

# Europe comes to London



The 126th Regional Meeting of International AOPA Europe was held in London on March 10th and brought together 37 delegates from seventeen European countries and the United States to discuss issues of common interest. Hosted by AOPA UK and Chaired by Martin Robinson, the day-long meeting was addressed by, among others, CAA Chief Executive Andrew Haines and London Olympics Airspace Planner Wing Commander Dawn Lindsey.

The AOPA US contingent included IAOPA President Craig Fuller, IAOPA General Secretary John Sheehan, Melissa Rudinger, who runs the political lobbying operation at AOPA US, Craig Spence, who will be taking over from John Sheehan on an acting basis when John retires in May and who is AOPA US's NexGen expert, and Bruce Landsberg, head of the Flight Safety Foundation. They were on their way home from the United Arab Emirates – the UAE has provisionally been accepted as IAOPA's 70th member.

Andrew Haines's talk and Q and A session was something of an eye-opener for delegates from certain European countries where the regulator is a shadowy figure whose organisation delivers imperious commands underpinned by no known logic and is impervious to dialogue; the fact that they now know the CEO of the UK CAA when they wouldn't know their own regulator if he sat next to them

**Above: seventeen countries from Russia and Malta to Iceland were represented at the meeting**

on a bus can be confusing for some.

Introducing Wing Commander Lindsey, Martin Robinson said the original Olympic airspace restrictions had been imposed by elements of the security services who knew nothing about aviation, and while they were still far from perfect, they had been significantly improved thanks to the work of Dawn Lindsey and her colleagues. Wng Cdr Lindsey gave the delegates a comprehensive briefing on the procedures that have been put in place for the duration of the Games, with special reference to issues of concern to foreign pilots coming into the UK for the Games. The Olympic airspace situation is well covered elsewhere in these pages so we won't repeat the presentation here; Dawn Lindsey has already delivered it so often she must be heartily sick of it, and there's still some way to go...

The substance of the main presentations is set out here. The next European Regional Meeting will be held in Malta in September. The IAOPA World Assembly takes place in Cape Town in April. ■

## Why students drop out

AOPA US has harvested a huge amount of data on flight training with a view to improving student retention and has come up with some unexpected and sometimes startling conclusions.

IAOPA President Craig Fuller outlined the results of a massive American survey of

flying students which shows that between 70 and 80 percent of them drop out of training before they get their PPLs, even though most of them find the experience quite positive and rewarding.

"We've been looking at our investment in trying to drive new pilots to flight training

organisations and trying to better understand how it's working," said Craig, who is also President of AOPA US. "A lot of people look at flight training and give up the idea right at the start, and we expected that. But the number of people who start training, then drop out, really surprised us."

The survey showed that most students got information on learning to fly from other pilots. Predominantly they obtained details online, with AOPA's website being heavily relied on. Far the majority of



**Left: a top class instructor is a flying school's most effective weapon**

With the American-style independent instructor system, many found that a sense of community was missing. "They wanted to be part of the pilot group," Craig said. "Aviation was something they wanted to be part of on a personal level. They didn't want just to show up for the lesson then go away. Those who felt part of the community had an increased chance of getting through the course." Perhaps part of the same theme, the students felt they didn't get enough recognition for their achievements.

In the US, training organisations that provided simulators reported better retention. They were seen as decreasing cost while increasing skills, and some instructors were giving students several hours of simulator time before they ever got near a plane. "The average time in the aircraft for a PPL is around 85 hours," Craig said. "If you can drive that number down to nearer 40, you've addressed a major cost issue."

Crunching the numbers produced 47 action points for improving the flight training experience and increasing the success rate. One of the results is a programme for recognising excellence in flight training, and putting student experiences online in the form of reviews. "We didn't want flight training organisations to think we were identifying some as bad, some as good," Craig said. "We spent a year talking with them about this research, and we co-opted them with very compelling arguments. We have enough support to go public with the next

element, which is a system that will recognise excellence in flight training, based on our research. The idea is for flight schools to achieve levels of excellence according to their students. It's not like a restaurant review, where one bad experience can skew the whole thing. It's only going to recognise those we give an award to."

