

EASA maps out the future of GA



EASA has set out its stall on the future of general aviation regulation with the publication of an Advance Notice of Proposed Amendment (A-NPA), which is well worth looking at and commenting on.

The A-NPA has been arrived at following lengthy deliberations by EASA's general aviation working group known as MDM.032, on which IAOPA is represented by AOPA-Denmark's Jacob Pedersen.

It's a fascinating document in many ways, offering ambitious and revolutionary solutions to some of GA's woes while at the same time warning that some of them might not be achievable. There's a nagging feeling that while the aims and objectives are laudable, public relations and window-dressing also have a part to play here.

As always with EASA, consultation times are short – feedback must be in their hands by October 16th, and it must be presented in a

the traditional European general aviation sector that is not mirrored on the American side.

There is however a notable exception to this decline in member states like the Czech Republic and France where the micro-light industry, subject to an extremely simplified regulatory regime, is a vibrant developing activity with a significant exporting potential. The same could be said of gliding activity in Germany, where the regulatory regime departs significantly from the full brunt of JAA rules. It is therefore felt by stakeholders that there is a correlation between the heaviness of rules or of their implementation, and the difficulties faced by general aviation in developing their activity."

The document also notes that many areas of general aviation had sought to remain outside the remit of EASA for fear of expensive and heavy-handed regulation.

As to the safety implications of relaxed regulation, it says that most GA accidents in

It points out that predictably, the UK CAA begs to differ here, saying that accident statistics for microlights or other self-regulated groups are worse than those for fully-regulated activities. Nonetheless, says the A-NPA, in view of all the factors put forward by the industry, "it is necessary to review the legislation affecting this sector of civil aviation and to adopt a new approach more conducive to its harmonious development."

Any new regulation, it says, should be proportional to the risk involved, and the people engaged in general aviation should play an active part in it. One particularly positive aspect of the document is that it seems to treat those involved in general aviation as grown-ups who are capable of making sensible decisions, rather than as idiot children who



Left: document says there are approximately 300,000 pilots and 80,000 aircraft in Europe, although some countries keep no figures
Above: 'light touch' regulation for gliding in Germany has led to a vibrant manufacturing scene with significant export potential
Below left: the simplified regulatory regime for microlights has also helped foster massive growth without an unacceptable reduction in safety

specific form, or there's a risk it won't be considered. You can download both the A-NPA and the approved comment form from the IAOPA-Europe website www.iaopa-eur.org. Please send a copy of any comments you make to info@aopa.co.uk.

EASA says the working group arose because of the perceived necessity to address the GA industry's belief that over-regulation is driving it into the ground, and that something urgently needs to be done. It adds that MDM.032's work should "lead to appropriate adaptations of existing implementing rules (airworthiness) and the issuing of new ones (air operations and pilot licensing)."

In summarising the plight of GA in Europe it says: "There are approximately 300,000 private pilots and 80,000 aircraft in Europe... this only represents 25% of the general aviation aircraft registered in the United States, which has a lower population and comparable size and economy." (These figures are guesses, as several countries keep no record of the number of GA aircraft on their territory).

"Moreover, there is a continuous decline in



Europe are the result of loss of control or controlled flight into terrain, and that while pilot decision-making and weather are significant problems, design-related failure is not. Incapacitation due to medical causes also appeared to be a marginal risk.

It adds: "In the microlight world, with an extremely simplified regulatory regime, the data available to the group do not show a significant difference with the traditional sector of General Aviation in spite of the lighter regulatory regime. The causes of accidents seem to be no different from those of aircraft regulated in the 'classic' manner.

would stick their hands in the fire unless there was a disapproving paragraph in the ANO to prevent it. For British GA pilots in particular, this is a heartening departure from the norm.

It says: "In general aviation, those involved will generally be well informed, have control of the activity and are able to make decisions based on informed judgement. It is therefore appropriate to develop a lower level of regulation for GA than for commercial air transport, for example, where passengers will generally not have this insight or level of control."

