it and whose aircraft had the anti-icing, oxygen or pressurisation to make best use of it. What about proposing something in between that was attainable relatively soon after the achievement of a PPL, something that

would make pilots safer by improving their instrument flying skills and general flying standards? On reaching Ron's home in the village of Aspley Guise in Bedfordshire, they sat down and roughed out a

basic outline of a new qualification, suggesting that it be called the IMC rating.

Following many more meetings, Campbell and Skinner had the first draft of the new AOPA IMC rating for presentation to the CAA. The first edition included control of aircraft in IMC, radar vectoring and the use of ADF but

did not include a 'let down'. In May 1968 the IMC rating was approved by the CAA and once instructors had received a qualification to instruct for this new rating, training commenced in 1969. It was soon realised that after pilots had been taught to retain and regain control in IMC, the next great contribution to the preservation of life would be the ability to return the aircraft safely to the ground. A revised version of the IMC rating was published in 1973, where RAD/NAV and let-downs were introduced. Since then, according to the CAA, only one IMC rated pilot has been killed in a continued-VFR-into-IMC accident – a CFIT in the Lake District.

Some 25,000 IMC ratings have been issued since 1969, and remarkably, 23,000 pilots who obtained the IMC rating still had valid medicals in 2008. Many of these have progressed beyond using the IMC rating, others may have allowed it to lapse; currently there are estimated to be 6,700 active IMC rating holders in the UK. While applications for the IMC rating have fallen off in recent times because of uncertainty over its future, it has been hugely popular in the past – the record year was 1991/92 when 1,630 IMC ratings were issued.

People do not spend money on such ratings unless they can see the benefits. The safety enhancement is recognised across Europe, too – many foreign pilots, notably Dutch and German, come to the UK to obtain IMC ratings not because they can use them at home, but →

because they might one day save their lives. Similarly, the average IMC holder does not use the rating in normal flying; it's kept in reserve to get them out of trouble.

Survey

The IMC rating confers no additional privileges of entry into controlled airspace beyond those of an unrated pilot, imposes no additional requirement for air traffic control services and impinges on no commercial traffic. All it does is reduce the legal visibility minima in which the PPL can operate. Why then do pilots spend thousands of pounds achieving the rating?

An online survey conducted over two years by Steve Copeland of the AOPA Members Working Group gives a clear picture of how the rating is used by pilots in the real world. Respondents were asked to describe their use of the rating with five tick-box options: to get you home in bad weather; primarily for climbing through cloud to fly VFR on top; for IFR touring around the UK; for business travel; and for improved SVFR privileges in controlled airspace. Just over 80 percent said they considered the IMCR to be a 'get you home' rating for use in bad weather. The figures back up the results of an ad hoc survey of airfields with instrument approaches, who said that when the weather closes in, GA traffic all but vanishes. Some 97% planned to keep their

IMC rating current, and 94% would be concerned if the IMC rating ceased to exist. The majority of IMC rating holders made little or no use of the privileges in terms of flying approaches and full instrument flight.

The evidence

When AOPA sought evidence of the safety benefits of the rating from pilots, it had its biggest postbag ever. A representative sample of pilots' responses was published in the February 2010 issue of *General Aviation* magazine – six pages of it. Pilot after pilot gave details of how the skills they learned during the IMC rating course had saved their lives; some agreed that they might have escaped a fatal accident had it not been for the rating, but others were adamant that without it they would have been killed – and Britain would have a similar death rate to France. One IMC rating holder, an air traffic controller at Aberdeen, told of a French pilot who had been flying 'VFR on top' in his area and had got caught when his destination and alternate were socked in; only by



deploying a fleet of commercial planes and helicopters to find a hole did ATC save his bacon. We cannot afford to turn the clock back to those days in the UK. You can download a PDF of the pilots' stories from the IAOPA Europe website – go to <http://www.iaopa.eu/contentServlet/feb10.htm> and click on 'Page 12-17 – How the IMC rating saves lives'.

The threat

EASA has been given the job of harmonising aviation regulation across Europe, but it is not harmonising airspace – so if one state decides

Chief executive's diary: Holding EASA to account

At the end of my last diary I said that I was going off to a meeting of the EASA Advisory Body. This is the group, created by regulation, where industry is able to question the budget of EASA as well as the safety plan. In my opinion EASA is not performing a safety regulator's role, but is trying to deliver on political issues as decided by the European Commission. I do not believe that EASA has the right level of staffing or the right skills match. It overspends its budget because it needs to respond to consultation within a given time frame, but EASA never considered that it would be inundated with the number of responses it gets. EASA started out believing that it would be so good at rulemaking that it would get very few comments – in fact, we were promised that EASA would be so competitive in rulemaking in GA that it would take away the need or the advantage of going to the USA for licenses, ratings or registrations. The reality has been very different.

The EAB continues to challenge the EASA Board of Management on delivery of better regulation by EASA, but I can't honestly say it does so effectively. It comprises industry representatives, pilots groups, trades unions and so forth, and their imperatives are all different. When GA suggests we tackle EASA on an issue, Rolls Royce or Dassault tend to ask whether that's really necessary. That's because we operate differently. When the likes of Airbus wants something changed, its Chairman will

arrange a meeting with EASA's Director General Patrick Goudou and they will sort it out between them. They don't need the EAB in the way general aviation does. So we can never agree on a single position. With one exception, I can't put my hand on my heart and say AOPA's presence at the EAB has improved matters for members. The exception is the freezing of EASA's fees and charges for companies with fewer than 10 employees. But the EAB is all we've got, so we must keep chipping away.

October began with a CAA safety conference at Gatwick. Although this was aimed at commercial air transport, the CAA kindly extended an invitation to myself. It's always worth being around when the airlines are discussing their plans because sometimes, unwittingly, they will propose something that will have a deleterious effect on GA, and it's best to put down our marker before things go too far.

We had the AOPA Executive Committee meeting on the 11th; I gave my usual report, most of which has already been reported in these pages. The Executive Committee, which effectively guides AOPA's strategy and authorises major expenditure, now includes Chris Royle, Mike Cross and Pauline Vahey from the Members Working Group.