Other initiatives will follow. "We have a shrinking pilot population, and if your constituency is shrinking you have a problem," Craig said. "There is a pilot shortage, and a system where 70 to 80 percent drop out is not tolerable."

AOPA is also starting a newsletter for flight training organisations and instructors to share all their findings, encourage customer focus and highlight best practice.

Martin Robinson commented that the situation where 70 to 80 percent of students were lost before they qualified was made worse in Europe where 70 percent of PPLs did not renew after five years. The problem for European flight training organisations was only going to get worse. "From 2015 all FTOs will have to become Approved Training Organisations with a new level of bureaucracy and new procedures, new audit requirements and new costs, and this is likely to do away with the one-man instructor flight school. EASA is planning a workshop on this in a few weeks time, where we will try to impress on them that gratuitously increase bureaucracy and cost has nothing to do with better training and safer pilots. Don't let the FAA go down that road."

The results of the American survey are available at [www.aopa.org/ftinitiative](http://www.aopa.org/ftinitiative). ■

students go into flying without intending to be professional pilots.

The most important single factor in whether a student is retained or lost seems to be the flight instructor. The perceived quality of the education, the personal support from the instructor and his or her availability to discuss issues and coach the student on the ground were supremely important. Many lost students said they had little idea where they were in the curriculum – they didn't know how far they'd come or how far they had to go. The negative aspects were topped by the cost, but close behind was poor instruction.

"The average age of a student is over 40," Craig said. "They're not 18 or 19 any more. They buy certain models of car, they stay in certain types of hotel, and they have high expectations which flight training organisations don't always consider."

**The top table – Chairman Martin Robinson, President Craig Fuller, and General Secretary John Sheehan**



# CAA Chief Executive escapes with his life

The Chief Executive of the UK CAA Andrew Haines attended the Regional Meeting without a bodyguard but was perfectly safe because – odd though it may seem to British pilots – the UK is seen as the land of the reasonable by delegates from European countries where perversity is a byword in regulation.

Mr Haines told them that May 3rd 2011 had been one of the best days of his life, when he had flown around the south of England in a light aircraft with AOPA's Martin Robinson. "We were in the air and on the ground for ten hours and didn't see a cloud," he said. "We flew over Oxford and other places I knew, down to the Isle of Wight, we flew into Popham and Bournemouth and I got a fascinating and valuable insight into why people get this bug. I saw the small business and the communities that are part of this industry, and it reminded me of how important regulation is."

He addressed four main topics – what the CAA was about; how it viewed aviation safety; where it stood on EASA; and how it looked on general aviation. "We are an 'authority' and we are independent, and unlike the FAA, we have no obligation to promote aviation. A lot of people would love us to do that – people within the CAA who fly themselves – but it is not part of our remit and we can only do what the law prescribes."

The Authority was responsible for airspace planning and design, the economic regulation of the major airfields, and oddly, the holiday protection plan, an anomaly which dates from olden times when someone whose tour operator went bust could genuinely find himself 'stranded' and unable to get home.

"I come from the railway industry," Mr Haines said. "I ran a £500 million company, then a division of a £1.7 billion company,

in a regulated environment, and that gave me a very real sense of what risk-based regulation really means. It does not mean 'light touch' regulation. We've seen that in the banking industry; 'risk-based' does not mean removing fundamental compliance requirements. But it does mean asking firstly whether compliance is delivering our intended safety outcomes, and secondly, whether the climate created by compliance lead to a less safe or environment, or more?"

He echoed what AOPA speakers had said earlier when he said that good information was the bedrock of good regulation. "It's been a surprise to me how poor the quality of information sometimes is in aviation, and this has sometimes driven poor regulation," he said. "We are in the process of radically updating our IT and will spend money on data gathering systems. If you do not have good information, you are reducing to making hunch-based regulation, and that is worse than compliance-based regulation."

