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Piper Saratoga:
 Six of the best
 Column: Off the rules against the CAA
 Military license - can it really fly?
 BAe's top pilot: I quit to fly for the Mission



Front cover:
 Saratoga
 Photo:
 New Piper

Chairman's message

All is revealed...

The two ongoing reviews of general aviation in the UK, namely the Strategic Review and the Regulatory Review, set up by Sir Roy McNulty, Chairman of the CAA, in June 2005 will remain a focus for AOPA's involvement and attention for the next six months, after which the two groups will finally report their conclusions. I remember reading Sir Roy's letter of invitation to appoint a representative from AOPA, and at the time being puzzled over a lack of clear objectives for embarking on a task that would involve a huge amount of resource, not only by the CAA, but also by the supporting industry. Why exactly had the CAA decided to go ahead with this exercise? I remember discussing this with Martin Robinson, our Chief Executive, who was the obvious candidate to be our representative.

It seemed initially that the reviews arose from within the Department for Transport, the CAA's boss, but then when a DfT spokesman praised the CAA for its initiative in setting these up, the source of the initiative became something of a mystery. But, with the appearance of a report, the Hampton Review, from H. M. Treasury on 'reducing administrative burdens', all has been revealed. The review is largely about regulation and government action resulting from the recommendations within tasks government departments, of which the DfT is one, with reducing the regulatory burden on those whom it affects by 25 per cent, the plans for doing this to be finalised by June 2006. It was only two issues of *General Aviation* ago in which I referred to the extremely well thought-out document issued by the Cabinet Office on Regulatory Impact Assessments. In this is highlighted, for instance, the harmful effect on creativity, initiative, innovation and business in general, particularly on SMEs (small to medium enterprises) caused by stultifying over-regulation. The Hampton Review provides explanations and recommendations that ensure that the philosophy of the Cabinet Office is put into practice.

This should be good for UK Ltd, and that includes the general aviation industry. It is appropriate to mention at this point that a ruling was requested by AOPA from the Cabinet Office as to whether AOPA was correct in expecting the CAA to have included a Small Firms Impact Test, and Competitive Assessment in their recent Regulatory Impact Assessment on Costs and Charges (see October 2005 *General Aviation* in which I exhorted the CAA to "do the job properly!"). The answer – indeed, yes, the CAA should have done this, but it is too late to go back now.

The Regulatory Review team has been looking at safety statistics for the past ten years up to and including 2004, being possibly concerned that deregulation may lead to a degradation of safety. The safety record in general aviation in the UK is good, and similar to that achieved in the USA. Both countries promote with some vigour their own safety education programmes, and this must be a prime contributor to the respective good records. Some European countries have regulated general aviation almost beyond vanishing point, and yet their safety records are relatively poor. Thus, provided effort is either maintained or increased on flight safety education, it ought to be possible to achieve a good degree of self- or de-regulation without compromising safety.

On another topic completely, there is some welcome stop press news to report. The AOPA Instructor Committee, and, in particular, committee member Howell Williams, who instructs at Wellesbourne Mountford, have been engaged in redrafting the AOPA RadNav Certificate, to include GPS navigation amongst many other improvements. The hours taken to complete the course in its previous guise could be counted towards the IMC Rating (and I make no excuse for reminding readers that this rating emerged from the AOPA stable). We have been waiting for some considerable time for the CAA similarly to approve the updated course, which it has now done. There will be more information in the April *General Aviation*, and AOPA will be promoting the Certificate amongst its Corporate Members, flying clubs and schools, making the point that the course can only improve a pilot's competency and experience, and that it is equally available to the NPPL and JAR PPL holder alike, although the IMC Rating is only available to the latter. Of course, it can be counted as one of the qualifying requirements in the AOPA Wings Scheme. So, if you have only recently gained your licence, and would appreciate being able to enhance your navigational cues beyond those from map and eyeball, as well as providing greater confidence, why not have a go? You will find the achievement satisfying and worthwhile.

George Done