While it was originally proposed that non-complex aircraft under 5,700 kg be exempted from the full force of regulatory oversight, EASA now says it believes it is appropriate to maintain the status quo for aircraft of 2,000 kg or more. It also says that individual certificates of airworthiness for all aircraft should continue to be issued by national authorities. This is music to the ears of the CAA, which now has an opportunity to make up any loss of revenue associated with EASA changes to airworthiness rules by charging

silly money for Annual Review Certificates – rubber stamps for which it need do little work. Incidentally, it also runs counter to the thrust of the document, which presents the reduction of regulatory cost as a laudable aim.

The A-NPA covers options for design certification, continuing airworthiness, operations and pilot licensing. It runs to 48 pages, including what it calls 'regulatory impact assessments' which seem to be fairly superficial, and obviously there's a limit to how much we can précis here. It says it has already been recognised that Part M maintenance requirements are too heavy for general aviation and are being revisited, and pilot licensing needs some pretty radical surgery. A

Europe-wide sub-ICAO NPPL is envisaged, with bridges to the global licence. The document states: "There is a need to revise the current PPL licence as defined in JAR FCL to accommodate deficiencies recognised by the majority of stakeholders. It is also confirmed that adjusting the current PPL, which is a first step in building up professional licences, could entail unwanted consequences and that the most practical way forward is the creation of a new type of licence.

"It is considered essential that such licences could be issued by Assessment Bodies, not only to preserve the existing situation in several member states, but also to better involve the regulated persons, through clubs and federations, in the administration of the rules they have to abide by. It is felt however that the name chosen by the Agency – 'Recreational PPL' – may not be the most appropriate.

"It is envisaged therefore to include in the concept a European private pilot licence

(RPPL) covering the full scope of aircraft other than complex-motor-powered aircraft, founded on a stepwise approach and on competence-based training. This licence would be built around a basic common licence to which ratings for different categories of aircraft (aeroplanes, gliders, helicopters, balloons...), operations (IFR, night, aerobatics, glider towing...) and specific authorisations (e.g. authorisation to perform pilot-owner maintenance) would be attached, including simplified instrument rating and instructor rating."

But always, in reading the document there is a feeling that this is a "wish list" which might help to improve EASA's standing among general aviation pilots, but might not be entirely attainable. The A-NPA says flatly: "The expectations of the group on the content and privileges of the new RPPL are very ambitious. It can however be questioned whether this is achievable. The Commission proposal for the extended Basic Regulation have indeed met with scepticism as regards the possibility to allow flying any aircraft that is not a complex-motored powered aircraft with a licence that does not meet the conditions of the JAR FCL PPL. Addition of instrument or instruction ratings may raise the same objections. Another aspect of the conditions that is raising strong concerns is the possibility that medical attestations of fitness could be issued by general practitioners."

Nonetheless, this is the only game in town and it's worth your while to go through the document and make your comments. While it may be difficult for people who are struggling to run their day-to-day businesses to navigate through a lengthy submission like this and record their impressions, there's a lot at stake here. ■

Okay, let's do it! (Let's do what?)

A debate on the future of EASA sponsored by European Parliamentarians provided an opportunity to tell the world that we want things to get better, but moved us no further forward on the question of how that is to be done, writes *Martin Robinson*.

The lunchtime debate in Brussels invited us to agree that we wanted EASA to take on responsibility for Ops and Licensing in due course, but as always the devil is in the detail and we don't know what we're signing up for until we've lifted the lid.

As I told one of the Austrian MEPs who attended, it's not the headline legislation that matters to us, but the Implementing Rules – the detail of what is to be done and how it is to be achieved. And the Implementing Rules never go anywhere near the European Parliament in any meaningful sense.

An example is the Implementing Rules on Maintenance – IR(M) – which everybody signed up for gleefully on the promise that we were to have a less onerous regime which would be better suited to GA's needs. When the actual rules were written, they turned out to be exactly the opposite. Having them rewritten is turning out to be a long and arduous undertaking.

Similarly, we can all do a lot of shouting and back-slapping about the extension of EASA's powers to cover Ops and Licensing, but now the work really starts. We have to keep track of every piece of this jigsaw, the bright ideas of every Belgian policeman and Estonian clerk that tend to find their way into the output of European committees. It's no good waiting for



Chief executive's diary:

Holiday's over — back to work

August is a month in which there are fewer meetings, as most of the world seems to be on holiday – or hopefully, out flying. I must stress again that this section of the magazine reports to you, the member, on some of my activities that should be of interest. It does not mean that I am the only person representing GA at meetings unless stated.