On the 19th I attended a meeting at the CAA with Director of Safety Regulation Gretchen Burrett and other senior officers to have an open discussion on where the CAA



should be heading in the future. I'm keen to ensure that when EASA takes responsibility for most regulatory functions, the CAA does not see EASA's regulations as minimum requirements which need enhancement. The bottom line is that more regulation does not equal more safety – in fact, often the opposite is

true. I illustrated the point with the effect of the JARs on Group B aircraft, which was effectively to price the twin-engined aircraft out of the private market. As a result, we have more people going over water in single-engined aircraft, which we were always led to believe was less safe.

On the same day I had lunch with CAA Chief Executive Andrew Haines, who takes very active interest in GA. Amongst other things we had discussed the development of the state safety plan and the future relationship of EASA and the CAA. EASA has made general aviation far more complicated and expensive. Even if you forget the cost of the change to Part M, EASA's maintenance regime is adding about £1,000 a year to the cost of keeping a fixed-wing aircraft, up to £2,000 for a helicopter. Yet you get the same piece of paper. What was the point? The labyrinth EASA has created in GA is almost impossible to follow. We'll have the 45-hour PPL, and the 30-hour LAPL. Instructors for the latter can't instruct for the former, and some can be paid and some can't, and aircraft under 450kg can go unregulated in places where Group A aircraft must be regulated, except if they're Annex II, and you can fly a Spitfire on a national licence but not on an EASA

that IMC flight should be illegal outside controlled airspace, then the IMC rating cannot be adopted across Europe. EASA has maintained up to now that that must mean it cannot be offered or used anywhere, even in the UK where it has been saving lives for four decades.

A campaign of misinformation about the IMC rating was mounted by those who wanted to kill it in order to further their own ideas – it was characterised as “an IR with 20% of the training” and some airline pilots had visions of the airways and ILSs of Europe suddenly becoming cluttered with Group A aircraft and low-time pilots. The British Airline Pilots Association tried to counter this nonsense in discussions with its European counterparts, with limited success.

EASA set up a Working Group called FCL008 to debate all matters pertaining to instrument flying, with a specific brief to evaluate the UK IMC rating. FCL008's terms of reference were headed 'Qualifications for Flying in Instrument Meteorological Conditions' and included under section 3, Objectives: 'Review the requirements of the

23 AOPAs in Europe have supported a call for the UK to be allowed to keep the rating, and many have said they would like it to be offered in their own countries

UK IMC rating and other national qualifications for flying in IMC and consider whether there is a need to develop an additional European rating to fly in IMC with less training, but also with limited privileges.' AOPA UK was not selected to sit on that group but sought to influence the debate through AOPA Germany, which had a seat; unfortunately the German representative was over-ruled when he tried to introduce the IMC rating into the discussion, and FCL008 failed in its obligation to consider the IMC rating.

The great irony in all of this is that EASA does not want to ban the IMC rating; in discussions, some of its officials have indicated that they see the merits of it. But no mechanism has been created whereby a national rating can be attached to an EASA licence, which is all we'll have in future. If one size doesn't fit all, everybody loses.

During the early years of EASA, CAA Chairman Sir Roy McNulty toured the capitals of Europe telling national safety authorities that EASA must not be allowed to reduce safety to some low common denominator. He was instrumental in keeping the national authorities

in the game when many thought they would simply become administrative rumps of EASA; however, his safety argument did not apparently extend to general aviation. The CAA always seemed ambivalent about the IMC rating; when asked to come off the fence it mumbled about having to wait to see what EASA decided, and sat on its hands. A major change came when Andrew Haines was appointed Chief Executive of the CAA in 2009; support for the IMC rating became strong and unequivocal, and it is now expressed CAA policy to retain the rating. Senior CAA officials Cliff Whittaker and Mike Dobson have made the Authority's position plain to EASA.

Support

Despite the widespread belief in Europe that the IMC enjoyed little support in Britain, every major pilots' organisation has given it unequivocal support, including the British Air Line Pilots Association, the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators and the RAF Flying Clubs Association. Every one of the 23 AOPAs in Europe have supported a call for the UK to be allowed to keep the rating, and many have said they would like it to be offered in their own countries. Conservative Euro MPs have been helpful in pressing the case for the IMC rating in Europe. Notable among them are

one, and you need a law degree to know whether you're flying within the rules or not. The point I made to Andrew Haines was that more regulation will not improve safety rates, but more attention to human factors just might. Attitude problems are often what kill pilots. It's a difficult topic to address, but more emphasis in this area might be fruitful.

On October 20th AOPA hosted a Maintainers Group meeting under the chairmanship of George Done. We had CAA representation, too. Benefits which can be won for our maintainers will end up in the pockets of owners and pilots in the form of reduced maintenance bills and associated costs; more work is planned for the future.

On the 22nd I had a teleconference with our international lawyers Hogan Lovells in Washington to discuss the impact of European legislation on the US. See separate story on these pages. The Aerodrome Operators Association held its annual awards on the 25th, and AOPA was asked to select the best GA aerodrome – the award went to Denham.

Three days later I was back in Brussels for a Eurocontrol/NATO meeting on security – see separate story – and the following day I met with the European Business Aircraft Association and the General Aviation Manufacturers Association to work out how we might liaise and consult on issues of common interest. The first issues we could jointly address are some aspects of EASA FCL and SESAR. A common approach from three groups with significant financial underpinnings and lobbying power would carry a great deal of weight.

On the first day of November we had a CAA Directorate of Airspace Policy meeting on future airspace strategy at the Royal

Aeronautical Society. DAP is sharing its ideas for airspace for tomorrow and how the UK plans to modernise the airspace and ATM. See www.caa.co.uk/airspace. Where does this fit with SESAR? I dunno.

