

'Best news for GA in a generation'

The European Parliament has provided general aviation with the biggest boost in modern times with the adoption of a resolution which guides the EC and member states to adopt a raft of principles which would preserve, foster and promote GA across Europe.

Resolution 2008/2134(INI) sets out an agenda which could have been lifted directly from the IAOPA policy manual, stressing the importance of keeping legislation in proportion, recognising the differences between CAT and GA in setting fees and charges, ensuring that GA has access to airports and airspace and accepting that GA has a vital role to play in Europe's transport infrastructure.

The resolution, adopted by a huge margin – 524 votes in favour, 74 against and six abstentions – now forms the basis of the European Commission's approach to general aviation. The Commission is in turn the boss of EASA, which will find it very difficult to ignore the new landscape for GA.

The resolution was hailed at the 120th IAOPA Regional Meeting in Friedrichshafen in April as "a dream document" and "a true breakthrough". National AOPAs can now use it in negotiations with their own CAAs and other rulemaking bodies to ensure that GA gets a fair crack of the whip in every European country.

Virtually every problem that IAOPA has highlighted to European parliamentarians, the European Commission and national authorities over the past ten years has been addressed in the resolution. The issues of proportionality,

the need for segmented impact assessments, the requirement for rationality in security, is included in the 35 sub-clauses in the resolution.

IAOPA senior vice president Martin Robinson said the resolution had its genesis in a meeting four years ago between European Aviation Commissioner Daniel Calleja di Crespo and an IAOPA delegation of then US-AOPA president Phil Boyer, IAOPA general secretary John Sheehan and himself, at which the need for action on European legislation affecting GA was discussed. It was agreed that some measure of GA activity was required, and Calleja instituted a study to provide a baseline by on which GA could be understood and catered for. This led to the EC document 'A sustainable GA for Europe' on which the EC then held a hearing to which IAOPA, the EBAA and sports aviation groups were invited. Martin said: "That helped the EC refine its paper on GA, and following the European process they sent it to the Council of Europe to discuss, and then it went to the European Parliament.

"In the Parliament the UK is fortunate to have Timothy Kirkhope MEP, an active general aviation pilot and a man who recognises the threat that some EASA regulation poses to the safety of general aviation, in particular regarding the IMC rating. Thanks to the work of legislators like Mr Kirkhope and Arunas Degutis MEP, who is president of AOPA-Lithuania, the vast majority of MEPs voted

in favour of the final document."

The full text of the document is available on the AOPA website www.aopa.co.uk. It begins by noting that GA comprises high-value activity, that statistical data is lacking, that it is the fastest-growing segment of civil aviation in Europe, that it complements the airlines by providing mobility across the continent while improving the productivity of industry, and is of increasing economic importance. It adds that EU policy has traditionally focussed on commercial air transport while 'not giving due consideration' to its growing impact on general and business aviation.

"Rules intended to govern the operation of highly complex commercial aircraft may place a disproportionate financial and regulatory burden on operators of small private aircraft," it goes on. "Therefore, one-size-fits-all regulatory approaches and the uniform enforcement of rules across different aviation sectors have proven inappropriate in certain respects.

"Access to airspace and aerodromes is a key issue for general and business aviation, since there is a growing gap between demand and capacity; general and business aviation is increasingly in competition for access to airspace and aerodromes with



Mode-S: a chink of light?

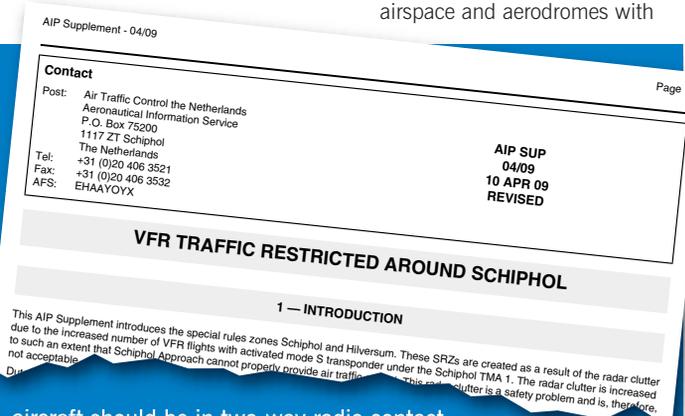
Dutch authorities are still working to repair the damage caused by their precipitate adoption of universal Mode-S, which caused chaos at Schiphol Airport as air traffic controllers were swamped by transponder returns.

The Netherlands had decreed that all traffic above 1,200 feet should carry Mode-S, but throughout the winter VFR traffic under the Amsterdam TMA was asked not to switch on Mode-S transponders because of the number of TCAS alerts CAT was picking up. The authorities imposed more restricted airspace under approaches to the north-south runways at Schiphol to address the problem.

However, this year the government decided that Mode-S must be switched on everywhere above 800 feet, and on the first sunny weekend of spring the demand caused consternation for ATC as CAT returns disappeared under a blizzard of Mode-S returns from VFR traffic.

IAOPA has warned for years that this would happen in busy airspace and has been assured that ATC could tune out Mode-S returns (thus, incidentally, rendering Mode-S pointless for GA). But returns can only be tuned out by flight level or altitude, and you can't do that for GA aircraft at low level because the CAT you're trying to control in the lower reaches of the TMA would disappear. At Schiphol, even when controllers reduced text sizes on Mode-S returns to the minimum, it was difficult to resolve CAT from GA.

In order to alleviate this problem of their own making, the Dutch closed a vast area around Schiphol to VFR traffic. This was clearly unacceptable, and IAOPA-Europe senior vice president Martin Robinson wrote to the Dutch CAA suggesting that as a short term solution, the AIP was amended to say that transponders should be turned off in the affected area and that



aircraft should be in two-way radio contact if they were operating in airspace other than class G. After a week of intensive negotiations between Ary Stigter of AOPA-Netherlands and the Dutch Department of Transport the authorities accepted that closing the area was the wrong way to guarantee safety. The situation now is that transponders must be switched to standby, and the area below the SPL TMA below 1200 feet is once again available for VFR traffic. Between 1200 and 1500 feet is available on special request – contact Amsterdam info on 124.30, and keep a listening watch on this frequency while flying in the west part of Holland. The east part is the domain of the military's Dutch Mil information on 132.35.

There's no question that a great deal of good could come from this fiasco. There is evidence that having seen universal Mode-S working in the real world, authorities across Europe are having second thoughts about mandating fitment for all aircraft in all areas. In the UK, the CAA is making noises about putting the universal adoption of Mode-S on hold, although no official announcement has been made. In Holland, aggrieved aircraft owners who have spent thousands of euros on Mode-S transponders they didn't want are considering legal action against the regulatory authorities.

the wider airline industry." It says the European Parliament "broadly welcomes the Commission Communication on general and business aviation since it provides a sound analysis of the issues affecting the sector and identifies a number of suitable approaches for addressing the specific needs of this sector."

Most importantly, it stresses 'proportionality', the catch-all term for the fact that a 152 is not a 747, a flying club is not British Airways,

Headcorn is not Heathrow and one rule, fee or charge does not fit all. It "stresses the need to take into account the interests and specificities of general and business aviation in the development of future air transport policy initiatives, with a view to strengthening its competitiveness" and "calls on the

Commission to ensure the application of the proportionality and subsidiarity principles in the design and implementation of both existing and future aviation legislation."

The need for 'segmented' impact assessments which focus on every area of aviation is stressed – another important

breakthrough. Generalised impact assessments have in the past been utterly useless.

It stresses that when the Commission is adopting rules on aviation safety, it should ensure that they are "proportionate and commensurate to the complexity of the respective category of aircraft and operation." It goes on: "...a degree of flexibility at the implementation stage would be desirable as far as general aviation is concerned; this could be achieved by delegating certain supervisory powers to sports and recreational aviation associations and organisations subject to appropriate oversight by the relevant aviation authority, provided that there is no conflict of interests." Additionally, it "invites the Commission to examine the possibility of laying down simplified security procedures and screening processes for business aviation passengers without in any way compromising their security and safety."

On access to airports and airspace the document points out the increasing difficulty of getting access not only to major airports but to regional airports and urges member states to tackle these problems through better planning

and better technology. It says it "believes that helicopters can be an important short-haul means of connecting between airports and urges the Commission and member states to include them in capacity-enhancing strategies; encourages member states and regional and local authorities to invest in the modernisation and establishment of small and medium-sized airports, which are of major importance for general and business aviation; encourages member states to invest in specific infrastructure necessary for the operation and stationing of aircraft in the field of general and business aviation; and encourages member states, as well as regional and local authorities, to involve all interested parties in consultation processes with a view to dedicating, where appropriate, potential or existing airports for use specifically by general and business aviation; where decommissioned military airports are concerned, the consultation should include military authorities."

It goes on to urge that GA's needs be fully taken into account in planning for the SESAR programme on future air traffic management, says it believes that it should be one of the



Chief executive's diary:

A SWIM into the TEN-T

Aviation lives in two irreconcilable worlds at the moment. In one world, air traffic is increasing rapidly, the kit for handling it is becoming obsolete and vast amounts must urgently be spent on new systems and upgrades. In the other world, air traffic volumes are falling off a cliff, airlines are suffering and air navigation service providers are losing billions of euros, which are desperately needed to pay for the upgrades that are urgently needed because air traffic is increasing, the kit for handling it is becoming obsolete, blah de blah blah.

When you point out that we're back to 2004 traffic volumes and we might just have a bit of breathing space here in which to road-test our assumptions a bit more carefully, they say we can't afford to waste a minute because the upturn is almost upon us, and we have to be ready because the system is overloaded and we urgently need... (see previous paragraph).

The saving grace is that not very much happens quickly in Euro-buro land, where the European bureaucrat frolics. At one meeting last month we discussed Cascade, the planned datalink system between ATC and pilots which should supersede VHF comms – except that it won't. Now, they're planning to use the datalink, but to confirm everything by radio as well! And they've been working on Cascade for twelve years. Let's see what more they can come up with in the next twelve.

Since I last reported, European developments have predominated. On March 24th I went to Brussels to attend the Industry Consultation Body of the European Commission, where the main issues under discussion are SESAR, the future air traffic management system, and the Joint Undertaking, the industry body now

embarking on the implementation phase. GA must be represented on the JU, and we're working with other bodies and external consultants to figure out how best to do it. The ICB discussed 8.33kHz vertical extension – the airlines still want it, and blame IAOPA for delaying it. We had been looking to Cascade and its data uplinks to reduce the need for radio exchanges – this is the project called SWIM, System Wide Information Management, which will allow data to be transferred from air to ground and back without resorting to 1930s voice technology. But they've decided that while they will have SWIM, they will also have VHF in order to confirm SWIM, so once you've got your data you'll get a call asking whether you got your data, and no frequencies can be saved.