On Wednesday, 2nd August I attended my first meeting of the Airspace and Safety Steering Group. Under the direction of Sir Roy McNulty (Chairman UK CAA), Paul Barron (CEO NATS) and Air Vice Marshall Chairman Chris Moran (Assistant Chief of Air Staff) a detailed review of the UK's airspace was discussed which will lead to a number of recommendations that should improve the overall safety of the UK's airspace.

On Thursday, 10th August I had a one-to-one meeting with a consultant for the European Commission in which I sought his views on a single European AIP. Broadly, we support this initiative as the aim appears to be to have a single EAIP where the format of the information is the same. If this improves the way in which our members access the information and

encourages more pilots to actually use it, then safety may be improved.

The following day I submitted the AOPA response to the CAA's Mode-S consultation, which broadly says we favour voluntary equipage and that there are technical difficulties for many airframes. Some of the costs should be borne by the government – i.e. certification costs. Nor do we agree with the high level of re-certification fees. See separate story.

On Tuesday, 15th August I attended the CAA workshop consultation on Mode-S and made a number of points similar to those which we submitted formally. I also stated that ADS-B costs (currently around \$8,000 per unit) may make that system less attractive to GA.

We had the AOPA Members Working Group meeting at AOPA HQ on Saturday, 2nd September. Lots of points were discussed – we welcomed Timothy Nathan of PPL/IR Europe (and now an AOPA member). There's a separate story on that meeting in these pages. If any member would like to join this group, particularly if you fly a microlight, a home-built aircraft or a business jet, we would welcome your



involvement – and there are only four meetings per year. Please email martin@aopa.co.uk if you wish to express an interest.

On Tuesday, 5th September we had the CAA Finance Advisory Committee, at which I raised some concerns about the increasing level of CAA charges which may affect the training industry.

However, I must congratulate the CAA's finance director on the practical solution adopted in respect of AOC charges for aircraft less than 2 tonnes (those engaged in pleasure flying).

On the following Tuesday, 12th September, I attended a lunchtime debate on the future of EASA (extension of the 1592 Regulation) along with Sir John Allison, President of European Air Sport, and Mark Wilson of BBGA. Generally, the industry has welcomed the approach from EASA which is promising a lighter touch to regulating European general aviation, but the devil is in the detail – see separate story.

Two days later there was a DfT briefing on EASA – this is the UK Government's perspective of the EASA debate. Looking ahead I've got the Industry Consultation Body on Tuesday, 19th September, where there's further discussion on the Single European Sky and SESAR. On Monday,



Implementing Rules on Maintenance - IR(M) - promised a light touch, but the reality was very different

the end result, which the Parliament will no doubt nod through – we've got to play the googlies when they are bowled.

In this we are lucky to have as an MEP Arunas Degutis, chairman of AOPA-Lithuania, who was at the debate and with whom we have been able to plan a strategy for scrutinising the detail as it goes through the machinery of the European Parliament. Through Arunas, any proposed text changes will be presented to AOPA in good time for proper evaluation to be made, and for our voice to be heard before it is too late.

In this we have joined with Mark Wilson of the BBGA, whose organisation not only has common interests with AOPA but has the means to follow through when work needs to be done.

The lunchtime debate was welcome, but most of it was geared to public transport operations rather than GA. EASA's budget, fees and charges came in for a lot of discussion, as did the banning of third-country airlines from Europe on safety grounds – a situation which the airlines fear may result in unwelcome retaliation. ■

25th September we've got the AOPA AGM, and the following day the AGM of NPPL Ltd Group. At the end of the month there's the Regional Meeting of the IAOPA Europe region in Warsaw, and we've got a NATMAC policy forum on October 5th. I'm looking forward to the Royal Institute of Navigation Seminar on Monday 9th October on whether we should use magnetic north or true north for navigation. There are strongly-held views in this debate, but I suspect physical mayhem can be avoided.

On Wednesday, 11th October we have a National Air Traffic Service discussion about continued airspace improvements at LATCC, and on Friday, 20th October

whether we should use magnetic north or true north for navigation

we will have the first meeting of the General Aviation Strategic Forum, which will

be chaired by Mark Wilson of BBGA, with AOPA providing the secretariat and the CAA providing the accommodation.