Next day I attended a Department for Transport meeting on Olympic airspace planning. The Atkins study on the use of helicopters was presented; why the government should spend money on consultants to produce a report like this is beyond me. It rehearses how helicopters might be used, what disturbance levels might be – basically it says black is black, white is white and the government must decide what colour it wants. Apparently there is a chart with lines on it which shows where the restrictions will be during the Olympics. I asked to see it, but was told it might be ready for the next meeting.

On the 3rd and 4th I attended a Jeppesen workshop at Heathrow, looking at some of their new products. Of interest are EFB and the Jeppesen iPad application which provides the airport and IFR SIDS and STAR charts. Next day I met Mike O'Donohue of GASCo for a discussion of Safety Evenings and how they are to be structured. As well as running GASCo Mike represents IAOPA on the EASA EGAST group – that's the European General Aviation Safety Team. More to follow in due course.

On the 8th I led a small delegation of AOPA Ireland to a meeting with the IAA Chief Executive and his senior staff. We were made very welcome and both sides soon got into an honest exchange of views. We agreed that safety was our primary aim and that GA wants to discuss openly with the IAA how best to achieve safety and facilitate growth without the need for more regulation. The IAA will develop over the

coming month a GA safety forum. IAOPA and AOPA Ireland will remain engaged in the discussion.

Next day I had another meeting with Hogan Lovells in Brussels regarding issues with the EASA FCL proposals. In the afternoon we had a meeting of the Industry Consultation Body, which looked at Functional Airspace Blocks and the slow progress on the first phase of SESAR, known as IP1. This affects other factors like 8.33 radio adoption and SERA, the Single European Sky Rules of the Air. European states must vote for the adoption of IP1, and the vote has been put back until next February or March.

Between the 10th and 14th I was at the AOPA Summit – formerly AOPA Expo – in Long Beach, California. It struck me that a lot of AOPA US initiatives, like the 'GA serves America' campaign, should be more international in scope. Aviation is in fact America's biggest export, and GA is a significant part of that. Yet we met a lot of people who believed they couldn't fly in Britain or France because we supposedly pay steep en-route charges. I did a live interview looking at what's going on in Europe and how it might affect the USA, and why it is important for AOPA US to take play an active role in world affairs.

The National Business Aircraft Association has the same idea; on the 16th I met with Steve Brown, NBAA's head of government affairs; America might be by far the biggest aviation market, but increasingly the centre of gravity is shifting to Asia, and they're concerned that the European effect on international regulation will hit them hard.

Martin Robinson



→ Timothy Kirkhope, MEP for Yorkshire and the Humber, who is a private pilot with an IMC rating, and Conservative Transport Spokesman Jackie Foster. The vast majority of pilots' organisations in Britain have given

unequivocal backing to the IMC rating,

EASA will be publishing its Notice of Proposed Amendment on instrument flying qualifications in January, and the next move will depend on what's in that NPA.

Martin Robinson says: "AOPA will

take no formal position on it until we have seen EASA's Notice of Proposed Amendment setting out its plans for instrument flying

qualifications. When it comes to the IMC rating, standards are not at issue; we are concerned only to create a political route through which the rating can be attached to an EASA licence for use only in the UK.

"There's no reason why aviation should be subject to enforced harmonisation when other areas are not – they are not, for instance, insisting that we drive on the right hand side of the road. The current situation forces EASA to sacrifice aviation safety to political expediency, and they need to be relieved of that requirement. A simple political input that gives EASA more leeway is all that's required, and we will continue to press for it." ■

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What the IMC rating course entails

Before you can apply for an IMC rating you need to have amassed 25 hours' experience since the date of application for your PPL(A). This must include ten hours as PIC, of which five hours must be cross-country flight. The 15 hours (minimum) of the IMC rating course may be included in this 25 hours. You also need an R/T licence.

Of the 15-hour minimum for the course, two hours may be in an approved simulator. No fewer than ten of the 15 hours must be flown by sole reference to instruments. In the event, most of your training will probably be done under the hood. In most cases, instructors will lay greater emphasis on those instrument approaches available at or near your home airfield, which is where you're more likely to encounter IMC conditions inadvertently.

You also need at least 20 hours of theoretical knowledge training covering flight instruments, flight planning, the privileges and limitations of the IMC rating, the Aeronautical Information Service, and physiological factors. There's a written examination comprising 25 multi-choice questions and the pass mark is 72 percent.

The initial flight test for the IMC rating must be conducted by a Flight Examiner or an Instrument Rating Examiner. The test will include straight and level flight at given speeds, turns at a given rate onto given headings, climbing and descending including turns, recovery from unusual attitudes, all of these on both full and partial panel; use of radio navigation aids and

maintenance of track based on a pilot-interpreted aid for ten minutes; let-down and approach to minimums, missed approach procedure using a pilot-interpreted aid, a recognised instrument approach procedure to minimums with an appropriate go-round and missed approach procedure; and bad weather circuits.

The rating is valid for 25 months and must be renewed with a flight test. Either you can demonstrate that during the 25 months you've completed a let-down, approach to minimums, go-round and

missed approach using a different aid from the one in the initial flight test (and this must be signed off by a qualified instructor) or you can do two approach procedures using different aids during the renewal or revalidation flight test. This test must also be conducted by a Flight Examiner or Instrument

Rating Examiner, and it will include some elements of the initial flight test.

If your IMC rating expired more than five years ago you must do at least 7.5 hours dual instrument instruction and pass the initial IMC flight test again.

Once you've obtained the IMC rating, the requirement on your PPL(A) for you to fly clear of cloud and in sight of the surface is removed. The rating does not allow you access to any airspace you could not fly in as a PPL; it merely reduces your visibility minima. You can enter a control zone on a Special VFR clearance when flight visibility is less than 5nm but not less than 1.5 nm. In uncontrolled airspace your visibility minimum is 1.5 nm. You may take off or land with visibility below cloud of not less than 1 nm. The IMC rating is only valid in the UK, including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

Austin Brown



Taking the fight to EASA

Nick Wilcock of the AOPA Instructors Committee attended the special IMC rating meeting with EASA in Cologne together with AOPA Chief Executive Martin Robinson. This is Nick's report.