We also talked through TEN-T, which is a European taxpayer fund for major transport infrastructure programs. Aviation has never benefited from it, but the Air Traffic Management system would seem to be a prime candidate for funding, and it could reduce costs to GA. The whole Single Sky project is going to cost €100 million a year for the next thirty years, and Europe promises to spend that money while increasing safety tenfold, increasing capacity fivefold, and cutting charges in half. Don't curl up your nose like that.

The best bit of news to come out of the meeting was that the EU's transport department DGTREN is to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to say SESAR and the American version, NexGen,



must be interoperable. So American kit will work in Europe, which should keep costs down.

I went to Aero Friedrichshafen as senior vice president of IAOPA; I'd been invited to give the opening address and spoke about how the industry would get through the current downturn, and the fact that passion is why people fly.

Aero is an excellent GA event, and if you didn't get to it this year, it's worth planning to go in 2010. On the second day I had a good look around, and helped to man the AOPA stand. It was nice to meet a number of AOPA-UK members, too. On day three I chaired a panel session on how we deal with regulators – it was quite well attended with about 50 people in the room, and speakers included the head of AOPA-US's Flight Safety Foundation, Bruce Landsberg. On the fourth day I chaired the IAOPA-Europe regional meeting, which is well covered in these pages, and on day five we had a wash-up session with key IAOPA people. It's good to see the Americans taking such a close interest in what's happening in Europe; they know that our troubles today are theirs tomorrow.

On April 7th we had an AOPA Executive Committee meeting where I gave a full report on recent activities, concentrating on the European Parliament resolution explained on page 5; that's great news, the best we've had I think in my 17 years at AOPA.

On the 16th I met with a police office from SO15, the counter-terrorism unit, to explain how general aviation works, and in particular how it works at small strips in the Home Counties. I can't say too much about it, but the police accept they need GA to be their 'eyes and ears' in the community, and if they alienate GA by instigating the sort of repressive measures that are favoured in some quarters, they'll lose more than they gain.

The Members Working Group met at White



“examine the possibility of simplified security procedures and screening processes for business aviation passengers without compromising their security and safety.”

VFR operators, (while fully recognising that all aircraft using controlled airspace must feature equipment providing for an adequate level of safety, such as positioning devices). In EU parlance, “insists” pretty much constitutes a direction.

On environmental issues, it recognises that GA’s impact is

small compared to that of the airlines but adds that it is necessary “to reduce emissions through further enhancing the environmental performance of smaller aircraft by using cleaner fuels and by promoting research, technological development and innovation.”

It recognises that in the absence of data on

objectives to provide VFR users with access to traffic, meteorological and aeronautical information in a user-friendly and cost-effective way and insists that the Single European Sky legislation and SESAR do not lead to disproportionate and excessively costly technological requirements for small aircraft

Waltham on the 18th – again, there’s a full report in these pages – and on the 21st I had a meeting with Roger Whitefield, a non-executive director on the CAA Board, for a discussion about the CAA. Roger is a former BA pilot who now flies a Chipmunk, and he understands general aviation, a rare attribute in that Authority at this time.

That afternoon I took the Eurostar to Brussels and in the evening met with Paul Ravenhill, a senior consultant with the aviation consultancy Helios. Those with long memories will remember that Helios produced for us the consultants report which showed that the CAA’s case for massive increases in charges to general aviation three years ago was a piece of nonsense. Helios may represent us in the SESAR implementation phase, except that the EU is now saying that outside consultants should not be used. But there’s more than one way to skin a cat.

The ICB workshop on TEN-T funding for SESAR followed on the 22nd, and while some in the CAT industry are keen to get their hands on TEN-T funding they don’t see why GA should get any. We intend to persuade them differently. Next day I attended a NATS Stakeholder Council, through which NATS seeks to engage with all sectors of the industry and the community, including the Greens. It’s a bit of a broad church and the discussions sometimes wander.

On the 25th I went to a Jeppesen-sponsored discussion on their charts, attended by 15 AOPA members whose views Jeppesen seeks on the efficacy of their products. We hope to be providing discounts on Jepp products to members in the near future – watch this space.

After a Eurocontrol Teleconference on the 27th we had a NATS-GA partnership discussion at Swanwick on the 28th, discussing the possibility of them giving up bits of controlled airspace. It’s a nice thought, but the practicalities of transferring such small

parcels of airspace into Class G, given that many affect SIDs and STARs in the south of England, leads me to wonder whether the game’s worth the candle.

On May 9th we had an ACEP meeting at Gatwick. This is the education project that goes along with ATSCAS, and I think that while we’ve had a lot of communication on infringements, we haven’t had much education and we need more. There are still too many infringements, and as I write elsewhere in these pages, many of the most dangerous ones are caused by the kind of pilot who has no business being in the air at all, and could cause a real tragedy that would effectively kill GA for the rest of us.

Then on the 11th I departed for Geneva to take part in a joint press conference with the European Business Aviation Association and Eurocontrol in connection with the Eurocontrol Yearbook which this year focuses on general and business aviation. Again, there’s a story on it elsewhere in this section. The conference was held, of course, at the start of EBACE, where the atmosphere was a little muted but everyone put on a brave face. I met many IAOPA colleagues there, including some from Lebanon and Russia, and had brief chats with Aviation Commissioner Daniel Calleja and Eurocontrol’s director general David McMillan.

On May 13th I attended a DfT update on Single European Sky II and SESAR. Main topic for discussion was the fact that EASA’s mandate has been extended to cover ATM safety, which gives it responsibility for aerodrome kit and so forth. Unless I miss my guess, there will be no other changes beyond the fact that the fees will go up. The national aviation authorities will continue to do the work, but now as agents of EASA, which will also have to be paid for being involved. And I’m sure we’ll all be safer for it.

Martin Robinson

general aviation it is difficult to manage the sector and calls on the EC and Eurostat to develop systems for systematic collection of data. The Commission should, it says, take “appropriate measures” to facilitate access of the EU’s general and business aviation manufacturing industry to world markets.

In conclusion it says it “considers as essential the promotion of recreational and sport aviation, as well as of European aero clubs, which constitute an important source of professional skills for the entire aviation sector; calls on the Commission to take account of the important role that this aviation sector plays and can continue to play in the development of vocational training for pilots; requests the Commission to report back to the European Parliament by the end of 2009 on progress achieved in relation to the issues identified in this resolution; and instructs that its resolution be forwarded to member states.

The IAOPA-Europe regional meeting reviewed the terms of the document and congratulated the Parliamentarians and the EC on having so concisely summed up what needed to be done to revitalise GA. Martin Robinson said: “Now we all have something to go to our regulatory authorities with and say okay, how are you going to do it? It’s up to us to make sure this does not gather dust on a shelf.”

IAOPA general secretary John Sheehan added: “I’ve been involved in this for 12 years and this is a real breakthrough, a major achievement, to get this level of government. The issue now is that you must follow this up with your own Parliaments and NAAs. They may be losing importance but they still have a major voice, and a major vote – more than we the stakeholders do. The big thing is to keep this up within the political process.”

Martin Robinson proposed obtaining copies of the resolution in every European language for distribution through national AOPAs to legislators in every country. It will also be sent to senior figures in EASA, on the Single Sky Committee, the Industry Consultation Body and every important European agency.

Ary Stiger of AOPA-Netherlands said they had already quoted from the document in discussions with Dutch authorities, and they have acknowledged that they need to incorporate its provisions into their policies. Delegates from Greece, Austria, Germany, Poland expressed delight at the terms of the resolution, and AOPA-Russia’s Vladimir Tyurin said AOPA had had the document translated into Russian, and while Russia was not part of the EU, the document may still have some indirect effect there.

Patrick Charrier, president of AOPA-France (where 50 percent of privately-owned aircraft are on the N-register) concluded: “This is a dream text and it has had a dramatic effect on our politicians in France. It has opened their eyes to the fact that there is indeed GA, it does exist. It has changed things quite significantly, and has been widely publicised not only in the specialised press, but the general and economic press. French airport authorities don’t like GA, but for the first time they are obliged to observe and treat with GA.”

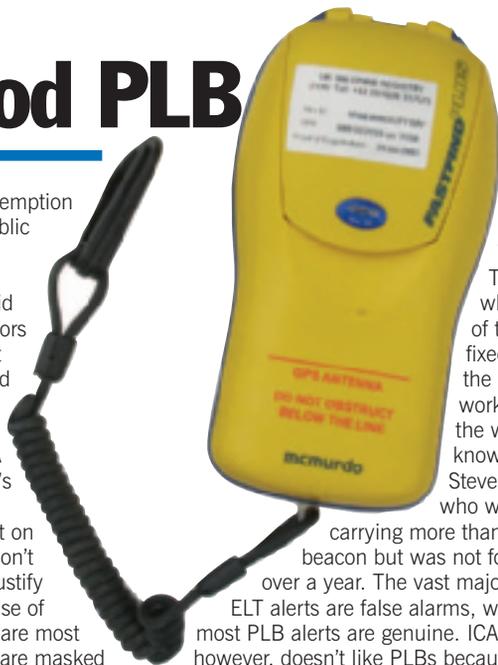
The sole (and minor) negative aspect of the resolution, it was felt, was the differentiation between general and business aviation. Europe should adhere to the ICAO definition of GA, which is everything except CAT and the military. Any attempt to split off smaller segments will eventually make ‘leisure’ or ‘recreational’ flying an easy target. ■

Buy a good PLB

The CAA has issued a general exemption to all aircraft not engaged in public transport operations from an ICAO requirement to carry a fixed Emergency Locator Transmitter amid signs that across the world, regulators are listening to industry advice that fixed ELTs are unsuitable for GA and that PLBs – Personal Locator Beacons – are preferred.



For five years, IAOPA has been fighting ICAO's move to recommend fixed ELTs for all aircraft on the grounds that they don't work often enough to justify the difficulty and expense of installation. Fixed ELTs are most often broken on impact, or signals are masked by terrain, and in cases of ditching, the ELT goes to the bottom and is useful, when the signal ought really to stay with the crew and passengers, wherever they may drift. IAOPA's representative at ICAO in Montreal, Frank Hofmann, has used several examples to try to convince ICAO that they're barking up the wrong tree, including an A340 overrun almost



on their doorstep, in Toronto, when none of the six fixed ELTs on the aircraft worked, and the well-known case of Steve Fossett, who was

carrying more than one beacon but was not found for over a year. The vast majority of ELT alerts are false alarms, whereas most PLB alerts are genuine. ICAO, however, doesn't like PLBs because they are not automatically activated in a crash.