"Once we have the information, we need to be able to identify the risks from within it. We need a level of technical expertise that allows us to analyse the data. We must also have good, effective relationships with those who are regulated."

"On top of that, you must have an appetite to do something about it. If you can properly identify the risks and understand where change needs to be made, you then need to implement measures to address the concerns."

## Working with EASA

To what extent can the CAA follow its own instincts within the EASA framework? Mr Haines said the CAA had originally been reluctant to get involved with EASA and was therefore not as influential as it should have been. They are moving to strengthen their voice at EASA and in Europe. "In defence of EASA, whereas we are an authority, it is an agency, an agent of the EC, and one of the big issues is that it has not had a very clear safety lead from the EC. The strategy was for harmonisation, not specifically for safety. The emphasis has been on standardisation even where it was not appropriate because it wasn't with safety in view. That is now changing."

"Regulator-bashing is a sport that unites the industry, but as a regulator we have to try to find the way forward. EASA has real problems to grapple with. It has been given deadlines it hasn't got the resources to meet. FCL is an example – the only thing that hasn't slipped is the deadline. In the UK we've gone for a two-year transition period because we think that gives the industry the best chance to transition. We have certainly looked at the lessons of the rushed implementation of the JARs, when the UK ran hastily into it, but we think in the circumstances we've chosen the best way forward. Those who need to do so can move early, those who do not can move when it suits them."

## IMC rating

Mr Haines addressed the peculiarly British problems relating to instrument flying. "At our first meeting, Martin Robinson said, Andrew, if you do nothing else, you have to save the IMC rating. He didn't think the CAA was ready to do that, and having looked at the matter, I agreed with him. It was clear to me there was a compelling case for the retention of the IMC in this country. We have determined to protect it. I can't say anything definitive beyond that, but I am confident that our work will not be in vain."

Regarding the CAA's approach to general aviation, he said he had worked to encourage the CAA to engage more proactively with GA. "A lot of people in the CAA are naturally GA enthusiasts," he said. "I'm saying that if we are confident in our ground, we should be confident enough to have an open conversation with GA." Mr Haines has breathed new life into the GA Strategic Forum, through which the CAA Board meets with GA representatives.



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**Right: AOPA UK Chairman George Done (left) with Andrew Haines and Martin Robinson**

“My plea to the aviation community is to engage with us,” he went on. “We need to be in a position where we can be influenced by all parts of the industry, but then have rigorous processes to come to the right conclusions.

“We are in a time of transition. Patrick Goudou stands down as Executive Director of EASA next year, and David McMillan stands down at Eurocontrol. There are questions over the future of the SESAR JU and we are building up our capability to influence there. This month we have two more people going into the Commission.”

In answer to a question from AOPA Germany on what the safety yardstick was, Mr Haines said there is a view that says, what is the likelihood of you killing other people? “To my mind, we ought to be looking quite aggressively at that,” he said. “It’s quite a controversial view which is not shared by all, by any means.”

Mr Haines left us with one thought – we have to get the Olympics right, or the legacy will be appalling for GA. “I’m about to start my PPL –that’s my goal for this year,” he said. “I want to be



able to use those privileges to the maximum, and for the rest of my life, and I genuinely worry that if we don’t get the right procedures in place for the Olympics the legacy could be profoundly negative. If the military need to intervene, the ramifications will be very significant, particularly when we have the eyes of the world on London. It’s incumbent on everyone to ensure this works, to behave responsibly and show good airmanship.” ■

## How to do the job properly

Melissa Rudinger, AOPA US’s Vice President of Regulatory Affairs, gave the meeting a rundown of the lobbying effort which backs up general aviation in America and helps them succeed where European pilots fail. The nature and scale of the operation she described left European delegates slack-jawed and wistful, constrained as we are by lack of funding and the inability to engage lawyers and lobbyists in Brussels and Cologne. AOPA US has 400,000 members contributing to a slick and professional lobbying effort which gets results. AOPA President Craig Fuller was named the most effective lobbyist in Washington by a leading lobbying magazine in 2011.