"My overwhelming impression was that the FCL.008 group chairman Raimund F Neuhold, Chief Training Pilot of Lufthansa Cityline, was clearly more interested in process than product; he was at pains to declare that his group had met the Terms of Reference set for them by EASA and was seemingly less concerned that they had delivered anything of material benefit. They have certainly made proposals for a so-called 'achievable' IR and for an 'En-route' Instrument Rating which includes no approach privileges. However, contrary to the promise made by EASA's Eric Sivel and the CAA's Ben Alcott at the CAA Kingsway briefing on January 22nd 2008, FCL.008 has failed to propose a resolution to the UK IMCR situation. Sivel had promised that a solution would be found; indeed, he is also on record as having stated that if FCL.008 did not find one, they would have failed in the task set for them by EASA. Perhaps their TORs were inadequately drafted; however, the position is that Sivel assured the UK that a solution would be found and EASA's Executive Director Patrick Goudou made a formal statement to the European Parliament confirming that the UK IMCR would be taken into emergent European regulation. FCL.008 has failed to do this; it now rests upon EASA to ensure that adequate provisions are included in the Notice of Proposed Amendment now being drafted.

"There was much discussion about the fact that regulations change over time; some of the FCL.008 group drew parallels with changes in motor vehicle licensing. However, I cut this short by reminding them that no-one in the motor vehicle licensing business had given political assurances to a Member State in the way that both Sivel and Goudou have. FCL.008 and EASA were clearly uncomfortable about this. Matthias Borgmeier of FCL.008 asked why we had not submitted any technical proposals for the future of the UK IMCR. I advised him that I most certainly had – as an objection to their non-inclusion in FCL.001. I gave him both the specific reference (Comment 117 to NPA 2008-17b Implementing Rules for Pilot Licensing - Part-FCL), which also included my alternative proposals, and read out the EASA response. It was obvious that the topic had been delegated to FCL.008, who failed to consider it properly. AOPA UK later submitted the same recommendations direct to FCL.008, but these have also been ignored.

"We moved on to discuss 'grandfathering'. Earlier, Geoffrey Boot (AOPA Instructor Committee Chairman) and I had agreed that the EASA 'Opinion' covering national licence conversions gave the CAA authority to issue current IMCR holders with EASA IRs restricted to the same privileges as the current UK IMCR for use in UK airspace only, although the CAA had been reluctant to accept this. However, EASA confirmed that the AOPA viewpoint was correct and that the CAA does indeed have this authority; Cliff Whittaker now accepts this point. We expect this to meet the needs of existing IMCR holders; however, it will not meet our future requirements.

"AOPA UK holds the following position with regard to the future of IFR flight in Europe for GA pilots:

- Support for the concept of an EASA part FCL/ICAO level IR with proportionate theoretical knowledge requirements.
- Opposition to any future instrument qualification which does not include approach privileges.

- Insistence upon the retention of UK IMCR privileges within UK airspace.
- Recommendation for the benefits of the UK IMCR be clearly explained to the rest of the EC.

"It is clear that FCL.008 has not met our position in all areas; hence we will continue to work towards an acceptable solution. We know that FCL.008 will propose an 'achievable' IR with reduced theoretical knowledge requirements and the 'EIR' which has the same theoretical knowledge requirements as the 'full' IR. However, neither categorisation of airspace nor rules of the air are harmonised throughout EU Member States. So it is clearly impossible for any sub-ICAO instrument qualification below the 'achievable' IR to meet the needs of all Member States. It would be folly to attempt to specify the privileges of such a qualification until harmonisation of airspace and rules of the air has been achieved, so any formal decision concerning a sub-ICAO instrument qualification should be put on hold until that time. Until then, Member States should be empowered to issue 'Restricted IRs' whose privileges and theoretical knowledge requirements would be proportionate to the training, language requirements, airspace structure and rules of the air of the Member State in which the 'Restricted IR' would be used. This would remove any need for a 'single-standard EIR' to be introduced in the short term.

The European Commission has stated that the present regulatory system gives enough guarantees of safety; clearly there is no need for urgent change. The 'Restricted IR' would also allow EASA to respect the legal and institutional deadlines laid down by the Member States and the European Parliament while at the same time paving the way towards a smooth improvement of the system in the coming years, in full cooperation with the Member States and all the stakeholders.

FCL.008 has failed to meet the assurances EASA has given to the CAA and to the European Parliament in respect of the UK IMC Rating. Unless suitable provisions are included in the NPA, EASA will put at risk the adoption of the implementing rules related to the EASA extension of competences within the timeframe indicated by the co-legislators and contained in Regulation 216/2008. The European Commission has already advised EASA that their NPAs are too ambitious and could put this at risk; however, EASA does not appear to have heeded this advice. Political pressure must now be brought to bear to ensure that EASA respects its obligations both to the European Commission and, more importantly, to individual stakeholders." ■

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AOPA wins breathing space on N-reg

EASA's proposal to make it illegal for pilots based in Europe to fly for more than a year on FAA licenses is to be discussed again on December 7th by the Comitology Committee which rejected them in October and asked for a rethink.

If the proposals are pushed through they will cost pilots millions of euros, lead to redundancies in the GA maintenance and support industry and probably drive out of the business those pilots who cannot afford the time and money it takes to get two instrument ratings and keep up two licenses and medicals. While it seems it will still be legal to operate an N-registered aircraft in Europe and to fly it on a European licence, it may not be legal to fly it between European countries unless you have both European and American licenses and IRs.

This situation, too, may soon change because there's another shoe to drop. An EASA proposal on the operation of third country aircraft is expected soon – possibly by the end of the year.

EASA finally showed its hand on the vexed issue of third country licences in September, when it put forward proposals that would make them valid for one year, after which an EASA licence would have to be obtained. EASA's Director General Patrick Goudou had previously stated that he recognised there were good reasons why European pilots held FAA licenses and kept aircraft on the N register, and EASA would deal with the 'third country' issue by making sure there were no advantages to being on non-European registers. In fact, the cost and complexity of EASA's rulemaking has made it ever more difficult to operate in Europe, and EASA has finally chosen the nuclear option of effectively banning the FAA licence for domiciled Europeans. The move is entirely political – there is no suggestion that any safety factors are involved.