Canada has been leading the way on mandating ELTs, but in a heartening move last month, Canada's Minister of Transport John Baird overruled his own department and suspended implementation of a rule that would have required almost all aircraft to have certified 406 Mhz ELTs installed by February of

2011 in order to fly legally in Canada. AOPA Canada – COPA – has been fighting the proposed mandate for ten years and has finally convinced Baird that new GPS-based systems that leave a 'bread crumb' trail on radar should be included as an alternative for fixed ELTs. Baird has instructed Transport Canada to take new technology into account in drafting any rule.

Now the CAA in the UK has filed a difference with ICAO and exempted G-registered aircraft not engaged in public transport from the need to carry fixed ELTs. The exemption was issued on April 22nd.

Martin Robinson, AOPA-UK chief executive and senior vice president of IAOPA-Europe, says: 'This is a welcome move on the CAA's part and we thank them for it. We're not usually in favour of national exemptions – we'd rather have everybody singing from the same hymn sheet, because otherwise things can get very messy. I note that McMurdo has to make 166 different variations of its PLBs to satisfy national regulations across the world, and in a small market like general aviation that's not good business. But in this instance, an exemption beats the alternative.'

"AOPA urges every pilot to buy the best PLB he or she can afford, learn how to use it and in particular, where and how to carry is so that if you have to ditch, the signal is as strong as possible." ■

Humberside makes it 201

Humberside has become the 201st UK airport to join AOPA's 'Strasser Scheme', under which landing fees are waived for aircraft in case of emergency diversion or precautionary landing.

The scheme aims to increase safety by eliminating the cost factor when pilots are making decisions on whether to land, often in stressful circumstances, if they are overtaken by unforecast bad weather or some other emergency arises in the cockpit. Over the past few years, all but ten UK airports have agreed to subscribe to the Strasser Scheme, including all MOD airfields. Heathrow, Gatwick and London City airports have not been approached.

An example of how the scheme works can be seen in the letters page in this issue; a pilot with a worrying oil pressure indication landed at Newcastle and was given the full emergency treatment by the airport without being charged. With handling and other charges, the pilot could have faced a bill of several hundred

pounds at some airports had it not been for the Strasser Scheme; that consideration might have led him to try to reach a more distant airfield, or press on to his destination, with catastrophic consequences. AOPA says, well done, Newcastle Airport – this is exactly how the Strasser Scheme should work.

The CAA believes that charging for emergency diversions or precautionary landings is detrimental to safety, and says so in CAP 667 9.2(c), which reads: '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.'

Unfortunately the CAA declined to do anything to follow up its own suggestion, so Charles Strasser, chairman of the AOPA Channel Islands Region, took it upon himself on behalf of AOPA to get as many aerodromes as possible to agree to the provisions of the scheme which now bears his name. As well as inducing airfields to sign, Strasser arbitrates in case of disagreement – the rules are strict and there can be no room for ambiguity, because any suggestion that pilots were using the scheme to avoid legitimate fees would spell death to this potentially lifesaving agreement.

Humberside, says Charles Strasser, is the first airport to sign up to the scheme without being prompted 'My thanks are due to Tony Lavan, the airport director at Humberside, and all of his staff for agreeing to participate in the scheme,' he says. 'This leaves just ten aerodromes outside the scheme, and I hope that, like the green bottles, they will soon fall.'

The aerodromes which have not yet signed up to the Strasser Scheme are Belfast Intl., Biggin Hill, Birmingham, Cardiff, Carlisle, Filton, Leeds/Bradford, Luton, Manchester, and Norwich. ■



FDRs for turbines?

IAOPA is working to assess the impact of an ICAO proposal to require all turbine aircraft to fit flight data recorders and cockpit voice recorders, regardless of their weight or the purpose to which they are put.

Currently, larger aircraft are required to carry the misnamed 'black boxes', and they have proved vital in determining the causes of accidents. ICAO is now looking at extending the requirement to all turbojet and turboprop aircraft, even those below 5,700 kg. If adopted, the requirement would mean that all such aircraft built after 2016 would have to have FDRs and CVRs, and after 2018, all planes in this class would have to follow suit.

The IAOPA secretariat is working to determine the impact of the proposal, assembling cost and safety data to determine the cost-benefit picture.



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Mentoring – we're almost there

The AOPA Mentoring Scheme took a major stride towards implementation in April when a group of potential mentors met to discuss the practicalities of operating and sustaining such a scheme.

The Mentoring Scheme has been proposed by Timothy Nathan of the AOPA Members Working Group as a way of improving skills in general aviation and of helping to stem the horrendous drop-out rate – some 75 percent of PPLs don't renew after five years. It has been positively received by AOPA's Instructors Committee and enthusiastically embraced by experienced pilots who believe they have something to offer.

The scheme addresses a 'sub-instruction' dimension and aims to encourage pilots who would

otherwise walk away from GA for want of help. Exemplifying the problem is the low-hours pilot who rarely ventures beyond the local area for fear of complex and unknown airspace, mistrusts his or her ability to evaluate the weather, isn't very good on the radio, can't confidently operate all the kit in the aircraft or unravel the Notam, or sticks to familiar territory for other reasons. For this pilot, flying will soon pall. Not knowing where to go to get help, he or she may turn to other pursuits.

Putting together mentors and 'mentees' (if you have a better word, please propose it) ought to be simple, but it's not. You can't just provide a 'dating service' without exercising a duty of care to the mentee which goes far beyond simply checking that the mentor hasn't got two heads. In fact it's taken two years of work to get close to the launch stage; some of the more complex issues have been set aside and the intention is to launch a day VFR-only scheme in this flying season, and iron out the bugs before widening the concept.

A set of guidelines for mentoring has been

written by Timothy Nathan and Steve Copeland, and potential mentors were invited to White Waltham to talk them through. The group, sixteen strong, were relatively high-time pilots who were characterised by Nick Wilcock of the AOPA Instructors Committee as 'universally of high calibre'. They clearly understood the possibilities the scheme presented, and the pitfalls.

The Mentoring Scheme has been given an enormous boost by the arrival of Mick Elborn, a former project manager for Royal Mail who is prepared to give his time and expertise to make the thing fly. Mick is a PPL with IMC, night and lapsed multi ratings who flies from Old Sarum and Booker.

Timothy Nathan kicked off the discussion by acknowledging that there were 'side-effects' to the scheme that needed to be understood, but adding that the benefits far outweighed them. Like the AOPA Wings Scheme into which it was tied, the Mentoring Scheme had the aim

of keeping people flying, giving them goals to aim for and helping them achieve those goals.

Some key points that came in for discussion: number one, mentoring is not instruction. The mentor's first job is to decide whether a mentee is really asking for instruction, and if so, to point them in the right direction. This can be a grey area if we're not careful; one example that was kicked around was that of a qualified pilot who did not feel confident with crosswind landings and wanted someone to sit with him while he did a few. But that is not mentoring, that is instruction. Although a specific form of words to cover all eventualities has not been set down, what we were working towards in the discussion was the idea that if there is a risk that the mentor will have to take control (as in the above situation) then it is not mentoring. The mentee will always be PIC and will always control the aircraft. The mentor is a passenger, a 'comfort blanket' who's probably been around the track a few times; he or she is not entitled, and in most cases not insured, to take over the controls.

Ah yes, but if it's all going pear-shaped and there's a risk to life, the mentor could take



Some of the experienced pilots who advised on the Mentoring Scheme

ATSOCAS – what do you think?

What are your experiences of the new ATSOCA system? It's been running for long enough to form an opinion – it came in on March 12th. Is it an improvement over the old RIS/RAS/FIS system, or do you feel worse off? AOPA wants to know.

The primary objective in overhauling the system of air traffic services outside controlled airspace was to increase standardisation so that pilots were more aware of the limitations of the service they were getting. Has it done that? My own experiences are mixed. On a recent flight from White Waltham to Bodmin I asked for a Basic Service from each ATSU along the way. Farnborough West gave me a squawk and passed some traffic; Lyneham gave me a squawk but no traffic; Bristol gave me no squawk, said "remain clear, own navigation and call leaving the frequency." (They weren't busy either). Exeter passed me some traffic, Newquay gave me a squawk and some traffic. So the idea of standardisation seems to have fallen at the first hurdle; the level of service depends on the controller's whim.

The Basic Service doesn't require the controller to give you any useful traffic

information at all... is it worth asking for?

What about Procedural, Traffic and Deconfliction services? Do you believe they are being uniformly and usefully delivered? Let us know. When do you ask for which service? It's suggested that if the weather is marginal, you ask for a Traffic Service – the old RIS. If you're IMC, ask for a Deconfliction Service – the RAS. If it's a lovely day, ask for a Basic Service – FIS – although many people say they now just choose not to use the radio under such circumstances. I know of one pilot who was arbitrarily busted from Traffic to Basic by ATC when he missed a call because he was dealing with a green passenger.

Some of those who were involved in planning the new system are not entirely happy with the way it's come out of the mincer and been put into practice. ATSOCA started out as a project designed to reduce complexity and get everyone, military and civilian, pulling in the same direction. Initial consultation with pilots indicated they were generally happy with RIS/RAS/FIS, although a few anomalies needed to be addressed. These issues were then handed to a team of air traffic controllers

to figure out, with minimal pilot input. The new ATSOCA was initially offered complete with five types of service (a subsequent amendment dropped one of these services). It was felt that, because a whole lot of work had gone into the review and that re-education was a key element of the new ATSOCA a name change was required; some people were not wholly happy with this, but the rationale behind the name change was to force pilots and air traffic controllers to re-educate themselves.

The re-education process has undoubtedly increased pilot awareness of the services available, which must be a good thing. But equally, pilots are now realising they may not be getting what they thought they signed up for.

So the questions are (with my own subjective answers in brackets):

- Is the new ATSOCA easier to understand? (No)
- Has the new ATSOCA standardised service provision? (No)
- Are pilots receiving the services they described in the consultation? (Debatable)
- Has the new ATSOCA improved safety? (No)

Please feel free to differ. Email your comments to atsocas@richmondaviation.co.uk.
– Pat Malone ■

control, surely? Well, if you get on a bus and the driver dies of a heart attack you're at liberty to stop the bus, even without a licence or insurance, but it's not specified in the terms and conditions on your ticket. 'Force majeure' is an established concept in common law, but as far as the AOPA Mentoring Scheme is concerned, there should be no foreseeable risk of the mentor having to take over. The flight must absolutely be conducted within the capabilities of the PIC mentee, and within the terms of his licence. A flight that might go into IMC would be absolutely ruled out if the mentee did not have an IMCR or IR. Mentoring is more about instilling confidence than improving technique.