Looking further ahead, there's a meeting on Tuesday, 24th October meeting at Westminster with the members of the Parliamentary Aviation Group – so you see, the August hiatus is well and truly over, and my family holiday in Turkey a distant memory.

Martin Robinson

Mode-S: airlines benefit, GA pays

AOPA has told the CAA that its proposal to make Mode-S transponders compulsory will benefit airline shareholders at the expense of GA, and has suggested that airlines should pay for equipping the GA fleet.

In its submission to the CAA on the Mode-S consultation, AOPA said Mode-S was being touted as a safety aid because airlines increasingly wanted to operate into regional airports which they were flying through the Open FIR to reach.

AOPA says: "The question is, why do airlines choose to operate flights with fare paying passengers in Class F and G airspace, and in doing so place at risk other airspace users and their own customers? If it is essential for these businesses to fly in Class F and G airspace, then perhaps these businesses should be required to meet the full cost of Mode-S. It is clear that there is no financial benefit for GA from installing Mode-S... it is the shareholders of the airlines who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the proposal."

AOPA does not accept the CAA's contention that air traffic will increase exponentially until everyone is off the ground simultaneously, and points out that no provision has been made for failures like that of EU Jet at Manston when claims to controlled airspace were being discussed.

The submission also says AOPA does not believe that it is necessary to replace all of the Classical SSR, as Mode-S is perfectly capable of being integrated with the existing transponder system, as evidenced by trials in the USA. "By 'efficient use of the lower airspace system' we assume you mean greater use of Class G airspace by low-cost airlines who want to use regional airports," it says. "Once again GA is being forced to support airline operations without any benefit. Airspace which is designated Class G should be used in accordance with ICAO criteria.

"AOPA generally agrees that there is a need to improve collision avoidance but Mode-S in itself does not, in our opinion, provide a benefit in relation to the cost to the individual aircraft owner. We would support a voluntary policy of encouraging the installation of a transponder."

The Association also suggests that voluntary equipping with Mode-S could be encouraged by improving access to Class D airspace to aircraft with Mode-S. It has also suggested a nationwide LARS network as a much cheaper and more effective alternative to the enforced installation of Mode-S, and says that

mandating the use of radio would do a lot more to reduce infringements, particularly in a zone controller.

It also quotes the actual cost of Mode-S installation for one member who was asked to pay £8,071.67 – the largest single element of which was related to CAA charges for a minor mod approval. The actual cost is far in excess of CAA estimates, and AOPA believes that compulsory Mode-S will cost UK GA some £30 million – money that could be better spent on safety improvements.

The irony is that the CAA stands to make a killing from selling minor mod certificates for Mode-S installation if it decides to make it compulsory. AOPA has proposed that the CAA waive its fees if Mode-S must be installed, but the chances of that are somewhere between slim and none. Martin Robinson says: "This is surely an instance where for once the profit motive should take second place. But I suspect that as long as the government measures CAA performance partly on how much profit it makes, the prospects are not good. Once again, despite its good work the CAA is brought into disrepute by its pursuit of profit."

Many owners and operators have responded to the CAA's consultation on Mode-S, among them Nigel Lamb of Aerobatic Displays Ltd, who operate between four and six aircraft on aerial work. He writes: "This year we have flown all over Europe, day VFR from the UK as far north as Helsinki and as far south and east as Istanbul and through 15 countries. Most of the time the transponder is on standby as we are at low level and outside controlled airspace. Especially given today's navigation technology, it is very easy to be sure that one is not infringing controlled airspace.

"On the majority of the above flights and once clear of refuelling airports we have seen no other aircraft at all. Believe me, the skies of Europe are not crowded with day VFR traffic.

"One of our aircraft, a Bucker Jungmann, has no radio and basically hops around in England. Other than dropping into the local airport for fuel, in the last 17 years it has NEVER been inside controlled airspace."