For the holder of an FAA PPL/IR, it would mean that you would have to pay for a certain amount of flying instruction – enough to get you up to speed with the European way of examining, rather than to meet any ability standards – and you'd have to do the IR flight test. You'd also have to study for and sit the seven theory exams required for the European IR – at the end of which you'd be allowed to do exactly what you're doing now, and have perhaps been doing safely for decades.

The FAA makes agreements only with other states, and the agreement by which you can fly an N-registered aircraft on the licence of another state applies only to individual states.

Direct Debit members

It would be of assistance to the Membership Department if those members who pay by direct debit and wish to cancel their membership would notify us of their intentions. Sometimes the only notification we receive is a message from BACS informing us that the direct debit has been cancelled – in some instances not due to cancellation but to change of nominated bank details. We cannot know this unless we have been informed. Thank you.

Therefore it seems that if you own or fly an N-registered aircraft you will not be able fly it between, say, England and France on an EASA licence issued in England or France. You will have to keep both FAA and EASA licences and IRs current. You will also need current medicals from both sides, although the standards will be different and you might get one but not the other.

Some of those with N-registered aircraft would be unable to switch them onto European registers because many have been modified according to FAA STCs, which makes it impossible to transfer them.

The proposals caused a flurry of activity at

and a Class 2 medical. It would also be necessary to demonstrate English language proficiency, and to have a minimum of 100 hours. That would convert the licence to a PPL with an SEP rating. Higher qualifications would be granted subject to additional training at the discretion of the service provider.

EASA says it is constrained by the Basic Regulation – the legal framework specified by the European Commission – to get the N-register out of Europe. In fact, the Basic Regulation requires only that EASA ensure it has adequate oversight, and there are many ways of doing that without taking an axe to the industry.



AOPA, which targeted the European Parliament and the Comitology Committee – a group of state representatives who must pass EASA's proposals, or 'opinions' – asking them to delay signing off EASA's proposal until it could be properly discussed. At its October meeting the Comitology Committee duly postponed consideration and asked EASA to come back on December 6th with rewritten proposals. Since that meeting the AOPAs of Europe and the United States have mounted a campaign to ensure that Parliamentarians and civil servants understood the issues.

There are believed to be about 10,000 European pilots currently operating with FAA tickets on N-registered aircraft. FAA figures are a poor guide; they show that UK pilots have obtained 20,851 FAA licenses or ratings, although it is not known how many are currently active. The figure for Switzerland is 6,258, for the Netherlands 4,024, for Italy 4,118, for Germany 17,461, for Austria 3,221 and for France 6,140. Every European country has a significant quota of FAA licence holders – in some cases outnumbering their own domestic issue. The cost of converting them all runs into millions of euros.

Under EASA's proposals the minimum requirements to convert a third country PPL would be to pass an examination in Air Law and Human Performance, a PPL Skills Test

Martin Robinson says: "EASA must ask itself what problem it is addressing here. The authorities of each state have absolute powers to prosecute any pilot for an infringement of their regulations, whatever licence he holds, so that's not an issue. If the authorities feel they have difficulty keeping track of the holders of third country licenses, they are at liberty to compile whatever database they feel they need. The UK, for instance, could validate third country licenses on condition that they be kept up according to the requirements of the state of issue.

It was originally thought that a bilateral agreement currently being worked on by the United States and Europe might provide an escape route, but the bilateral does not cover licensing. There may be a licensing bilateral in future, but not before EASA has had its way.

International licensing issues are likely to become more rather than less complicated, even within EASA. One of the positive aspects of EASA was said to be the possibility of 'regulatory shopping', where an owner pilot could go to another country for his oversight if he was dissatisfied with the cost or the service in his own country. But European states are moving to ensure that idea is stillborn; Sweden has already dictated that aircraft based in that country must be on the S register, and others are expected to follow suit. ■

EASA – the hope, the reality

Martin Robinson looks at how high hopes for EASA turned to dust

In the beginning, when EASA was being dreamed up, many of us thought that the European Commission had the opportunity to deliver a truly modern aviation regulator, one which could combine maximum safety with minimum unnecessary bureaucracy and cost, freeing the general aviation industry to grow and profit in the way it has done in some countries outside Europe. We thought that regulation would become less prescriptive, more streamlined, based on high-quality safety and risk data and subjected to cost-benefit study and Regulatory Impact Assessment.

How different is the concept from the reality. The plain fact is that EASA would not meet the minimum standards required of a regulator in the UK; its consultation processes are utterly inadequate, its Regulatory Impact Assessments are meaningless, the regulations it produces are needlessly complex, costly and bureaucratic, and it is wholly unresponsive to the legitimate concerns of the industry that must struggle to comply with its diktat. We have a regulator who is determined to deliver regulation to a pre-ordained and totally unrealistic timetable set by a European Commission which must be appeased, regardless of the cost to business.

When the UK government signed up to EASA, it bought a pig in a poke. It committed the aviation industry to comply with EASA regulation, *whatever that regulation might be*. I warned at the time that we were reposing a lot of faith in our ability to control and shape EASA's deliberations. In fact, we have been able to control and shape very little indeed.

In the UK, the government has commissioned such reviews as the Hampton Report which looked at ways of cutting red tape and bureaucracy in regulation, thereby reducing the cost to business. Hampton recommended making use of industry advice, applying the principle of risk assessment, increasing accountability, cutting out pointless form-filling, encouraging the viability of the regulated business. The UK CAA has to comply with Hampton, but when it comes to European regulation we are being forced to accept a lower standard of regulatory process – a system that is unacceptable in the UK.

Regulatory Impact Assessments are meaningless in EASA-land. An EASA RIA can say what it pleases – there is no quality control. Nobody will ever check whether the reality came within a million miles of the forecast impact, or whether the RIA was incomplete or just plain wrong. If it turns out to be fantasy, there are no sanctions. It merely pays lip service to the concept of 'better regulation'.