The guidelines set out minimum qualifications for mentors, and if you're thinking of putting yourself forward you should consider these carefully. The mentor has to know his or her onions. Apart from being current (although this may be revised with time – a greybeard who's lost his ticket on medical grounds may be a better mentor than a pilot with valid paperwork) there will be a workshop for potential mentors to attend. Exactly what form this will take has not yet been established, but as part of its duty of care AOPA must be satisfied that you are who you say you are, you have the qualifications, and you haven't forgotten what you were taught.

It struck me as we were discussing these issues that the Mentoring Scheme would be beneficial for mentors as well as mentees; they'll be forced to stay sharp. Do you know, for instance, how to review an aircraft's documents to ensure they're in order? How often do you do a weight and balance calculation? Are you completely comfortable in the AIS website? Can you reel off all the



Above: Project manager Mick Elborn (left) and progenitor Timothy Nathan

paperwork requirements for going foreign? And how slick are you at emergency procedures like total electrical failure? Do you know what equipment is mandatory in nearby European countries? You'll be asked questions. If you're out in the sticks, a mentee might ask for help in flying into a major airport, and you have to be confident that you will do everything right. If you fly from a thousand yards of tarmac, you might be asked about short grass strips. You do need to know.

What about pilots who seem qualified to be mentors, but don't inspire confidence in other ways? A guy might have a thousand hours and all the tickets, but you need to be sure he doesn't drink his bathwater. How do you tell someone at a workshop that you don't think it's right for them? That's an issue that

has to be addressed.

Mentors and mentees will have to sign a one-off 'contract' that makes sure they fully understand the nature of the relationship, and records will be kept by AOPA. The insurers Besso, who already provide specialist instructor insurance through AOPA, are being appraised of the development of the scheme and are considering the issues surrounding the insurance of mentors and mentoring.

Almost all the pilots at the White Waltham session came from the Home Counties; there was some discussion about how to drive the Mentoring Scheme out into the north and west. But AOPA chief executive Martin Robinson made the point that outside the Home Counties, clubs tend to be more 'clubby' – they're usually smaller, everybody knows everybody, they organise fly-ins and fly-outs and there's often a *de facto* mentoring scheme going on anyway. The need for the AOPA Mentoring Scheme is greater in the Home Counties, where clubs can be that little bit more impersonal and the low-time pilot might find it more difficult to get help.

The discussion went on for three hours and, as Timothy Nathan said, it threw up a number of issues which he and Steve Copeland had not thought of when writing the guidelines. But everyone agreed that the Mentoring Scheme is desirable and well worth putting effort into. Timothy said: "Nobody knows whether this is going to work. It could be great, it could be a disaster. The rules will change, they'll be different next year as we gain experience. Much depends on people behaving like grown-ups, and however well we prepare, we know we will be faced with unforeseen circumstances. But we do not believe there are any problems that cannot be overcome." ■

Wings Scheme mods

The air touring requirements for the AOPA Wings Scheme have been modified to permit pilots to count shared flights towards their awards.

In requirements designed to encourage pilots to undertake relatively long distance flights, Wings holders could move up by flying varying distances starting at 300 miles with a number of intermediate stops. The way the requirement was worded meant that pilots who shared alternate legs of a long flight, as is common practice in club fly-outs or private arrangements, would not be eligible.

This has now been changed. Instead of stating that the applicant must be PIC for the complete qualifying flight, the new wording states that he or she must be PIC, and must fly the take-offs and landings, for "all flight legs for which the qualifying flight distance is sought."

Nick Wilcock of the AOPA Instructors Committee proposed the change

and wrote the new wording, which was approved by the Instructors in March and positively received by the Members Working Group in April. It becomes effective immediately.

Nick Wilcock says: "This is designed to widen further the appeal of the Wings Scheme. Many pilots do not have the desire, funds or time to complete the current Air Touring Experience requirements in a single flight but would prefer to spread their experience as they are able. The change will particularly benefit members of clubs involved in summer fly-outs, for example, who share their flying."

Grass strips

David Scouller, chairman of the Instructors Committee, has now defined the scope of the 'Farm Strip Course' mentioned in *General Aviation* last year following an approach from Philip Cardew of Cornwall Flying Club, and expects to have it available to members in three to six months. Completion of the Farm Strip Course will be one of the achievements which count towards the Wings Award.

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CAA back for another handout

Swingeing new increases in CAA fees are driving the GA industry to despair, with some charges being hiked by as much as 80 percent and virtually every corner of the business being hammered for cash.

AOPA is appealing for the Department for Transport to take action to alleviate the suffering of small businesses in general aviation, caused by the implementation of new charges as a result of the CAA's Joint Review Team, which raised charges to general aviation while reducing them for airlines. There are signs that even the CAA – which points out that it is forced to charge by the government – recognises the situation is critical. It has decided not to implement a further round of increases planned for mid-2009, although further increases are expected later.

The heaviest blow has fallen on AOC holders, many of whom are being forced to give up on commercial work altogether. According to CAA figures, 18 companies have handed back their AOCs and got out of general aviation in the past year. The AOC charge for Cabair's helicopters has gone up by 80 percent to £28,000 a year, which knocks the stuffing out of the whole charter business. Cabair's Simon Cooper says: "It's just horrific, far beyond anything reasonable. When you add the £6,000 it costs us to audit things to the CAA's satisfaction, the effect on our margins makes the business unsustainable.

"The only way we can continue is to ask the owners of the helicopters we use to make a contribution to the cost – effectively, to pay to be on the AOC. But we have to be careful there because if they come off the AOC, it may be that their entire business plan for the aircraft is undermined – the knock-on effect could be dreadful."

At London Helicopter Centres at Redhill, the AOC charge has gone up from £9,000 to £16,000 a year. Owner Mark Souster says: "We need to drastically cut the number of aircraft on the AOC, and that means not offering charter work to pilots we have previously employed. It is surely nobody's

intention that regulatory cost should have such a clear negative impact on business and employment."

The burden and the shame of the CAA is its cost-recovery requirement. The Authority is required by law to make all of its costs back from industry, plus six percent profit. The law was introduced by the Thatcher government – some members of which now privately admit it was a mistake – but no provision was made for any external control of what the CAA does, how many people it employs or what it charges for the 'services' it demands we take.

The new round of increases came about when British Airways complained it was paying too much to the CAA, and GA was not paying enough. At the time BA was paying one fiftieth of one percent of its turnover to the CAA, while some GA companies were paying more than ten percent of turnover, and in addition were paying VAT and taxes which BA was excused. CAA chairman Sir Roy McNulty instigated a review, from which AOPA was specifically excluded – Sir Roy said he "wanted to keep the numbers down". The result was predictable – massive cost increases to GA and reductions to the airlines.

Engineering charges

CAA charges are now grotesquely out of balance with the realities of the general aviation industry. Consider the case of engineer David Storey, who has had a bill for more than £4,000 from the CAA for trying to add a new type to his Part M licence. David runs Cornwall Aviation Services at Bodmin, a small engineering concern affiliated to Cornwall Flying Club, and he maintains a handful of aircraft for the Club and for local owners. David was one of the first to apply for Part M status and paid the CAA several thousands of pounds to get registered, and several thousands more to renew his accreditation after the first year. Under the old system he was licensed to work on dozens of aircraft, but the CAA advised him

Below: David Storey, who has had a bill for more than £4,000 from the CAA for trying to add a new type to his Part M licence



to put only those aircraft on which he was currently working on his Part M application. "They said all I had to do was call them if I needed to add another type to my ticket, and they'd put it on," says David. "But when I needed to add a type, they said they'd changed the system – there was a form to fill in online, and the last item on it was 'fee'. The charge for adding one type was £1,380, and I had to pay it twice, once for the sub-part F, which is the actual maintenance work, and once for the sub-part G, which allows me to keep the documentation.

"There was no way around it, no way to appeal. So we managed to find the money and sent in the application, but because they charge the same to add any number of types, I put all the types on my old JAA licence on the application. Then they sent me back a demand for a further £1,400 for 'additional work'.

"These fees are just driving us under. They bear no relationship to what work the CAA does. Their surveyors come here and charge £181 an hour to look over the shoulder of a guy who's probably getting a tenth of that to do the actual work."

Cornwall Aviation Services' labour rate is less than half what you'd pay a Volkswagen dealer, and David Storey works for the love of aviation. There's not much scope for growth in rural Cornwall, and it's a hand-to-mouth existence – to David Storey, £4,000 is a fabulous amount of money, probably more than three months profit, and to have to pay it to the CAA for no discernible useful service is crippling.

Mark Taylor, chief executive of Cornwall Flying Club, has written to the CAA to ask exactly what they're charging for and demanding to see the work sheets. "This is simply unsustainable," he says, "but nobody at the CAA seems to understand that."

There are scores of David Storeys up and down the country, struggling to make a living. The problems for engineers are compounded by the fact that there is no consistency in what the CAA demands of them. AOPA chairman Professor George Done, who handles engineering issues, says: "One CAA surveyor will say one thing, another will say something completely different. We have cases where a maintenance company that wanted to register for Part M has created documentation that has fully satisfied their CAA inspector. That documentation has then been used by another maintainer in a different area, where the CAA surveyor has rejected it! That surveyor has returned three or four times seeking changes – and of course, the company has to pay according to the number of visits."

Licensing costs

The shortage of examiners is being exacerbated by CAA fees. When Cornwall-based Philip Cardew renewed his examiner qualification recently, it cost him £740 – a £200 fee to the examiner, one of his former students, £99 in expenses for the examiner to come down from Weston super Mare, £140 for the use of the aircraft, and fully £307 to the CAA to issue the renewal.

"It's a small piece of paper that simply says I can carry on examining," says Philip. "Add to this the increasing cost of twice-yearly Class 1 medicals and all the other rigmarole, and I find it almost impossible to recoup my outlay in fees to students. I can't raise charges to students because the market won't bear it. I'm going to carry on examining for perhaps another year to try to get back what I've spent, then I'm going to give it up." ■

Get them out of the air

*Fines and retraining are not enough to bring airspace infringements down, argues **Martin Robinson** – pilots' licenses must be lost*

In recent years the CAA has become markedly more constructive in its attitude to the prosecution of pilots for trespassing against the ANO. Thanks to the Authority's Head of Enforcement Ian Weston and his team, and to the CAA's legal department, re-education is stressed and money that once disappeared uselessly in fines is now routinely ploughed into enforced training regimes that seek to address the roots of the problem.

Furthermore, not for several years has there been a prosecution which might be described as arbitrary, or designed to appease a public eager to see a scapegoat hung, drawn and quartered. In the area of enforcement and prosecution, the progress the CAA has made is entirely praiseworthy.