“If we don’t engage with the political process, we don’t stand a chance,” Melissa said. “Somebody else will define who we are, and we won’t get what we need to support the industry. In Europe you face more onerous regulation, but it’s a lot of hard work to maintain our position in the United States.

“We have 73 years in the lobbying business and AOPA’s government affairs department has 50 staff members, of whom 30 are dedicated to lobbying in Washington and interacting with the Federal agencies. It’s an uphill battle but they are very effective, and sometimes even we forget how dedicated they are.

“We reach elected officials at every level, from the smallest municipality to the summit of Capitol Hill in Washington.

You have to have a good working relationship with these people. They need to know that GA makes a huge contribution to the economy, and pays its fair share of taxes.

“We take the business of educating political leaders seriously. Our ‘GA serves America’ campaign wasn’t aimed at pilots, it was aimed at decision makers and opinion leaders. We used well-known pilots like Harrison Ford and Morgan Freeman as our spokesmen, but also everyday pilots like the doctor who uses his aircraft to reach patients on islands in Chesapeake Bay to illustrate our case.

“We also gather support from our allies. Four years ago we helped organise the GA Caucus on Capitol Hill, a group of politicians who may or may not vote in favour, but who acknowledge that GA is important and want to understand it better. The caucus now has 185 members in the House and at least 30 in the Senate.

“President Obama’s 2013 budget proposes a \$100 fee for every business jet, which affects very few of our members, but recognising that the divide and conquer system is alive and well we banded together and got the caucus to send a letter saying these fees have been proposed before and Congress had always rejects them. And that was signed by 198 legislators, so they know they’re in for a fight.

**Right: North American delegates Frank Hofmann, Bruce Landsberg, Melissa Rudinger and Craig Fuller**

“We contribute to the campaigns of candidates that support our issues. We host fund-raisers and give a lot to favourable candidates. We work to ensure that legislators get phone calls, visits and letters from their constituents. We can message pilots down to the zip (postal) code, to do things at the right time. The sophistication of our targeting is extreme. We also target those legislators who are anti-GA with our education programme. It’s it’s easy to throw stones at your enemy but better to engage with him. Even if you don’t agree, it often dials down the rhetoric.

“The ones who get the attention are the ones to whom attention is drawn – silence ensures you’ll be ignored,” she concluded.

The contrast with Europe, where GA pilots generally decline to fund political participation and the regulators ride roughshod over them, using the ‘divide and conquer’ principle to the full and selecting the least troublesome of the organisations which claim to represent GA in order to go through the motions of consultation, could not be greater. ■



# SESAR and NexGen

The vexed question of who pays for the equipment GA may be forced to adopt in order to fly in the brave new world of European airspace is being addressed by the European Commission, and there may be some relief for those pilots who get no benefit from what they have to pay for. IAOPA's man at SESAR, Ben Stanley, gave the delegates an update on progress towards the Single European Sky and the position of general aviation in it. Through professional and proactive engagement, IAOPA had become heavily involved in drafting the new Master Plan for air traffic management, which critically will include estimated costs for IFR and VFR equipage from 2015 to 2030. "The understanding is that where any user is disadvantaged by proposals which benefit the likes of commercial air transport, Airbus and so



"We recognise that at a European level air traffic management has to change and improve, but that should not benefit only CAT. Martin Robinson and I met with the Executive Director of the SESAR Joint Undertaking, which controls the research and development funds, to talk about where those funds need to be directed to help develop solutions which are appropriate to GA.

"The first step would be to catch up with the United States, where traffic and other data is transmitted to many GA cockpits. The ATC providers in Europe have no intention of funding such technology as the Americans have done, so new ways are being sought to get traffic, terrain and weather information to the pilot."