Consider EASA Part M, the maintenance regulations which were GA's first experience of EASA-style regulation. What has Part M given GA? Improved safety? No. Reduced cost and bureaucracy? No – quite the opposite. Would it comply with Hampton? No. Yet it seems that our own government is impotent. So I ask again, how has the development of EASA improved regulation?

EASA's attitude to industry consultation is exemplified in its treatment of its Working Group on complex operations. As we report in our coverage of the IAOPA Europe Regional Meeting in Amsterdam, the industry group spent a year discussing EASA's proposals in detail before being told that these proposals were not the ones EASA intended to put forward – they had been cranked out merely to meet a deadline. The real proposals were completely different. The industry representatives had taken hundreds of man-hours out of their businesses and spent a year picking over EASA's original 'proposals' and making their recommendations, only to find that EASA had known all along they were wasting their time.

While EASA treats the industry with such disdain, it seems happy to accept comments from national regulators with whom it must get along; failure to do so could mean problems further down the line, at the Comitology stage where the national authorities hold great sway.

EASA has come under criticism from all parts of the industry and MEPs in Brussels, but our own Government has not been notably voluble in support of the industry. The UK Department for Transport sits in the Comitology system, all the while knowing it is accepting a regulatory process which is far below any standard we would accept at home. It simply shifts the blame onto Europe and says we must comply, because we have signed up to EASA.

I talk to many different regulators across Europe and none of them ever speaks in a positive way about EASA – yet we all accept that the system as a *fait accompli*. In conversation with Daniel Calleja Crespo, the head of aviation at the EC's transport department DGTREN, he said to me: "We can have EASA, or we can have EASA." I replied: "Yes, but we can either have good EASA or bad EASA." What we want, and need, is good EASA – a modern EASA, one which regulates without adding more layers of bureaucracy and avoidable costs. What we get is an EASA whose first consideration is to cover its own liabilities.

The system needs reform, and to begin with EASA needs the right people with the right skills doing the right jobs. It has not got them. Its Director General Patrick Goudou expects to retire in three years; he told French pilots during the general assembly of the GIPAG, an organisation covering French flying schools and maintenance organisations, that it's important that he be replaced by a Frenchman. But is this wise? It has to be said that in matters of regulation, the French march to a different drum. Lawmaking in France is an elitist process. As a result, French people feel free to pick and choose which rules they will obey, and which they will discard. And the regulator allows leeway, and finesses the matter with a shrug. This is not the way in Germany, or in England. Regulations must be obeyed, and to the letter. Is there any room in aviation safety for the Gallic shrug? M Goudou complained at that meeting that he receives complaints from UK MPs every week and that EASA loses time answering them. EASA needs a Director General who can see the flaw in this statement.

The European Commission's white paper and MEP resolutions on 'A Sustainable Future for General and Business Aviation', although excellent, have done little to impress upon EASA the real needs of GA, and the need for properly defined segmented cost benefit studies. I guess this is hardly surprising, given that neither the paper nor the resolutions are law, and therefore EASA doesn't need to take account of what is in the communication.

The JAA did not improve the safety of GA, and all EASA is doing is adding another layer of bureaucracy which will further shrink the GA market and force people into alternatives such as the LAPL and sub-1000 kg aircraft. Do we believe EASA is having, or will have, a positive impact on safety in GA? The industry has given EASA a chance to prove itself, it has accepted being marginalised and dismissed in the hope that some good would come of it.

No good has come of it, and it looks increasingly likely that no good ever will. ■

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'It flies!' Swansea students win AOPA award

AOPA supports an educational initiative that aims to encourage budding aircraft designers every year by providing one of the major prizes in "It Flies!" – the Annual Merlin Flight Simulation Group's Aircraft Design and Handling Competition. In 2010 the competition took place in June at Coventry University and is open to student teams from UK universities and colleges; each team submits their own design of an aircraft to a specification set by their tutors which is then 'flown' on the Merlin simulator by test pilots Dave Southwood from the ETPS and Dave Mackay from Virgin Galactic, with commentary from John Farley, the now retired Harrier test pilot. The team from Swansea University had designed a 20 seat



This photo: the winning Swansea University students, and (left) their blended wing design



blended wing-body bizjet and it was selected by the test pilot team to receive the AOPA prize for the best new design, which consists of up to an hour's flying with an AOPA Corporate Member for each student. There were nine in the Swansea team, and six available to take up the award. One of the team, Beth Kenward, has described the team's flying experience with the West London Aero Club, as follows.

"At the beginning of the final year of our degree in Aerospace Engineering at Swansea University, we were given the task to design a new commercial aircraft that could be entered into the Merlin 'It Flies!' competition. At that point I don't think any of us thought that we would win the prize for best new design, giving us the opportunity to experience actually controlling a real aircraft in flight.

"I have always been interested in flying and so this opportunity also gave me a real incentive to go on and try to achieve my PPL.

"It was towards the end of September before our flight could be arranged. Six of us were able to take part and so we headed down to White Waltham in Maidenhead on a nice sunny Monday afternoon to get started with the experience.

"Our Instructors Tom Griffin and Neil Jackson met us in the club members bar and explained a few rules and what we would be doing on the flights.

"The plan was to split into two groups of three in two aircraft. We would take off from White Waltham and head off to Shoreham airport first. Here we would stop and get a drink in the café before switching pilots and

taking off again, this time heading to Goodwood airport. From Goodwood we would switch pilots again and fly back to White Waltham. This plan gave everyone a chance to take control of the aircraft.

"We took off in a Cessna 182 and a Piper Cherokee. I was in the Piper with Chris Pretty and Rajiv Banik while Andrew Girling, Ramsay Ilyat and Stephan Bulmer were in the Cessna. I took the final leg which allowed me to watch the others fly first and get some idea of what was to come. As I was on the last leg I was able to fly over my home town of Reading, an amazing experience that I am grateful for. It was a lovely afternoon with excellent visibility; we even got the chance to see other aircraft flying nearby and saw a Naval Sea King and a Chinook airborne from RAF Odiham. Previously, we had also orbited for a while over

Portsmouth allowing us to see some ships of the Royal Navy and other commercial vessels waiting at sea to come into port. I still find it hard to believe that we were up flying for nearly three hours and experienced some wonderful sights.