Adding that installing Mode S in all their aircraft would be a waste of money, he poses two questions: "What exactly will be achieved by installing this equipment on these example aircraft? And why is there no exemption for such aircraft?" ■

Right: Nigel Lamb's Bucker Jungmann has never been in controlled airspace in 17 years other than to refuel

Below: airlines want to use Class G airspace to gain access to more aerodromes



'Reckless endangerment' costs pilot dear

A pilot has been fined £1,500 with £2,000 costs after aborting a landing on Pilling Sands in Lancashire and being accused by the CAA of reckless endangerment.

In a disturbing case which highlights the capriciousness of applied law, the pilot, who was flying a light piston single, was originally investigated for low flying, although the CAA chose not to prosecute on that charge. Instead, they charged him with recklessly endangering persons on the ground.



AOPA chief executive Martin Robinson said the case was particularly troubling because it seemed the CAA was dropping the Rule 5 (low flying) prosecution, which would have required a burden of proof, in favour of a reckless endangerment charge which could succeed if the court could be influenced by the emotional testimony of witnesses.

And emotional testimony there was aplenty. There were six witnesses – five members of the family whose child was said to have been endangered, and one independent witness standing almost a kilometre away looking down on the proceedings. The mother's

testimony was particularly influential, as she wept in the witness box.

The pilot was intending to land on the sands and chose an area clear of people, made a circuit to check the area and was beginning a second approach when a child ran towards his landing area. The pilot said he aborted the landing at 400 feet, while the family's testimony ranged down to 15 feet, at distances of between a few yards and a mile.

AOPA was not involved in the case during the CAA's investigation, and in fact was only able to furnish advice "at the door of the court". The pilot was not a member – he joined after the case – but while AOPA cannot help non-members with legal problems it can furnish advice where there is an overwhelming interest to do so for the benefit of all members.

Martin Robinson says: "The two most disturbing aspects of this case are firstly, the CAA's refusal to prosecute under Rule 5 1.e, and secondly, its massive costs bill. On this occasion it amounted to £10,000, but luckily the magistrates slashed it to £2,000 – still an onerous burden.

"Under Rule 5 a pilot cannot be prosecuted for low flying if he is landing at a licensed

aerodrome. At unlicensed aerodromes, and certainly in places like Pilling Sands, there is no such protection. But the problem for the CAA would be that they'd have to prove he had come within 500 feet of a person.

"With reckless endangerment, however, they could just put the witnesses in front of the magistrates and invite their sympathy. Few pilots would stand a chance when there's a weeping mother in the dock.

"It's a pity we were not involved in this case at an earlier stage because we would have been able to point up a lot of anomalies in the testimony, and perhaps have encouraged the CAA to take a different course.

"AOPA cannot represent non-members because it would be unfair on those people who pay for the day-to-day work of the Association. In effect, I'm saying it's not possible to take out the insurance policy of AOPA membership after you've had the accident. I'm pleased to say that this pilot has now joined.

"There are several facets to this case that we're still looking at, but I would say to all members who get into trouble to involve AOPA at the earliest possible stage. Once the investigation is complete and charges have been laid, it's very difficult to mitigate. Even if you merely suspect the CAA is on your case, give us a call straight away." ■

GPS approaches – give it a go



Left: Blackpool is one of six airports in GPS trial

take part, but who haven't been able to for reasons which seem to me to be arbitrary.

"Other people tell me that some of the aerodromes on the list find it difficult to fit them in at times which are suitable to them, and that the stated requirement for excellent visibility is another factor militating against uptake.

"We hope that members who can fulfil the CAA's requirements, the stipulations of these aerodromes and the vagaries of the weather do take part in this study, because the establishment of GPS approaches in the UK is very important – not perhaps for access to the airfields in the study, but for those that can make a real difference to general aviation."

The trials are due to finish on October 25th.

The CAA's trials of GPS approaches at six UK airports is approaching its conclusion, and the Authority is concerned that very few pilots have so far signed up.

Ron Elder, Head of the CAA's Safety Regulation Group's Licensing Standards Division, says: "The number of approaches that have been flown is disappointingly low. If the UK is to move forward with the introduction of GPS approaches then we need solid safety evidence and that can only be gained by pilot reports."

AOPA has been concerned that the CAA had chosen the wrong types of airfield for the study

– the six are Blackpool, Teesside, Exeter, Gloucestershire, Inverness and Shoreham. Martin Robinson said: "We said at the outset that the CAA seemed to be missing the point of GPS approaches, which is to give instrument-approach capability to low-cost, less well equipped aerodromes, thus reducing the requirement for pilots to fly too high-priced regional airfields for instrument approach practice.