Ben covered progress towards trajectory planning – Airbus will deploy it in the next few years, and even the latest GA equipment contains much of the baseline

approaches and is proactive in the application to non-instrument aerodromes, with several in the north of Scotland likely to be installed in the next two years, including one of the few airports in the world on a beach!

Craig Fuller remarked that an LPV approach had been put in place at AOPA's home airfield in Frederick, Maryland, and the main problem they'd encountered was changing the mindset of the controllers, who were initially more comfortable with the ILS and took about a year to come round to the idea of just clearing an LPV approach. He also commented that the iPad could be the tool of the future for all pilots. "The technology is moving an awful lot faster than the regulators," he said. "The iPad really looks like a game-changer for general aviation."

The possibilities of the iPad were also touched on by Craig Spence, AOPA's Vice President for Operational and International Affairs, who is AOPA's point man on the ADS-B based NextGen, the American equivalent to SESAR. He and Ben Stanley are in constant communication about the interoperability of the two systems. LPV, he said, was a major factor in driving equipment updates, with 74,000 WAAS boxes having been sold in the US. The iPad, he added, had the ability to revolutionise GA, as a means of getting the weather or displaying traffic at relatively low cost. "When ADS-B in and out were proposed, the iPad wasn't thought of," he said. "Expenditure of \$1,500 gives you everything you



**Left: SESAR meets NexGen – from left, Ben Stanley (UK), Dr Michael Erb (Germany) and Craig Spence (US)**

on, there will be some assistance in the form of funding or financing," he said. "The aim is to look at both financing arrangements such as loans over several years, but also funding such as direct subsidies for those aircraft not getting any benefits from improvements intended to assist the overall network.

"The European stakeholders tend to disadvantage GA without thinking about it. They may say, for instance, that GA IFR flights, of which there are 490,000 in Europe in a year, will have to equip with datacomms. That means you'd have to spend about €50,000 on a radio, and our answer is, of course, that this will be impossible for most GA operators. The requirement for proportionality is being ignored.

functionality – the decommissioning of VORs and NDBs, and LPV approaches. These are the 'Localiser Performance with Vertical Guidance' approaches made possible by GPS signal augmentation, by WAAS in the US and EGNOS in Europe, which allow approaches to a 250 feet decision height, giving access and safety benefits to many pilots. In the US, 3,000 LPV approaches have been implemented, in Europe, seven. Ben highlighted the concern with over-regulation in Europe, with EASA currently proposing that every LPV approach should also have a conventional (e.g. ILS) approach also available, vastly reducing the benefits and take-up. IAOPA are firm that this is not the way forward.

The UK CAA has approved LPV

need. ADS-B needs to be benefits-driven, and the benefits aren't there right now. We've just surveyed our members and only 18 percent are familiar with ADS-B. We have a lot of education to do; 17 percent said they hadn't heard of it and 34 percent said they didn't intend to equip. 22 percent plan to equip before 2014, but cost is the most worrying factor. The regulatory deadline for implementation of ADS-B out is 2020 and manufacturers can install the equipment in about 10,000 aircraft per year. We think we've got 120,000 to do by 2020, and there's no certificated equipment at the right price-point. Air carriers have to have it nailed down by 2015, to meet their five-year cycle. The military is in an even worse state." ■

# EASA Ops: small concessions

EASA's response to industry concerns over its Ops regulations perhaps illustrates the Agency at its worst – unreasoning, unresponsive and unwilling to change. While it has conceded some small alterations and clarifications to the text, on the major safety concerns it remains immovable.

Jacob Pedersen of AOPA Denmark said that of the 34 comments IAOPA has submitted on EASA Ops, the Agency had accepted 13 and rejected 18, while leaving three open.