The emphasis on retraining has done its bit to attack the problem of airspace infringements, but as AOPA has repeatedly made clear, there are still far too many of them, and almost always they are due to bad airmanship and disregard of the basics of navigation. In general, AOPA members are less prone to infringe than non-members. I suspect that anyone who is sufficiently engaged with aviation to join AOPA is generally more professional in his or her approach to the business of flying. There were some 800 recorded infringements last year, of which the CAA prosecuted 90, and only a tiny proportion of them crossed my desk. Those I do deal with tend to be at the less serious end of the scale.

But some infringements are so bad as to be almost inexplicable – the result of slapdash planning (or no real planning at all), over-reliance on GPS, inability to read a chart properly, or worse, a cavalier disregard for the entire airspace structure. Some of these pilots, when they are approached by the CAA's enforcement branch, seem to have little grasp of the enormity of their offence. Increasingly, my worry is that one unprofessional GA pilot is going to cause a catastrophe in which many airline passengers will die. We have large buffer zones around our CAT, and increasingly sophisticated ATC tools like CAIT which help identify infringers early and head them off, but the great fear is that one of them will one day find a way through, and death and destruction will result.

However much we want to encourage people to fly, it has to be said that there are pilots out there who have no business being in charge of a plane. They have the wrong attitude, they are unlikely to derive real benefit from additional training, and even heavy fines are unlikely to change their ways. When pilots like this are involved in serious infringements, the only correct response must be to take their licenses away. Nothing else will get through to them.

This must be the CAA's next step in attacking the infringement problem. Pilots whose negligence has caused dangerous infringements have been getting away with

substantial fines, but they must also have their licenses suspended, or in particularly egregious causes, withdrawn entirely.

Draconian measures are called for to prevent the nightmare scenario. If it comes to pass, not only will there be death on a horrendous scale, but the media will be full of half-bright hacks holding up Mode-S transponders and saying that hundreds died because this pilot couldn't be bothered to properly equip his plane, and other such hogwash.

In effect, we will all lose our licences then. The fact that the vast majority of pilots are conscientious people who make proper preparations and never trouble the enforcement branch will count for nothing when the bodies are being carried away. You'll be able to mount your aeroplane on a plinth for a garden ornament, because you won't be flying it again.

It cannot be allowed to happen. ■

Eurocontrol Yearbook

IAOPA has contributed heavily to the new Eurocontrol Yearbook, a document which sets out to explain what Eurocontrol is doing, for whom, and what it plans to do in future – and which goes out to persons of influence in all European governments and regulatory authorities.

This year Eurocontrol invited IAOPA and the European Business Aircraft Association to write a series of articles for the Yearbook. IAOPA provided eight articles explaining various facets of general aviation – one by IAOPA president Craig Fuller, one by senior vice president Martin Robinson, and several by *General Aviation* editor Pat Malone covering topics such as business aviation's contribution to growth, the GA perspective on regulation, the environmental sustainability of GA, and the business benefits of aviation.

Other contributors to the Yearbook, entitled *'The Business of Flying'*, include the European Commission vice president in charge of Transport, Antonio Tajani, and Eurocontrol director general David McMillan, who not only wrote the foreword but has been heard quoting from the IAOPA articles in speeches at EBACE.

Martin Robinson has ensured that copies of the Yearbook have been sent to key people in transport departments and national aviation authorities across Europe. "This has been a fantastic exercise for general aviation because we've been able to get our arguments into a publication which is seen and digested by all the important people in European aviation," he says. "There are a lot of misconceptions about what general aviation is and what it does, and this will help us put the record straight at the right level.

"The decision to devote the Eurocontrol Yearbook to general aviation came about because of Eurocontrol's involvement in IAOPA's World Assembly in Athens last year, which David McMillan supported and attended. I must express my appreciation to David McMillan for giving us the chance to present our industry's case in this way."

If you can make use of a copy of the Eurocontrol Yearbook, contact Mandy Nelson in the office, info@aopa.co.uk or 0207 834 5631 – we still have a handful of copies left.



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Safety Bonus Day

Duxford's Safety Bonus Day had the makings of another runaway success until the weather intervened – 98 aircraft, 38 cars and more than 250 people had booked in advance to participate. Come the day, the promised eastward clearance of a cold front did not happen, leaving East Anglia and South East England under gloomy, unflyable conditions. Duxford AFISO Alan Evans was kept busy all morning taking fly-in cancellations, but many pilots decided to make the journey by road. In the end about 70 – 80 people attended a full day of lectures and table-top presentations, and however you travelled, the journey was well worthwhile.

The Imperial War Museum Collection at Duxford is an outstanding destination for GA aircraft. There is more to interest and excite pilots and aviation enthusiasts than at almost any other airfield in the world, from the £25 million 'AirSpace' hangar opened last year, the American Air Museum, through to the four pre-WWII original hangars housing a wide variety of historic aircraft, many in flying order.

Since 2006, Duxford aerodrome has hosted Bonus Days, where pilots of particular aircraft (e.g. Piper, Cessna) pay a reduced landing fee and also have the advantage of reduced admission to visit the museum aircraft collection.

In 2008, Alan Evans and airfield manager Frank Marson initiated a Safety Bonus Day, when landing fees were waived completely and pilots were invited to free presentations with flight safety as their theme. This proved to be a great success. The 2009 Safety Day was planned to be a mixture of informal presentations and opportunities to chat to the



Gary Benbridge

Above: the 'AirSpace' hangar contains over 30 historic British and Commonwealth aircraft, including military and civil types

professionals, set in two teaching rooms in the magnificent surroundings of the AirSpace Hangar. As last year, AOPA was invited to participate, with the Mentoring and Wings schemes being AOPA's flagship publicity areas. Mandy Nelson had worked hard on production of publicity and handout material providing information on the Mentoring Scheme. Timothy Nathan and Mick Elborn were kept busy all day chatting about the scheme with pilots. Interestingly, the main interest came from potential mentees, many of whom had recently gained their PPLs and all of whom expressed enthusiasm for a development that is planned to encourage and help them to spread their wings.

Events like these are always great opportunities to meet pilots face to face, hear their concerns, discuss issues and encourage them to join AOPA. Our team of Martin Robinson, Mandy Nelson, Timothy Nathan, George Done, Mick Elborn and Chris Royle all felt that it had been a highly worthwhile day, and were pleased to have been involved in this safety oriented day organised by Duxford.

We look forward to participating again in 2010. Let's hope that the weather will smile on us then!

Duxford Bonus Days planned for 2009 are:

- May 23rd **Flyer Magazine' Bonus Day** - see Flyer magazine for details
- June 20th **Cessna Bonus Day** - arrive in any Cessna aircraft
- July 25th **Piper Bonus Day** - arrive in any Piper aircraft
- August 8th **Bulldog / Pup Bonus Day** - arrive in a Bulldog or Pup – *Chris Royle* ■

Emissions trading

Operators of some business aircraft have been caught by an anomaly which exempts AOC aircraft from emissions trading but forces non-commercial operators of identical aircraft to pay trading fees.

The problem affects aircraft over 5,700 kg – a Beech King Air would qualify – which will now fall under an EU emissions trading scheme while an identical aircraft operated commercially would not. EU Directive 2008/101/EU on emissions trading



Right: a Beech King Air

exempts aircraft below 5,700 kg MTOW and commercial operators producing less than the 243 flights every four months, or less than 10,000 tonnes of CO2 per year. These are classed as 'minimal emitters' who do not fall into the emissions trading net.

Private operators of such aircraft would, however, be required to pay. Dr Michael Erb, managing director of AOPA-Germany, says: 'This is clearly discrimination against non-commercial operators, because I can't imagine any justification for declaring non-commercial emissions worse than commercial emissions.'

The problem is not just that private

operators will have to pay emissions trading fees, but setting up a monitoring system is a costly and bureaucratic process which has been designed for airlines. Article 3 of the Directive, concerning monitoring and reporting plans, says: 'The administering Member State shall ensure that each aircraft operator submits to the competent authority in that Member State a monitoring plan setting out measures to monitor and report emissions and tonne-kilometre data for the purpose of an

application under Article 3e and that such plans are approved by the competent authority in accordance with the guidelines adopted pursuant to Article 14.'

Jacob Pedersen of AOPA-Denmark, who first alerted IAOPA to the anomaly earlier this year, says: 'For a small operator the burdens associated with setting up a monitoring system, filling in the many Excel sheets, having an approved auditor sign you CO2 report, and signing up with a company that gives you access to the marketplace for CO2 trading will cost you many times more than the price of the CO2 quota itself.'

'The unfortunate thing is that absurdities like this only contributes to putting the whole CO2 emission trading scheme in a bad light, and do absolutely nothing to help the climate. This seems to be another example of the

'curved cucumbers'-type madness, and I think that the European Commission can see the issue if we raise it.'

IAOPA senior vice president Martin Robinson is seeking to canvass widespread support for a joint approach to the Commission by representatives of IAOPA and business aircraft associations like the EBAA. 'I believe it will have to be challenged on legal grounds because it is a tax,' he says. 'It can be calculated at 7.7 euro cents per litre, and the fact that it goes to the Treasury departments of governments without hypothecation clearly demonstrates that it is a tax. This is in direct contravention of the Chicago Convention.'

'The major issue for private operators is the administration and validation of the figures, and of course there will be people springing up as "experts" charging to do the validation. Another aspect to this discrimination is in the form of allowances, which from 2012 favour large commercial aircraft.'

'I am contacting EBAA and IATA about a possible joint legal challenge. Most of our members do not fly aircraft over 5,700 kg, but those who do need our assistance. ■

Moray Flying Club

The contact number for Moray Flying Club in the 'Scotland' section of the Where to Fly Guide in April's General Aviation was incorrect. It should have been 01309 617361. Our apologies to the club, and to any frustrated callers.

'Poor man's IMC rating'

EASA's FCL.008 group is working towards a two-tier IR structure which envisages an ICAO-compliant instrument rating with reduced theory tests, and an 'en-route' IMC rating which would allow holders to fly in cloud in the cruise. AOPA has been in the forefront of moves towards a more attainable IR for years, but it opposes any plan that would effectively kill off the UK IMC rating while replacing it with a less safe, less useful qualification at additional cost.

The idea that an en-route IMC qualification can replace the UK IMC rating is misplaced. When the IMC rating was written by AOPA almost 40 years ago, its prime purpose was twofold – first, to ensure a pilot maintained control after inadvertently flying into IMC, and second, to get him safely back onto the ground. An en-route rating which did not teach

and allow the practice of instrument approaches is no substitute.

There has been significant opposition across Europe to EASA's adoption of the IMC Rating, and Dr Michael Erb, AOPA's representative on FCL.008, confirms that opposition remains strong. The stated reason has been that some countries do not allow instrument flight outside controlled airspace; how then is an 'en-route' IMC feasible if a UK-style IMC rating is not?