"In addition, the fact that they have barred N-registered aircraft from participating is an own goal. I have been contacted by AOPA members who have FAA IRs who would like to

Pilots can log on to www.gpstrials.leeds.ac.uk to register their participation in the trials. Immediately after flight, pilots should submit reports online for analysis. These reports will not be seen by the CAA but will be managed independently by Leeds University and Imperial College, London.

Further information, including the necessary briefings to take part in the trial, may be obtained from UK Aeronautical Information Package (AIP) Supplement and AIC number 50 (yellow 205) 'UK Trial of RNAV (GNSS) Instrument Approach Procedures' at www.ais.org.uk. ■

transair ad

'Strasser Scheme' ups and downs

AOPA has declined to support a small number of members who claimed free diversionary landings under the 'Strasser Scheme' where the conditions of the scheme have not been met to the letter.

The Scheme, to which almost all UK airfields have signed up, provides free landings in the case of unforeseen weather or emergency diversions. The purpose is to ensure that pilots who are making life-saving decisions in stressful circumstances do not have to include the cost of diversion in their thinking.

A handful of appeals have been made to AOPA following the refusal of airfields to waive landing fees under the Scheme, which was conceived and is run by AOPA's Channel Islands chairman Charles Strasser. In some cases AOPA has supported the appeal, and airfields have refunded fees. But some cases have not been supported, not because they were not legitimate, but because there was room for doubt.

Charles Strasser says: "Ambiguity is the enemy of this Scheme. For it to work properly,



every airfield must be certain that every claim is absolutely legitimate. It is unfortunate that sometimes we must decline to help members with genuine claims, but unless the conditions have been followed, we cannot risk bringing the scheme into disrepute."

One recent claim concerned an AOPA member who flew from Guernsey to Dinard, only to find that unforecast fog prevented his landing there. On the way back to Guernsey he landed at Jersey to drop off two passengers who had intended to fly another aircraft from Dinard to Jersey. His claim for a free landing at Jersey under the Strasser Scheme should have been refused. After investigating all the circumstances, Charles Strasser contended that he could just as easily returned to his home airport of Guernsey, only about 20 miles away, and dropping off passengers invalidated his claim. However Jersey Airport decided not to charge and it is now left to the member or his passenger to pay the fee next time they visit Jersey.

Earlier this year John Haffenden, manager of Shoreham, contacted Charles Strasser to say there seemed to be an increase in the number of pilots claiming free landings for weather diversions.

He wrote: "Only today with a forecast clearance of weather later in the day we had an aircraft divert – the pilot accepted that the forecast was PROB 40 4000 RADZ BKN 012 for the south coast." The Scheme, he added, should not be used by those who thought they could always divert for free if the weather at their destination was as forecast.

In his answer to John Haffenden, Charles Strasser wrote: "The last thing I want is for this AOPA scheme to be abused to the ultimate detriment of the genuine pilot in difficulties, leading to potentially life-threatening decisions as defined in CAA CAP 667 9.2(c).

"No pilot should set off without first having a proper METAR and TAF for his destination airport and for his chosen alternate, and he should not take off if the conditions in those met reports are below his capabilities and/or his licence/rating privileges. If his destination does not have published METAR and TAF facilities then he must take those of the nearest airfield which has, or phone the airfield for their actual weather and be able to show you evidence of all this. Assumption of weather is not acceptable.

"He must also, in accordance with the scheme, depart again as soon as possible for his original destination with the same complement of passengers on board. Clearly he must not do so until the weather at his destination has improved to the extent that he can continue his journey there. This is all in accordance with the abuse-limiting conditions drafted into the Scheme.

"You are therefore perfectly entitled to refuse a free diversion if those conditions have not been met, and you can ask any protesters to appeal to me setting out the full circumstances of their claim for a free diversion.

"Having said all that, I can genuinely say that you are the only one to have complained about the high level of claims for free diversion landings and I would be interested to see some of the forms that pilots have completed, and to see some monthly statistics of free diversions claimed, accepted and refused, and the cost of those accepted.