“Our major concerns are the oxygen requirements, the dangerous goods requirements, and the requirement to carry a fire extinguisher in an aerobatic aircraft,” he said. “EASA refuses to change on oxygen or on dangerous goods, while the fire extinguisher issue has been deferred to specialised Ops. They are also refusing to revisit the revised minima for IFR take-off.

“Many organisations pointed out the dangers inherent in their oxygen requirements, including EASA's own review group. This regulation addresses no safety issue, but forces aircraft without oxygen down to possibly dangerous altitudes in

the mountains to conform to a law which even their own review group questions.

“We suggested aircraft be allowed to climb a little higher for a short period in order to maintain safe clearance from terrain. In responding, EASA didn't even address the alternatives we proposed, or mention the serious safety concerns we have about flying into the ground. EASA has dealt arrogantly with the input of its own review group, and of a virtually unanimous industry. If you only look at one side of an argument you will reach a one-sided conclusion, which is what they have done.”

On dangerous goods, EASA is enforcing as law an ICAO recommendation which was never intended as hard regulation, and which makes it illegal for a private pilot to carry certain substances, such as de-icing fluid. The pilot won't know what he is allowed to carry unless he pays ICAO a subscription and obtains a 1,000-page document which sets out what is thought to be good practice. Who is going to do that?

EASA has also rejected a challenge to its requirement for every aircraft to have a Minimum Equipment List (MEL). IAOPA

has suggested that a master list for the type should be adequate. It also rejected a request to reconsider its prohibition on simulating IFR conditions, other than in an Approved Training Organisation environment.

“What was accepted?” said Jacob. “Most of the items were of an editorial nature, or seeking clarification. The requirement for an engineer to have a radio licence in order to taxi an aircraft on an airfield with no radio has been lifted. We have also got rid of a strange requirement whereby the operator must carry aboard the aircraft a written list of all the emergency and survival equipment on board. “What was this list for?” asked Jacob. “To wave at the rescue helicopter?”

“The main issues are unresolved. Political action is needed at EC and Parliament. We have a two-year opt-out, and we need to use the time to achieve a positive result.”

The irony is that these unwelcome and poorly thought-out regulations which EASA doesn't have the wit to change are utterly unenforceable, so the Agency brings itself into disrepute for no good reason.

## Making more engineers

An International Civil Aviation Organisation manpower study is predicting a shortage of 150,000 pilots and 250,000 aviation engineers by 2020, and IAOPA has proposed addressing the engineering shortage by changing the rules to allow work on light sport aircraft to be taken into account for the purposes of engineering qualification.

IAOPA's representative at ICAO Frank Hofmann said the type-certificated fleet was shrinking while the non-certificated fleet was growing, but ICAO was not recognising engineering training in the non-certificated sector. At its World Assembly in Tel Aviv in 2010 IAOPA had resolved to press for a rule change, and some progress had been made.

“The General Assembly of ICAO has approved our request, and ICAO has found money to hire consultants to look at these aircraft from a technical standpoint and prepare paperwork seeking approval.

“IAOPA asking that these aircraft be recognised for commercial operations, and be permitted to operate internationally. This proposal is being picked up,

particularly where such aircraft are manufactured. Slovenia has agreed to go ahead even before ICAO; Romania, Bulgaria, and two other states will have a multilateral agreement so they can begin to do this – they are up and running with our initiative. These countries are at ICAO and have voting rights, and they will become suppliers of engineers – the power centre will shift in their direction.”

Frank reported on his visit to Rotax in Austria to look at engineering and design trends. “There are 170,000 Rotax engines flying, and of the 255 original equipment manufacturers in the world, 224 use Rotax,” he said. “About 88 percent of LSAs use Rotax, and the company is looking at developing an aircraft. The new 912 engine is fuel injected, runs on avgas or mogas and produces 100hp. It has an electronic control unit so no more magnetos and it has diagnostic features so you can download engine performance data. Rotax claims the engine has the best power to weight ratio, and the best cost-horsepower ratio, but over time and against horsepower it's at the top of the cost range. It is IAOPA's position that the people servicing these engines should have their qualifications recognised for professional purposes.”