"Each of us was allowed to steer the aircraft on the ground whilst taxiing, and then take control and fly from the climb-out until lined up for landing at the destination aerodrome; en route were given the opportunity to manoeuvre the aircraft and do some banked turns. When we finally landed at White Waltham you could see from our smiles how much fun we had all had.

"This was a wonderful opportunity to experience in practice some of what we had learnt on our degree course, and so on behalf of the entire group I would like to thank George Done and AOPA for the award, Chris and Marion Neil from Merlin for running the competition, our Instructors Tom Griffin and Neil Jackson at the West London Aero Club, and Professors Sienz, Adhikari and Gethin and Clive Francis and Jane Wallace from Swansea University for helping us with our design and simulation model.

"We hope that other universities and students will continue to enjoy and participate, as we did, in 'It Flies!' in the future, and that the competitions in 2011 to be held at the University of Dayton, Ohio, USA, and Coventry University again are equally successful." ■

Infringement packs

An education campaign aimed at reducing the number of airspace infringements of the London TMA has been launched by the Airspace and Safety Initiative. ASI, which is supported by AOPA, is sending information packs to all flying schools in south east England for distribution to students and self-fly hirers. The packs contain listening squawk information cards, radio 'best practice' kneepads, magazines and interactive CDs. The CAA's Giles Porter, Chairman of the ASI Communications Group, says: "Flying instructors are the key contact with pilots, through initial flight training, additional ratings, re-validation training flights and general contact through flying schools and clubs. We are asking their help to move airspace safety on to the next level.

"We are particularly keen to get educational material to pilots who hire aircraft, as statistically they are responsible for a high percentage of all airspace infringements."

Flying schools who haven't got packs but think they'll benefit their students can get them from the CAA press office on 0207 453 6030.

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Who deserves recognition?

AOPA invites and urges members to submit for consideration the names of worthy candidates for its prestigious achievement and endeavour awards, which recognise the special contributions of individuals and organisations to private aviation.



The AOPA Awards are made every two years and cover almost every facet of GA, seeking to reward the contributions of pilots, flying schools and instructors, ATCOs, aerodromes and engineers – in fact anyone who has improved the lot of aviators anywhere.

If you would like to nominate someone for an award, please send a letter or an email to AOPA with enough supporting evidence to help a panel of judges form a decision. About 200 words should be enough, but more is welcome. The postal address is 50a Cambridge St, London SW1V 4QQ, and the email address is info@aopa.co.uk. If you have someone or an organisation in mind for a possible award, please do not delay – get an email or letter off to us straight away. All nominations will be acknowledged.

Achievement and Endeavour Awards are as follows:

Lennox-Boyd Trophy. Awarded to a person, club, group or organisation who has contributed significantly to the furtherance of flight training, club flying or piloting standards. The trophy is a cup in a special presentation box which 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 2009 the trophy was awarded to

Gerald Howarth, MP, for his efforts in conveying the value of general aviation within Parliament and beyond.

AOPA Special Award. Awarded to a pilot, controller or engineer, or other person who has made a special contribution to safety, or other areas of general aviation. The trophy is a cup originally presented by the British Precision Pilots Association in 1987. The trophy was awarded in 2009 to Pilot magazine for its significant and longstanding contribution to the world of general aviation.

Best Aerodrome. Awarded to the aerodrome that has been an outstanding place to visit, offering value for money and helpful service. The trophy is a sword donated to AOPA by Airtour International Ltd (now Pooley's Flight Equipment Ltd) in 1982. The sword was presented to Marshall Airport Cambridge in 2009 for its welcome to and accommodation of general and commercial aviation alike.

Customer Care. Awarded to the flying school, club or organisation that has provided outstanding customer care, as recommended by students or private pilots. The trophy is a shield, and was awarded in 2009 to James Crabbe of Shoreham Airport for his efforts in achieving continued operation for all users over a period of unsettling change of aerodrome ownership.

Contribution to the Community. Awarded to a person or organisation who has made an outstanding contribution to the aviation community. The trophy is a cup donated in 1997 by Flyer magazine. In 2009 it was

awarded to Mike Cross for his efforts in achieving operational viability for general aviation of Lee on Solent aerodrome.

Controller of the Year. Awarded to a controller, FISO or ATC team who has or have provided especially good service to pilots. The trophy is a shield, originally donated by International Air Radio Ltd, who developed the AERAD charts, in 1982. The award was given in 2009 to Gordon Reid of NATS for his efforts in improving the relationship between NATS and general aviation.

Individual Merit. Awarded to a pilot who has made an outstanding aviation achievement. The trophy is a cup on a granite plinth. It was awarded in 2009 to private pilot Timothy Kirkhope who, as an MEP, enabled the European Parliament to adopt overwhelmingly a resolution that provided the European Community and its member states with an important set of principles for general aviation.

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. The trophy is an art deco cup donated in 2004 by Virgin Experience Days. It was awarded in 2009 to Rod Brown who instructs at Denham Aerodrome and is a recognised authority on Chipmunk aircraft.

Friend of AOPA. Awarded to a person or persons who has or have made a special contribution towards the work of AOPA. The award is normally a tankard for the recipient to keep. In 2009 two awards were presented, one to Paddy Casey for his achievement in establishing AeroExpo as an important event in the GA calendar, and to Tim Scorer for providing valuable first-aid legal advice to AOPA members over many years. ■

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Ash award for Kelleher

You may have thought the CAA were all at sixes and sevens when trying to deal with the fallout from the Icelandic volcano, but in fact they stuck head and shoulders above other aviation authorities in their handling of the problem. When many were banning flights by gliders and even balloons (yes) the UK CAA allowed general aviation to continue to fly, and effectively wrote the book on volcanic ash which has been adopted across Europe. Now Padhraic Kelleher, the CAA's Head of Airworthiness, has been given a safety award by the International Federation of Airworthiness for his role in the volcanic ash crisis. The Whittle Award was presented to Kelleher at a conference on volcanic ash at the Royal Aeronautical Society in London last month. The award, named for Sir Frank Whittle, recognises those who have made a major contribution to the advance of aviation safety.