In all the time the UK IMC has been operating, some 18,000 ratings have been issued, countless lives have been saved and only one fatal accident has befallen an IMC holder in IMC. Standardisation across Europe is laudable, but not at the cost of pilots' lives.

AOPA's solution is for Europe to adopt the UK IMC rating in the same way as it has

adopted the LAPL medical system, which allows each country to comply if its legal structure allows it to do so. The fallback position is for the CAA to 'file a difference' with EASA in order to retain the IMC Rating at home – something that EASA's Deputy Head of Rulemaking Eric Sivel agreed was possible when the issue of killing off the IMC Rating was discussed in London two years ago.

Martin Robinson says: "It is not acceptable that we should lose the full IMC rating and that holders should be forced to spend additional money getting an inferior rating. Europe has no data on the IMC and its benefits, while we have a long track record of experience with it. It is a proven lifesaver. Its retention should not impinge on anything FCL.008 suggests – the easier route to an IR has been IAOPA's goal for years, and if they insist on a 'poor man's IMC', well and good, but the UK IMC rating and the rights of its holders must be protected." ■



LARS – who pays?

NATS has been rebuffed in its approach to the government for £3 million which would be billed to GA in order to pay for new LARS services, but it is unlikely to give up on its campaign.

The Lower Airspace Radar Service used to be paid for through a £1.6 million rebate on navigation charges, but because the charging regime outlaws rebates, the money is theoretically now coming from the government through the DfT. But the DfT would have to raise this money from industry, and there can of course be no cross-subsidy, so if the DfT stumped up for LARS, the money would have to come directly from GA. When NATS went to Peter Griffiths, former head of Civil Aviation at the DfT, to ask for £3 million to cover services to GA, they found that the previous day Griffiths had been flying with a GA company in the south of England which was demonstrating to him the difficulty of getting a clearance to cross the Southampton Zone. He told NATS that unless they could provide a complete service to GA, the DfT would not be party to a charge which would inevitably fall on GA.

Gretchen Burrett, Director of Safety at NATS, has confirmed the approach to the DfT, and the rebuff. But NATS is now largely owned by an airline group – which AOPA supported during the privatization process – and they don't provide free services. In common with other air navigation service providers, NATS is suffering a horrendous shortfall in income caused by the reduction in air traffic, and the pressure to increase revenues and cut costs is extreme.

The Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation CANSO, of which NATS is a prominent member, is forecasting a €1 billion loss for its members this year and is urging European states to inject money to help them out. It says ANSPs like NATS are taking desperate measures to cut costs, including shedding staff, and seeks a commitment from national authorities and Eurocontrol to freeze or reduce costs and increase efficiency. CANSO says the reduction in European air traffic has cost its members €400 million. The chairman of the European CANSO committee, Marc Hamy, says: 'Wherever possible we are cutting costs to keep navigation charges down, but we have to do all we can to modernise European ATM and make it more efficient.' CANSO is also calling on nations to limit their own charges and make soft loans available to ANSPs, while investing cash in new ATM infrastructure.

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Do they mean us?

*IAOPA-Europe's 120th Regional Meeting heard bad news and good from all quarters of the continent, as **Pat Malone** reports*

Funny place, Europe. Every national AOPA has different problems, but most of them can be traced to one cause – a complete lack of understanding of general aviation on the part of authorities and regulators. Leaving aside things like the three-ring-circus of Mode-S imposition in the Netherlands, there are a thousand little crosses to bear, some of them petty irritations, some real obstacles to business. In Italy, you need an ELT broadcasting on 121.5, even though nobody monitors the signal any more. But everybody keeps quiet about it because having it absolves you from having to file a VFR flight plan. So keep schtum.

But there's good news, too – AOPA is winning many local battles, membership is increasing and the work continues to stem and even roll back the tide of restriction that faces GA. Last year's AOPA

World Assembly has had a huge impact on general aviation in **Greece**, said AOPA-Hellas president Yiouli Kalafati. GA flying hours have increased by 100 percent, the authorities have withdrawn landing and parking fees at regional airports, and AOPA had been able to turn back unreasonable local limitations on movements because of new links forged with government. Greece is working on allowing fuel sales without the use of licensed middlemen. The high profile of AOPA-Hellas has increased member numbers by 22 percent since the World Assembly. Five new corporate members have enlisted, together with all the large flight schools, and some 75 percent of Greek GA is now in membership, giving AOPA tremendous strength in negotiation.

Good news from **Denmark** is that the VAT exemption which has saved European GA billions of pounds on aircraft purchases will continue until Jan 1, 2010. Other costs have been increasing; because people and companies were leaving GA, the CAA had to boost its charges to the shrinking remainder, and find new things to charge for. Fuel prices have not come down as much as car fuel prices because of lack of competition, something AOPA-Denmark is taking up with the national competition agency. It is also in negotiation with the CAA over compulsory ELT installations. Denmark is concerned about 'Natura 2000' the European initiative to establish 162 nature sites where aviation would be banned, affecting several airfields. Jacob Pedersen said: "We need a study to show that small airfields are not a threat to wildlife, indeed they are exactly the opposite."

Denmark is one of the countries to which AOPA-UK sends large numbers of copies of *General Aviation* magazine, which Jacob said was a great help in retaining members. AOPA also had a presence in Denmark's best-selling flying magazine.

The Netherlands is preoccupied with Mode-S, Ary Stiger reported; all petitions to the authorities have been ignored. They're also worried about the imposition of 'Natura 2000' areas, because several Dutch airfields and landing sites on islands would be affected. AOPA-Netherlands has established its own

local standards to try to forestall some of the worst problems. They are also defending three pilots accused of flying in the vicinity of bird sanctuaries, something the authorities are becoming very active on.

To recruit new people to AOPA they have introduced free membership for a minimum of one year to everyone who goes solo.

For AOPA-**Poland**, Blazej Krupa said that after two years of negotiation, they'd had a major success in convincing the government that fuel could be sold without a licence,

each recruiting ten new members.

In **Sweden**, lack of access to Stockholm-area airfields is of increasing concern. "GA airports are the responsibility of each community or private interests," Lennart Persson said, "and everyone agrees we need them, as long as they're somewhere else." There is also a fear that too much complex, expensive and unnecessary EASA regulation will lead to pilots ignoring the rules – in remote parts of a country like Sweden, how will EASA enforce them? Regulation is bad enough at home – Mode-S is now mandatory for IFR flights, yet nowhere in Sweden is there a Mode-S receiver. Lars Hjelmberg added that avgas tax had now been introduced in Sweden, but most bowsers had been filled before the tax came in and the full impact had yet to be felt.

For AOPA-**Spain**, Juan Manuel Perez said local regulations such as those requiring flight plans for every flight were difficult to tackle



Above: some of the delegates at the 120th IAOPA-Europe regional meeting

which cut out the middlemen and allowed aero clubs to sell their own fuel. This has cut the price, and Poland is still flying tax free – a litre of avgas costs 90 cents (about 80p) with no VAT, and pilots were flying in from Germany to fill up.

They had also introduced free student membership of AOPA and extended honorary membership to all pilots who could show they had lost their licences for medical reasons.

AOPA-**Switzerland** president Ruedi Gerber said the primary issue for GA there was the Part M maintenance requirement, which had doubled the cost of maintenance for a single-engine aircraft and was one reason why so many aircraft were for sale. The unharmonised introduction of Mode-S and 406 MHz ELTs was a mess, with each country bordering Switzerland having a different set of requirements. Security was an ever-pressing problem, with access to GA aircraft becoming more difficult, time consuming and expensive.

On the recruitment front, Switzerland has started a 'liaison officer' programme similar to AOPA-UK's regional reps – men and women at GA airfields who gave presentations, answered questions and reported to the Board. The target for 2009 is for 20 new liaison officers,

because the authorities say they are waiting for a lead from EASA. AOPA is working with the Spanish CAA on such issues as the size of TMAs and extensions of controlled airspace, which is very encouraging because until now GA has largely been ignored.

Vladimir Tyurin of AOPA-**Russia** said they were trying to work with the authorities to make them more GA-friendly. "There's a lot of work to do," he said. "Uncontrolled VFR doesn't exist, all airspace is Class C, 'partisan flying' where people just fly regardless, is a safety issue. The number of type-certificated aircraft is minimal; Cessnas and Pipers are not certificated and the only way is to get a Permit for Fly, a difficult and cumbersome process which costs up to \$5,000 a year. AOPA has drafted proposals to make that less expensive. We're also pressing the government to make aeronautical information widely available. VFR and IFR charts are monopolised by government agencies, and we are working with Jeppesen to open up the data." They're also working to remove regulations for foreign VFR flights into Russia, particularly the requirement to have a nominated Russian speaker on board, who needs a first class ticket to the airport of departure. ELTs are a

requirement, but there is only one certificated ELT and the maker charges \$5,000 for it, before you'd paid installation and certification costs, and it never worked in a crash anyway. "We want PLBs, or to be allowed non-certificated ELTs from foreign manufacturers," Vladimir said.

Massimo Levy, president of AOPA-Italy, said that when the EU decided airports had to be liberalised, the Italians simply gave them away to private entities who paid nothing, with contracts that do not enforce any public service requirement. Access had been made extremely expensive, including at Naples, which had been acquired by Heathrow owners BAA, who did not want to facilitate GA. "We have been able to fight some of these situations and win," Massimo said. "At Milan Linate, they decided to multiply the landing fees by seven, but this was changed after six months of hard battle, with help from IAOPA's representative at ICAO, Frank Hofmann, because it was totally against ICAO regulations. But we have the same fight at Bologna, at Malpensa, Venice. Bologna introduced a new 15 euro fee to pay for deicing, even if you landed in a Piper Cub. We also have the largest TMA in the world, the largest CTRs, the strictest classification of airspace. Small regional airports with CTRs are classified C, and they simply don't let you cross. When you have TMAs 300 km square where you can't get over 1,000 feet, with the Alps and Apennines north and south, it gets very difficult."

Because of Italian bureaucracy, 30 percent of the Italian GA fleet is registered in Germany. The Italians still demand ELTs broadcasting on 121.5, even though nobody is monitoring them; if you have one, you can fly without filing a VFR flight plan, so AOPA doesn't want to muddy the waters.

AOPA has had great success by offering aero clubs a 50 percent discount to enroll all their members.

For AOPA-Luxembourg, Gottfried Zankl said security had become ridiculous. "We have three flying clubs where lounges are in the airport area, now surrounded by barbed wire, so the airport arranged a control point with security officers checking everyone going in and out. But these officers finish at 8pm, so nobody can get in or out of the bar after then. We have made an informal arrangement to be allowed to leave the bar after 8pm, but not to go in. We can no longer walk to the main terminal to file flight plans or get the met. We must go out through security and drive around. Because of local concerns about aircraft noise, we fly to Bitburg in Germany to do circuits."