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# The achievable IR

EASA's welcome moves to make the Instrument Rating more achievable are about to begin their passage through the comment review stage with no implementation date yet established, IAOPA's representative on the FCL-008 working group Michael Erb told delegates.

Michael, Managing Director of AOPA Germany, said the proportion of PPL instrument rating holders in the US was 53 percent, while in Europe it was five percent. "We believe an IR pilot is a safer pilot, and this figure must be increased," he said.

The theoretical knowledge for the new IR has been reduced by 40 percent, with questions about jet engines, inertial navigation systems, jet streams and other irrelevant issues having been removed. "There was some opposition to this," Michael said. "Some of the professional pilots said it was useful to know what was

needed at the next stage up, but we pointed out that by that logic, 747 captains would be required to know how to fly the Space Shuttle." Eventually the obstacles were overcome.

Only ten hours of the theory study needed to be done with an authorised training organisation. The other 30 hours could be done with DVDs and books at home. The practical test remains unchanged.

The En Route Instrument Rating had survived – it was an IR without approach and departure qualifications. "People said that is dangerous, and we said that in certain parts of Europe it was, in other parts it wasn't. In Finland I wouldn't be interested, but in Spain or Italy in summer, where you know the skies will be blue for two weeks, you could use it." The theory exams will be the same as for the full IR but the flight training is reduced to 15 hours.



**Above: Delegates to the 127th European Regional Meeting listen to CAA Chief Executive Andrew Haines**

The UK IMC rating was not being adopted across Europe, but Michael said: "We are quite positive that a solution can be found on a national basis, limited to UK airspace as the IMC rating is at present."

There had been some 1,800 comments on the proposals, most of them criticising the En Route Instrument Rating, with some national authorities being most negative.

Entry for third country IR holders was being simplified. "If you have 100 flight hours there is a practical flight test and a theory exam in four subjects," Michael said. "We don't know if it will be written or oral, but will include air law, possibly human performance, and aeronautical weather codes." ■

## Sheehan era ends

IAOPA Secretary General John Sheehan is retiring from the post on May 1st, and is handing over to Craig Spence who will run the ship while some strategic decisions are made about its goals.

"My first regional meeting in Europe was in 1984 and it was a very small meetings of the elite," John said. "This is my 25th, and my lasting impression is that I'm astounded at the progress IAOPA Europe has made in 15 years. You've come a long way, and it has to do with the realisation that there is a common way forward, and having everyone working towards that. You have excellent leadership, every one of you must participate and follow that leadership."

Craig Fuller paid tribute to the work John has done over the years and thanked him for the effort he put in. He credited Martin Robinson with suggesting that this was a good time to look at what we wanted international AOPA to achieve, exactly how it should be structured, and to do some strategic thinking.

**Below: Dr Michael Erb with AOPA Lebanon's Hadi and Haytham Azhari and Bruce Landsberg**



## Sorting out Part M

An EASA-industry that is trying to sort out the Part M maintenance requirements is shaping up for its second meeting, with the aviation industry united in the view that things must change, AOPA UK Chairman George Done told the meeting. He and Dan Akerman of AOPA Sweden had attended the first meeting in Cologne in October, and there was a lot of flak flying towards EASA. "In comparison to some of the others present, IAOPA's presentation was quite polite," George said. "The EASA contingent sat at the back, well out of the firing line, except for Eric Sivel who had to sit at the front." The upshot of the meeting was the formation of a task force comprising eight industry representatives and four from EASA. "There are five meetings planned for this year, and it is very encouraging that the industry members are arranging to meet the evening before each to plan strategy," George said. "A lot is resting on Dan's shoulders, but he's the best man for the job. He's operated a CAMO for a year before it got too difficult to carry on in Sweden, and he knows Part M inside out. It's early days yet but we have reason to be hopeful."