The IFA is a global organisation of airlines, manufacturers, professional bodies, regulators and others which aims to improve safety by

enhancing international communication and co-operation. The citation for the award reads: 'In recognition of his leadership in the co-ordination of international efforts to secure operational solutions to the risks presented by ash contamination of UK and European airspace by the Icelandic Volcano, Eyjafjallajokull, resulting in airworthiness criteria on ash tolerability and establishment of a safety risk management framework for flight in contaminated airspace.'

Lifting the award, Padhraic Kelleher said: "The events of April and May were challenging to say the least, with so many people working hard behind the scenes to resolve the crisis. It is encouraging to know that our actions in putting public safety first and seeking an evidence-based solution are appreciated by key industry bodies such as the IFA."

*Cockburn safety award: page 17



Airbox Aware winners

The names of new AOPA members go into the hat for a monthly prize draw with an Airbox Aware GPS-based anti-infringement tool in play. Our September winner was Naresh Malhotra, pictured



here with his spoils; winners for July and August were Andrew Stephenson and Nigel Hallard.

If you're not among the winners, consider putting your hand in your pocket for one of these... it's actually subsidised by NATS and supported by every major pilot group including of course AOPA. It's a very simple to use, very effective means of avoiding controlled airspace. All the reviews have been very positive, including the one in this magazine. See www.airspaceaware.com

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Filton joins Strasser Scheme

Bristol Filton is the latest airport to have joined the Strasser Scheme, following Birmingham's decision to sign up in July. Filton's move reduces to seven the number of airfields declining to subscribe to the scheme, with 205 having pledged their support.

The Strasser Scheme aims to improve general aviation safety by removing cost as a factor in decision-making when a pilot is faced with an emergency or weather diversion. AOPA's Channel Islands Chairman Charles Strasser was honoured with the Civil Aviation Authority's Safety Award this year for his promotion of the scheme which bears his name.

The scheme came about because it was recognised that pilots sometimes continue flying with developing problems rather than make a timely diversion, and sometimes a prime reason for this is fear of an enormous bill landing or handling. The CAA outlined the problem thus in CAA CAP 667 9.2 (c):

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

No further action was taken, so Charles Strasser set about persuading airfields to agree to the CAA's request and levy no charges on aircraft under three tonnes making genuine emergency or unplanned precautionary diversions landing other than at their planned alternate. Over the past ten years he has signed up 205 of the UK's aerodromes, leaving only seven hold-outs – Belfast International, Biggin Hill, Cardiff, Carlisle, Leeds-Bradford, Luton and Manchester. Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and London City have not been asked to participate. Charles Strasser also arbitrates in case of dispute – it is supremely important that there be no suggestion that the scheme is used to avoid legitimate landing fees. ■

Denmark abolishes its CAA

The Danish Ministry for Transportation has announced that the Danish CAA (SLV) will cease to exist as a separate authority from today. Henceforth all CAA activities will be handled by the Agency for Transportation currently dealing with road and rail matters. The Director of the Danish CAA left his position on September 1st, and the new director for the combined agency will be the current Director for the Agency for Transportation.

AOPA Denmark's Jacob Pedersen says the organisation is very concerned about this sudden move and fears that it will lead to a loss of competencies. He says: "The aviation industry is a very specialised business and needs a dedicated authority which fully understands the industry. The Ministry will not make any further comment at this time so it is unclear what is the reason for this surprising move. I suspect that it may be in recognition of the fact that more and more tasks will be moved to EASA level in the longer term."

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Mustang sim at Shoreham

Transair has opened a new aviation showroom at Shoreham airport, complete with free refreshments and a chance to fly their new P-51 Mustang simulator – quite easy apart from the landings, it is said. Transair now has 2500 square feet of space, which allows them to display every product they sell, and of course they have the advantage of employing knowledgeable staff, many on their way to airline careers, who can guide you through the labyrinth of choice and make sure you're buying the right stuff. There's a landing discount voucher available on the Transair website www.transair.co.uk.



Cockburn gets top safety award

David Cockburn, General Aviation Safety Promotion Officer at the CAA, has been given a prestigious safety award by the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators (GAPAN). David was presented with the Sir James Martin Award for outstanding contribution to aviation safety at a ceremony at the Guildhall in London on October 21st.

David is well-known to AOPA members as the man behind the CAA's Safety Evenings and is a GA pilot, a former RAF instructor and an AOPA member. He is also responsible for writing and editing the General Aviation Safety Information Leaflets (GASILs).

After receiving his award, David said: "Knowing what has been achieved by previous recipients of this award, and considering the citations for the other awards presented that night, I feel particularly honoured at having been considered fit to join them. Although I was singled out for the award, I am only one among the many in the CAA who provide that advice."

David spent 28 years in the RAF, initially on the Canberra and Vulcan, later instructing on the Jet Provost and Chipmunk. He obtained his commercial licence



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in 1995 and his ATPL in 2001. He has been a CAA flying instructor since 1995 and a PPL examiner since 2003, on single engine piston aeroplanes and touring motor gliders.

David joined the CAA in 1999 to look after its GA safety promotion and education work. His most visible role has been delivering Safety Evenings at flying clubs during the autumn and winter, travelling the length and breadth of the country carrying the safety message to far-flung recesses. On the European level he is a member of the core team of EGAST, the European General Aviation Safety Team, where his language skills – he speaks German, French and Russian – have been particularly useful.

GAPAN's citation says: "Despite an often punishing schedule of late nights and long drives between Safety Evening venues, David's ebullient enthusiasm for his safety promotion role has never diminished. His non-preaching, self-deprecating style of presentation, together with his willingness to share with others the lessons he has learnt throughout his flying career, is evidence of his empathy with GA pilots. This makes his safety messages all the more effective." ■