I hope this will convince you that there are enough safeguards in place and they are there for you to use. If you can think of any others which would not be counterproductive to the safety element of the Scheme, please let me know." ■

Who deserves recognition?

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

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

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

Achievement and Endeavour Awards are as follows:

Lennox-Boyd Trophy. Awarded to a person, club, group or organisation who has contributed significantly to the furtherance of flight training, club flying or piloting standards. The trophy is a cup in a special presentation box which was originally given to the Association of British Aero Clubs by the late Rt Hon Alan Lennox-Boyd PC CH MP (subsequently Viscount Boyd of Merton) in 1953. In 2005, the trophy was awarded to Peter Skinner and (posthumously) Ron Campbell in recognition of the tremendous contribution to flight safety of the IMC Rating which they conceived and guided to fruition several decades ago.

AOPA Special Award. Awarded to a pilot, controller or engineer, or other person who has made a special contribution to safety, or other areas of general aviation. The trophy is a cup originally presented by the British Precision Pilots Association in 1987. The trophy was awarded in 2005 to Frank Bannister, managing director of AOPA's insurance advisors, Besso Ltd.

Best Aerodrome. Awarded to the aerodrome that has been an outstanding place to visit, offering value for money and helpful service.

Members Group – will you join?

The AOPA Members Working Group met on September 2nd – its third meeting – at the AOPA offices in London. Present were Chris Royle, Martin Robinson, George Done, Ian Harnett, Nick Lambert and Mandy Nelson. We were joined by Timothy Nathan, attending on behalf of PPL / IR.

After some debate, we've now settled on the following terms of reference for this group:

- To further the aims of General Aviation
 - To provide the AOPA board with recommendations, information, views and opinions from the wider AOPA private pilot membership
 - The group to consist of as wide a spectrum of membership as possible, together with the magazine editor, AOPA Chief Executive and AOPA Chairman
 - If necessary, the group will co-opt specific individuals in particular circumstances
 - Meetings will be at quarterly intervals
- Having got that out of the way, we moved on. The "shop window" for most organisations these days is a website.

The AOPA web site now looks a bit out of date, so the group agreed to recommend that the Board commission work to make improvements. Member's ideas on what they would like to see on the website would be welcomed.

We discussed at length AOPA's role in representing the interests of all pilots. Organisations like the CAA would like to speak to one body. Clearly the needs of microlight pilots will differ, for example, from those private pilots flying airways. Are there any glider or microlight pilots out there who would like to join our group, so that we can get a more balanced view?

An AOPA coaching scheme is planned. Again, your ideas would be appreciated. We plan to put some details of this on the web forum and link it to the "Wings" scheme.

The CAA issues log on the AOPA forum remains unpopulated, so to get the message more widely distributed, Ian Harnett will be posting details on both the "Flyer" and the PPL/IR forums. If anyone out there has an issue to report, please post it on one of these forums. This concession was "won" during negotiations with the CAA, and it would be a shame if it is not used.

The group meets again in December. Contact Mandy Nelson at the office (mandy@aopa.co.uk), 0207 834 5631) if you would like to join this group. – Chris Royle

The trophy is a sword donated to AOPA by Airtour International Ltd (now Pooley's Flight Equipment Ltd) in 1982. The sword was presented to Cranfield Airport in 2005.

Customer Care. Awarded to the flying school, club or organisation that has provided outstanding customer care, as recommended by students or private pilots. The trophy is a shield, and was awarded in 2005 to the Helicopter Club of Great Britain.

Contribution to the Community. Awarded to a person or organisation who has made an outstanding contribution to the aviation community. The trophy is a cup donated in 1997 by Flyer magazine. In 2005 it was awarded to John Romain, founder of the Aircraft Restoration Company of Duxford.

Controller of the Year. Awarded to a controller, FISO or ATC team who has or have provided especially good service to pilots. The trophy is a shield, originally donated by International Air Radio Ltd, who developed the AERAD charts, in 1982. There were no proposals for 2005 and so the trophy was not awarded.

Individual Merit. Awarded to a pilot who has made an outstanding aviation achievement. The trophy is a cup on a granite plinth. It was awarded in 2005 to Quentin Smith and Steve Brooks (*pictured below*) for an epic flight in their piston-engined Robinson R44 to the South Pole.