In Luxembourg, where virtually all the pilots know each other, AOPA has 310 members, more than 55 percent of the pilot population.

In Bulgaria, the GA pilot population is tiny and AOPA has only 40 members. Ivaylo Dermendyiev said: "We have no VFR charts and have to use road maps, we have 70 percent of the country restricted area for military. South part of the country is totally restricted, they close these areas for weeks, you never know why. Our Robinson helicopter dealer recently lost a contract because the military just closed his demonstration flight area. When AOPA-Switzerland had a fly-out to Bulgaria we had to go personally to the Minister of Defence to get permission, but we can't do that for everyone. Also, fees have been increased by five or six times. They don't want GA in Sofia but there are no alternative airport. There are huge landing fees at ports of entry, something like €150. It's cheaper and

easier to register abroad, and most aircraft are on the German register."

Closure of airfields is a salient issue in Germany; Dr Michael Erb said AOPA was fighting court cases against the state of Bavaria to preserve facilities in the Munich area. "We lost the fight to keep Tempelhof," he said. "Berlin has gone from having three airports with six runways to having one airport with two runways. We have another fight, to defend Egelsbach, our home airfield where AOPA's offices are. It was running into financial problems, but NetJets has bought 80 percent. We also fight the drivers of the cost of flying – mandates on 8.33 radios, Mode-S above 5,000 feet, new 406 MHz ELT are mandated from January 1 2010, and we are opposing this. We are also fighting unreasonable security checks – all German pilots are obliged to undergo every five years a background check, and to pay for them. We won a couple of court cases on this, and it is now appealed to our supreme court."

Dr Erb said one of the best recruitment drivers had been the members-only section of the AOPA website which showed individuals and companies how to reclaim all fuel tax under EU law.

Ioannis Papaicovou of AOPA-Cyprus said the island had two private international airports at which GA was unwelcome. "We are trying to build our own airport, we have the funds but getting a lot of problems," he said. "Controllers who have no radar will give us a squawk – what's that all about? They force specific VFR routes on us, but they are dangerously close to high mountains."

AOPA-Cyprus provides an airport pass for members, which is popular, and supports them with a flight planning service.

AOPA-Austria has a new representative in Joachim Janezic, an aviation lawyer. Fighting high fees and taxes was the major preoccupation, he said. "To revalidate a pilots licence in Austria costs €300," Joachim said. "We are currently fighting on fuel taxation, security issues, and on a daily basis we are clarifying unclear rules for our membership." Joachim's colleague Doris Gammer added: "We have lost people to old age, or people giving up their licence for medical reasons, or just quitting flying – maintaining the members is as important as attracting new people."

IAOPA-Europe vice president Martin Robinson summed up by saying: "The issues centre on access to airspace and aerodromes, costs, fees and charges, equipage, the minefield of regulation, fuel taxes and availability of avgas, and security. The picture is clouded by the fact that in some parts of Europe it is accepted that something is allowed unless it is specifically prohibited, while in others the principle is that something is prohibited unless it is specifically allowed."

"In the UK we have had success with the AOPA Members Working Group, an initiative of the members themselves, which meets every other month and has brought forward many good ideas, and the people to push them through. If you can engage your members in the same way, kit will be entirely to the good. Their initiatives have included area representatives for AOPA at airfields and a Mentoring Scheme, a sort of 'dating service' between experienced pilots and those who need help, and none of this has put significant new pressure on the office. It's all helped to keep people interested in flying, to be more positive about aviation, and to counter those who feel there's so much hassle they give up." ■

Reward for Ruedi

Outgoing IAOPA-Europe vice president Ruedi Gerber was given a special service award by IAOPA general secretary John Sheehan in recognition of his work for IAOPA over the past two years, and for AOPA-Switzerland for 20 years before that.

In recognition of Ruedi's taste for whisky, he was also given a bottle of the finest malt by his successor Martin Robinson.

Ruedi likened his term of service to a good book, full of good experiences and good characters, composed by good writers and defined by a strong single thread from beginning to end, the thread being the IAOPA mission we are all committed to advance. "Thank you for the many wonderful hours we spent together," he said. "Ours is an important cause, as important today as it was 20 years ago."

Outgoing regional vice president Ruedi Gerber (left) with AOPA-Germany's Dr Michael Erb



EASA consultations

Three EASA amendments were out for consultation at the time of the 120th RM, and the consultation periods allowed for them – always short – had been extended to the end of July. While the official Working Group on which



IAOPA has a seat believed it had picked over every detail of these proposed amendments, the final wording sometimes came as a surprise to our representative on the group, AOPA-Denmark's Jacob Pedersen. "Sometimes the text varies wildly from what was discussed and agreed in the group," he says. "I'm not sure who's putting these new proposals in – they just seem to come out of thin air."

At the first-draft stage of the EASA-Ops NPA, Jacob said, they had been able to kill off some of the least sensible EASA proposals. "The document is already a lot better than what was internally circulated within the Working Group six months ago, which was a disaster," he says. "Performance requirements for single pistons – EASA wanted to propose accelerate-stop distances to be respected by GA, would have closed down all airstrips of less than 800 metres. We were able to remove mandatory carriage of liferafts, and a lot more has been taken out. A lot of things they've put in are new to me, even though I was part of the Working Group producing the document."

While the FCL consultation was 700 pages,

Ops is 1,081 pages, a huge consultation. IAOPA is concerned about proposals which would effectively make VFR on top impossible and would seriously affect night VFR. "We are working on sensible proposals to allow VFR on top," Jacob said.

"A real problem here is that the whole structure of the document is a disaster. This regulation was never written for the pilot or the operational people in mind, it was written to satisfy EU legal requirements. The pilot who wants to know what regulation applies to him must piece together everything from dozens of different parts of this enormous document – he must go first to the basic regulation, then to the General Section, then to the section dealing with the specific aircraft, then the section concerning alternative acceptable means of compliance, and if it's a complex aircraft there's another section... at least the JARS were understandable, but this document is such a

Americans look to Europe

While AOPA-US President Craig Fuller couldn't be at the IAOPA-Europe regional meeting, two of AOPA-US's top men joined General Secretary John Sheehan in making the transatlantic trip to Friedrichshafen. Andy Cebula, executive vice president for government affairs, and Bruce Landsberg, president of the AOPA Air Safety Foundation, came to fill us in on how they do things in America.

While we tend to look to America as a general aviation utopia, not all is well. Craig Fuller had intended to come to Europe until quite late in the day, but Andy Cebula

explained that he has his hands full at home. "The US economy not doing well, which affects AOPA and GA," Andy said. "Airports are reporting 20 to 30 percent declines in revenues as the industry is hit at the top level first, and it's working its way down. There have been some high-profile attacks on the use of GA aircraft, primarily corporate jets, and that's taken its toll. The Obama administration, for reasons we cannot fathom, has reopened the whole debate about whether our system should be financed by aviation taxes, and is pushing for additional user fees in 2010, so we have a big challenge there. On top of that

the Transportation Security Administration, the TSA, had got very fixated on GA being a threat to the US and to the world, and launched several initiatives to restrict GA and burden it with new requirements.

"To respond we need money, and for a special campaign called GA Serves America we are asking AOPA members to contribute to a fund to influence regulators, and Craig Fuller has to do the fundraising and help to launch that programme. It's a multi-million-dollar programme and he has to go and get that money.

"None of this betokens a lack of commitment to International AOPA on the part of Craig Fuller – quite the opposite. We have more of a commitment now to get involved in international issues than we saw under Phil Boyer, we are going to be more involved, not less."

Can we afford SESAR?

AOPA faces a real challenge to make sure the voice of general aviation is heard during the implementation phase of SESAR, the future air traffic system for Europe.

The definition phase of SESAR ended last year and IAOPA was closely involved in setting out the framework, having paid some €400,000 to be part of the consortium which spent two and a half years laying out the ground rules. Had AOPA not been there, GA would certainly have been cut out of the equation.

Unfortunately participation in the implementation stage is almost as costly, with the minimum contribution to the Joint Undertaking on implementation having been set at €250,000, and IAOPA-Europe just doesn't have enough members to pay the bills. But GA can't afford not to be

part of the Joint Undertaking – SESAR will govern the way all of European aviation operates 15 years from now – and IAOPA is looking for ways to make sure GA has a voice.

As with the definition phase, it's not just a matter of turning up for meetings – IAOPA was required to commit several thousand man-hours of expert time and hired Val Eggers, former head of the Dutch CAA, to help with representation. For the next phase IAOPA is talking to aviation consultancy Helios with a view to taking on some of the workload.

AOPA-Germany managing director Dr Michael Erb, who oversees IAOPA's work on SESAR, and IAOPA-Europe vice president Martin Robinson are in negotiation with the JU's chief economist Alain Siebert over the cost of representation. Dr Erb says: "Financing is a major issue. Working on this is not just a matter of reading documents and sending out comments, you really need experts to take care of the business. We're considering working with Helios, who are already working with the EC."

Martin Robinson adds: "Because of our lobbying of the Council of Europe it has been officially stated in the documentation that GA must be taken into account at the JU, and their chief economist understands the need to bring GA in. Unfortunately the JU has moved away from being a collection of interested parties and has become an agency of the EU; which is leading to delays in many of their programmes. The reason for this is that being an agency saves it 20 percent VAT, or an estimated £350 million. But it may be possible for SESAR to get EC funds, in which case some of our costs will be covered and we may hire Helios, if the rules allow.

"We don't yet know how the funding issue will come out. SESAR is linked into the Industry Consultation Body, which is the industry's voice on the Single Sky Committee, which in turn is made up of the state regulators, and they have set up working groups including the Economic Task Force in which I've been invited to participate. Part of the funding is EC taxpayers money, normally available from another part of the European Commission to fund research into large transport infrastructure projects. While we thought at first we would be eligible for this form of funding, they've decided that GA and the military are too hard for them to deal with. It's disappointing, but they still understand that they have to address the needs of GA, and we have make sure we're not forgotten.

"We have invited Europe Airports to join with IAOPA Europe in the tender programme and currently we await their reply." ■

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mess that it is a safety issue. EASA has proposed an e-tool to help the user find the right sections, the quality of that is going to be really important. This really is a jungle of regulation and we have stressed our concern at its complexity.

"The text is not segmented according to the type of aircraft so the rules for aeroplanes, gliders, helicopters and balloons are all mixed together with exceptions like 'except in the case of balloons' written all over."

Early problems that had been identified include the mandate for a counter drum pointer in all aircraft flying at night – an unnecessary and expensive requirement for GA operating below 10,000 feet. The requirement for oxygen above 10,000 feet will adversely affect GA routes through the Alps, some of which go above that level for short periods.

