

Letters to the Editor

Bournemouth charges

Sir,
Further to your recent request for AOPA members to write to the Transport Committee regarding the BA/CAA fiasco affecting GA, I, like many others, have done as you requested and look forward to hearing more in the magazine.

I write now on the points listed below:
GA at Bournemouth Airport:
I am becoming concerned at the attitude of Manchester Airports Group to GA at my home airport. For a visiting aircraft, say a PA28, the landing fees/Servisair charges all up are around £60 or so. This is deterring GA movements at the airport. Indeed, GA flights are beginning to avoid Bournemouth; e.g. cross-country qualifiers etc. or local flights from Old Sarum/IoW/Henstridge/Compton Abbas and Channel Islands traffic, etc.

I have heard that MAG is not particularly interested in promoting GA at Bournemouth. With the increase in Ryanair, and now Thomsonfly and easyJet flights, I fear we will be squeezed out like GA was at Southampton. My flying club, Solent School of Flying/Bournemouth Helicopters handle incoming GA flights on behalf of the airport (Bournemouth Handling), so at least club

members are able to fly for normal prices without the huge hike charged to visitors by MAG.

Even to bash out a few circuits requires a "Circuit Number", and sometimes circuits aren't even allowed by ATC, or you have to wait for the Ryanair/Thomsonfly movements.

In view of what happened at Southampton, I think it may be necessary to find another aerodrome in the area which GA can use in a few years time. The disused aerodrome at Stoney Cross is probably the



Disused airfield at Stoney Cross

best option; it is easily accessible from Bournemouth and Southampton and is well away from the NIMBYs. The only village is Fritham, 1nm north of the field. Circuit direction could be designed to avoid Fritham, completely.

I would like to know what other members think.

On a lighter note:

Regional Pressures:

Can somebody please explain the relevance of the Regional Pressure Setting in this day and age of internet access/mobile phones and most aircraft having radios (which they can set to London Centre on 128.60 for ATIS info for airports in the south!)? The regional pressure at Bournemouth is some 4-6 mb below the QNH. If the pressure were dropping by this amount every hour, I wouldn't go flying!

Some instructors don't even bother using it now and remain on the QNH local to say, Bournemouth or Southampton Zone.

I am sure the RPS is a hangover from bygone days when the CAA did not exist and the Ministry of Aviation allowed freedom of the skies!

I would like to know what other members think.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Cable
AOPA Member 4934

Many thanks for adding your voice to the Transport Select Committee's postbag. AOPA CEO Martin Robinson has been called to give evidence to the committee on January 18th - too late for this magazine, but a full report will appear in the next issue of General Aviation - Ed

Airport security

Sir,
I find myself increasingly inconvenienced by burgeoning security at some of the country's regional airports.

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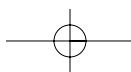


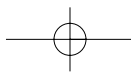
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When visiting these places, getting off the airfield is generally no problem. The difficulties arise mainly on departure.

As I am neither the pilot of a commercial airliner, a fare-paying passenger, nor a member of the local flying club, security staff do not appear to know how to deal with me. Needless to say, this can lead to endless and frustrating delays while I wait for permission to go airside.

Perhaps AOPA could raise this matter with the appropriate authorities. Are we deliberately being discouraged from using these airports? Or have the people responsible for security simply not thought to accommodate the needs of visitors who fly their own aeroplanes?

George Tyler
Disgruntled PPL

Many regional airports are increasingly unwelcoming of general aviation, and security can be just one manifestation of that. I've often found that the AOPA Aircrew Card can assist in such circumstances. Access to regional airports will comprise part of any policy on general aviation that AOPA can induce the government to accept - Ed.

Yellow peril

Sir,
Keith Carr's article (*GA December 2005*) on learning to fly seaplanes brought back memories from forty years ago.

A friend, Ricky Wojciechowski, and I planned a trip to Norway where I was to research material for a new book. We were told that there should be no problem in doing some flying while we were there, but that we should really have a seaplane rating because floats

were common. The problem was that we couldn't find anywhere in Britain to get the rating, nor could we locate a seaplane. Eventually we tracked down both plane and instructor at a Royal Navy station on the Solent.

Ricky, infinitely more competent than I, was to train for the rating. Our first surprise came when we arrived at the Naval station to discover that the seaplane was no less than a Tiger Moth with floats. Over many a weekend we drove down to the Solent usually to find that the plane was airborne with (and I hope I've got the name right) Sir George Easton at the controls. We were told he was in his seventies or eighties and had been a racing car driver. Dear old Sir George flew with utter disregard for those on the water. We watched with amazement as he hit the sea surface and the dinghy sailors scattered in front of the approaching yellow peril. I don't recall that he ever hit anything, but near-misses were common.

We were told that only eleven UK pilots had a seaplane rating back in the mid-60s and that one of these was HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. If that was true, Ricky made it a round dozen and we set off for Norway. But that's another story.

Do any of your readers remember the Tiger Moth with floats?

Yours faithfully,
John Douglas

Olympic air games

Sir,
I would like to buy a Cub and fly it for fun, but I can't because around north west London and south Hertfordshire there is nowhere under



No cover for a Cub

cover to keep it, not even at those airfields that can double for Steptoe's scrapyard.

Lots of offers to park it in the open air, but I want it to be my pride and joy to be safe and not ravaged by our weather. Has any one any ideas? I would be happy to share.

It seems a scandal that a legitimate activity should be inhibited by a stone age planning policy that discourages our pursuit but is quite happy to chuck billions at a two week long sporting event Londoners will be unable to afford to fund, let alone attend, and which will disrupt their lives for years.

Perhaps AOPA can promote spot-landing and flour-bombing as an Olympic sport, and we can have a new grass roots flying field to make up for the long departed Leavsdon, Radlett, and Hatfield. Panshanger would be fine if they could put up some hangars without having to carry the cost of half the county's business rate account.

If we want GA to thrive we not only need places to go but things to do - where better to admire a sunset than from a slow, quiet tail dragger.

Where AOPA leads we will follow! March on
Graham Colover ■

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