Instructor of the Year. Awarded to an instructor who has made a special contribution to the training of student pilots for the PPL or NPPL, or to private pilots for added qualifications. The trophy is an art deco cup donated in 2004 by Virgin Experience Days. It was awarded in 2005 to Ian Marshall, Senior Training Captain for bmi, who instructs at White Waltham in his spare time.

Friend of AOPA. Awarded to a person or persons who has or have made a special contribution towards the work of AOPA. The award is normally a tankard for the recipient to keep. In 2005 it was awarded to barrister Tudor Owen. ■

Helicopter IMC – slow progress

EASA's head of rulemaking Claude Probst is to reconsider the current requirement for helicopter students to undergo five hours of instrument training as part of their PPL course – but not until EASA has taken responsibility for Ops and Licensing.

Earlier this year AOPA submitted to Mr Probst a dossier of evidence that the instrument flight requirement was contributing negatively to safety, with continued-flight-into-IMC accidents on the rise. While GPS certainly plays a role in the increase, AOPA believes the main culprit is instrument flight training.

Helicopter accident investigator Richard Mornington Sanford, who contributed to the dossier, says: "We teach people to fly on instruments, we examine them on their ability to do so, and we confirm that they have the ability to do so.

"But a light helicopter pilot who gets into actual IMC will be killed very quickly, as we see from the depressing accident statistics. We must stop pretending that the instrument training we are giving bears any relationship to the real thing, and tell pilots that when IMC threatens, the only thing to do is land!

"We must teach them actual off-airfield landings in order to reinforce the message, as well as a better appreciation of how to recognise the imminent onset of IMC conditions."

At a meeting in Brussels Mr Probst told AOPA chief executive Martin Robinson that while he accepted there may be a problem, EASA would have to wait until it had taken over responsibility for ops and licensing before it could be addressed.

After the meeting Martin said: "I'm not wholly convinced that Mr Probst has a full grasp of the issue, but AOPA will continue to ensure that it is not pigeonholed somewhere in Cologne and forgotten." ■

Coloured judgement

In the April issue of General Aviation I stated that I hoped to be able to provide an update on greenfield and brownfield sites in the June edition. However, the wheels of officialdom revolve at less than snail pace and it was well into August before there was any positive response. However, the following is an extract from a letter to the ever-helpful Gerald Howarth MP from Baroness Andrews, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government. The key paragraph is this:

"I can assure you and other members of the Parliamentary Aviators Group that it was not, and is not, part of our intention in proposing the amendments to change the status of airfields, or the application of the definition of previously-developed land to current or former airfields, or to change policy in relation to the prospective development of them for housing."

This is encouraging but we will need to check the precise wording in the new PPS3, due for publication at the end of this year. Also, we will need to ensure that this is honoured wherever the situation of a greenfield/brownfield site arises.

AOPA will endeavour to keep fingers on this important pulse, but I would appreciate any input from readers who may come across any specific examples. – *David Ogilvy*

Isle of Man aircraft register

Legislation to create a separate Isle of Man (Manx) Aircraft Registry is now progressing well. Earlier in the year the Isle of Man Government appointed a Director of Civil Aviation, Brian E Johnson, who for the last 13 years worked with the UK CAA including for a time as Regional Manager, Caribbean. For the last six years he was Head of Flight Operations Inspectorate (Aeroplanes). He also comes with a good general aviation provenance.

It is now over four months since he took up the post and he has been busy incorporating Articles into the Isle of Man's Air Navigation Order (ANO) to enable an aircraft register.

Draft primary legislation has now been submitted to the UK for approval and the UK Department of Transport has informed the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) that the Isle of Man will be operating an Aircraft Register under the auspices of the UK as the contracting state to the Chicago Convention.

Aircraft registered in the Isle of Man will bear the prefix M followed by four letters and will be nearer the format of other major European registries.

Interestingly, in the 1920s when aviation was growing internationally, Great Britain was allocated the prefix G as we all know for its aircraft register and the prefix M was also allocated to Britain but never used. Maybe someone knew that the Isle of Man would need it 80 years later. – *Geoffrey Boot, chairman, AOPA Isle of Man Region* ■

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