The second NPA, on Authority Requirements, might be thought by most pilots not to concern them, but they'd be wrong. One of the worst bear-traps concerns what a national authority must do when it receives a declaration from a non-commercial operator of a complex aircraft. The NPA makes it clear that the declaration will be dealt with just like an approval, and a 'receipt' will not be issued until the authority has 'verified' compliance. This runs completely counter to the concept of a declaration instead of an approval, effectively introducing certification, and its attendant costs.

"This is an excuse for charges," said Jacob. "The whole idea was just to have to declare your activity and not have it certified. But they're creating certification for non-commercial operations."

In the NPA on organisational requirements, Jacob went on, EASA has tried to make one NPA for all organisational requirements, whether for operators, flying school or one-man bands with one aircraft. "The word 'proportionality' is written in many places in this document, but if a one-man operator with a complex aircraft must have a written management system, an ops manual, a fatigue management system, an organisational structure, how is this proportional? How will it be understood and implemented by the NAA? There are no statements that illustrate what proportionality entails."

Martin Robinson warned that the NPA referred to aero clubs as 'ATOs', Aviation Training Organisations, which meant that for the first time, membership clubs would have to be audited every two years by the national authority, which in the UK and some other countries would cost thousands of pounds. "Under the JAA system they just had to be registered facilities, with no audit requirement, and we must oppose this change," he said.

IAOPA general secretary John Sheehan suggested that perhaps IAOPA could write an alternative means of compliance for the small operator. Martin Robinson thought it would be possible, although EASA would have to get approval from each of the 27 national authorities for it, and Jacob pointed out that these amendments will be operational within three years. Bruce Landsberg, president of the AOPA Flight Safety Foundation, said that when the NTSB became concerned at the level of fatalities in volunteer medical transport in the USA, AOPA took the initiative and developed operational specifications and guidance to pilots and operators on fatigue, mountain flying, night flying, second pilot operations, weather minima and other issues, which forestalled regulation. "By June we will have something available to all, and it could form the basis of something EASA could be approached with."

Bruce Landsberg also added the Air Safety Foundation's take on the complexity of regulation – "The way all this has been packaged, it is too complex and is likely to be ignored, and that is seriously detrimental to safety."

FCL

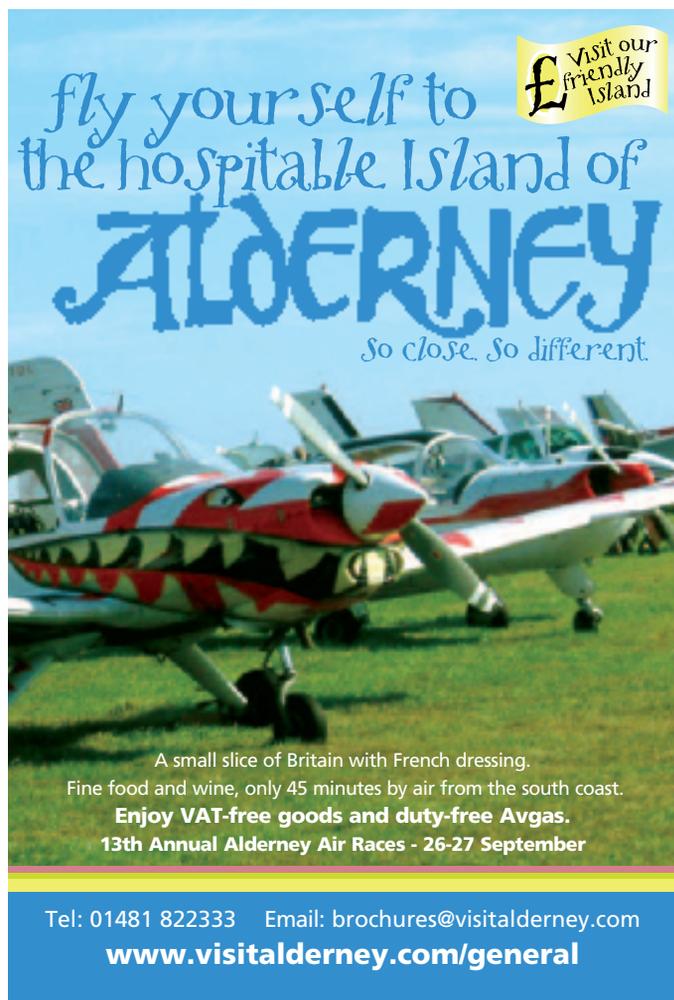
Pam Campbell reported on the NPA on EASA-FCL, the consultation period for which had already closed. EASA had received 11,000 comments on the NPA and claimed to be able to get through them before the end of May.

Some of the proposals AOPA had opposed were almost universally opposed by the entire GA industry. Among them was the name of the new Leisure Pilots Licence – 97 percent of respondents were against it, and urged EASA to revert to its previous plan, which was to call it the Light Aircraft Pilots Licence. Some 90 percent did not want the Basic LPL, which was modelled on the French *Brevet de Base* and allowed pilots with ten hours solo time to take passengers. EASA was also being asked to drop the requirement for a proficiency check with an examiner every six years, and given the shortage of examiners, the requirement for examiners to be CPLs was also undesirable.

"At the Working Group we managed to get all of these things thrown out of the text," said Pam, "but what happens behind closed doors at EASA we don't know. However, there were such numbers, and such unanimity, that it's difficult for EASA to ignore."

Apart from AOPA, many of those who lodged responses were opposed to the crackdown on third country licences which would make it very difficult to fly in Europe on the N-register or to use an FAA Instrument Rating.

Andy Cebula, vice president for government affairs at AOPA-US, said they had commented to EASA on this aspect. "Our gist was that there should be a bilateral agreement between US and EASA to accept training," he said. "We sent the same request to the FAA international office asking them to put together a bilateral agreement." ■



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Aero – book early for 2010

Aero Friedrichshafen reaffirmed its position as a major force in global general aviation with a show in April which exceeded all expectations at a time of economic uncertainty – more aircraft, more types, more exhibitors, more visitors and more money spent. European manufacturers were out in force, particularly the East European ultralight companies, but the Americans are taking Aero seriously too. Cessna took up almost half a hall, with the Mustang and Caravan, the trusty old 172 and its derivatives, and the former Columbia line. Exhibitor numbers were up 12 percent, visitor numbers by 14 percent. The show stretched over twelve halls and boasted virtually every GA-related product you could think of, gliders and paramotors, ultralights beyond counting, models, parachutes, avionics, engines, cleaning equipment – and for the first time this year there was a dedicated helicopter hall, which threw up a few surprises. On show there was the world's only airworthy Bristol Sycamore, which flies on the Swiss register in RAF livery. There were a number of helicopters and gyrocopters you'd think twice about flying away, but hey, somebody must buy them.



Rolls Royce had a presence with its small

reported good sales. "It's been very much worth out while," said Michael Whitley of Yorkshire-based Cambrai Covers. "Last year we sold five covers in the whole show; this year we sold seven in the first two days and have had more than 40 serious enquiries, which will certainly translate into more sales. We've had a number of dealer enquiries, too, which is very welcome."

There are some fabulous-looking ultralight aircraft from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and elsewhere; one wonders whether there are enough customers to go round. The East Europeans employed some old-fashioned tactics to help them stand out from the crowd,

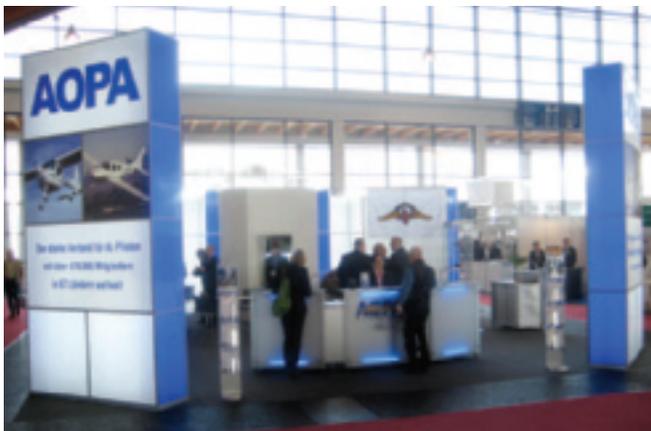


Left: the AOPA stand at Aero, manned by AOPA-Germany

Above: Marie Warwick and Michael Whitley of Cambrai Covers at Friedrichshafen

Top right: politically-incorrect East Europeans resorted to old-fashioned methods of attracting pilots' attention

Below: Rolls Royce's Simon Kemp with the RR300, as fitted to the R66



turbines, including the RR300 which has now flown more than 850 hours in the Robinson R66 prototype, according to RR rep Simon Kemp. The engine is certificated and during the flight test programme they've incorporated a few minor modifications – shifting a filter here or enlarging a bolt there to make maintenance easier. At heart the 300 is a modification of the stalwart RR250 from the Hughes 500, the JetRanger and the Squirrel – more than 30,000 250s have been made and 17,000 are still in service, so it's paid its dues. The 300 is made at the Rolls Royce factory in Indianapolis and for the moment Frank Robinson has cornered the market – he's been guaranteed delivery of a certain number of units and RR can't sell to anyone else until he's satisfied. The engines are already being delivered and Frank is stacking them up in a warehouse somewhere – and they're paid for, too. Robinson expects to have the R66 certificated by the end of 2009. Would-be customers were lining up at HAI to pay him deposits, but he turned them all away.

British companies were thin on the ground at Friedrichshafen – some cancelled quite late following the pound's graceless belly-flop at the end of 2008 – but those who did attend



and scantily-clad blondes were a welcome diversion from the business in hand. But it's sometimes difficult to tell these fine aircraft apart. Can all these companies survive?

AOPA-Germany hosted representatives from 20 other countries around the world at its stand and reported signing up a lot of new members, which is welcome – we need all the firepower we can get. If you didn't get to Friedrichshafen this year, it's worth thinking about it for 2010, but book early because there wasn't a hotel room to be had within 20 miles of Friedrichshafen this year, and flights were full. ■

Carl Olof Olsson

At the start of the IAOPA-Europe meeting a minute's silence was observed in memory of Carl Olof Olsson, founder of AOPA Sweden and one of the moving forces behind International AOPA. Lars Hjelmborg of AOPA Sweden said Olsson had been "a real pioneer" in the early 1960s when he had realised the requirement for an international body in order to represent general aviation at ICAO. "At the time, the air in Sweden was owned by the airlines and there was no freedom," said Lars. "Olof Olsson was a true entrepreneur who used general aviation to further his business, flying all over Europe in his Navajo. At times he neglected his business in order to work for the benefit of AOPA, and it is because of his work that we have so much more freedom in Sweden and in Europe today."