

Instrument ratings, safety and money

France's Private Pilot Instrument Rating, first revealed in the June issue of this magazine, has been formally announced by AOPA France, the Direction générale de l'Aviation civile (DGAC) and the French Aero Clubs Federation (FFA).

The new IR, for which only a single written examination on pertinent topics is required, means that French pilots can obtain the benefits and protection of an IR without going through the nonsensical theoretical knowledge requirements which have hitherto made European IRs unobtainable for 98 percent of private pilots. Holders of FAA IRs will be able to convert them to French IRs easily and cheaply.

In Britain AOPA has brought the French move to the attention of the CAA, which is studying the implications. France is inviting other European countries to make agreements to accept the French qualification, and to adopt it where they see the need.

Exactly where this leaves EASA's long-delayed plans for instrument flying qualifications is unclear. Early indications of the Agency's attitude are not promising. The word from Cologne is that EASA's lawyers are going through the small print of the French rating to see "whether it's legal or not." Elsewhere in Europe the official resistance is getting its boots on because some civil aviation authorities don't want an increase in IFR traffic from which there would be no revenue; sub-two-tonne aircraft do not attract IFR charges. Where money is concerned, safety has a rival.

EASA's Notice of Proposed Amendment on instrument flying, originally due to have been published in the summer of 2010, has been repeatedly delayed and is now promised for August or September. Some sources say it is being amended to include a private instrument rating similar to that offered by the French, but with powerful voices expressing concerns about adding to the IFR load, especially when they don't get paid for it, nothing is guaranteed.

The delay in revealing the contents of the NPA makes life particularly difficult because the deadline for implementation hasn't changed – it's still April 8th, 2012.

Originally, the industry and its state regulators were expected to have almost two years to plan for the switch – now, that looks like being about six months. AOPA has always had a jaundiced view of EASA's deadlines, which are entirely arbitrary but which are treated as holy grail by EASA; some flexibility will have to be found in implementing FCL, however, because delays in writing regulations have become excessive.

The French IR came about because M Patrick Gandil, Director General of the

DGAC, is a private pilot who had been unable to take time out to study for the JAA IR exams. There are seven written exams for the JAA IR, which are full of irrelevant and sometimes nonsensical questions. The candidate must study full-time for about a year to pass the exams, and as a result the number of private pilots with instrument ratings in the UK is around one percent.

In contrast, the American IR requires a similar level of flying training but has none of the arcane theoretical knowledge requirements, and almost 50 percent of US pilots have an IR. Because the JAA IR is not achievable for all but a handful of non-professional aviators, many European fliers obtain FAA IRs and fly in Europe on the N-register.

M Gandil travelled to the USA in May to look at the FAA IR and flew with Bruce Landsberg, head of the AOPA Foundation. The two men flew from AOPA's headquarters in Frederick, Maryland, to Hagerstown, 35 miles to the north west, in a G-1000-equipped Diamond DA40, with M Gandil in the left seat. Bruce Landsberg described M Gandil as "making an excellent job" and added: "That France is embracing a much simpler instrument rating is highly commendable and will not only save lives but provide French pilots with a real incentive to upgrade their skills at a reasonable expenditure of time and money."

For years, European authorities have recognised that the theoretical knowledge requirements were an unnecessary barrier to the IR and have worked to reduce them. The JAA set up a committee to winnow out the nonsense, but it was never allowed to finish the job. Now, the Emmanuel Davidson of AOPA France says: "The written exams for private pilots is centered on the subjects that are pertinent to the conduct of IFR flights in single or twin engine pistons up to FL195. There will be no questions about the hydraulic systems of airliners or the calculation of Mach

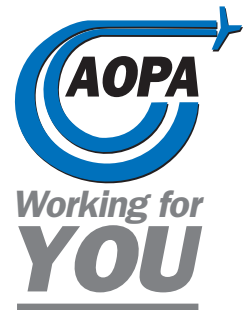
numbers, only subjects relevant to what pilots needs to know."

In France, fewer than three percent of private pilots hold an Instrument Rating. A joint study by AOPA and FFA showed that more than 3,000 French pilots would like to train for an IR(A) in the next 18 months if they could be trained in a manner resembling the one used by the FAA.

The new IR will allow the pilot to fly on instruments to the same minimums as JAA IR holders. It allows French PPL holders to fly IFR on French registered airplanes in French airspace, and there is provision for FAA IR holders to validate their US IR on their French license – if they have 100 hours on instruments (including sim time) they simply need to fly a 'skills test' at an approved FTO.

The theoretical knowledge exam calls for the student to answer 150 questions on air law, radio comms, IFR-related human factors, instrumentation and radio navigation, flight planning, flight following, and meteorology. While an accredited FTO must be in charge of the training, pilots can do the flying in their own aircraft, or in an aero club plane, which further drives down costs.

The first French candidates for the new rating should be taking their written and practical exams as early as September. The way is open for other European countries to accept the French rating, given that it is ICAO-compliant, by making an agreement with France under which French rated pilots could fly into other countries. M Davidson says: "If enough European countries accept the French rating, EASA could decide to adopt a system that is already functional and has been proven as a functioning alternative to its own plans." ■



Olympics – spooks not for turning

By the time you read this a top-level meeting should have been held involving the CAA, the Department for Transport, the Home Office and the Cabinet Office concerning the airspace restrictions imposed in the Home Counties to cover the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The CAA and NATS largely side with the general aviation industry in saying that the restrictions are too extensive and could deal a devastating blow to many GA companies, who stand to lose a major

portion of their business during what ought to be the busiest two months of the year. Given that GA is already in the grip of an unprecedented recession, the loss could prove fatal for some.

Unfortunately, those segments of the Home Office which consider themselves responsible for public safety couldn't give a monkeys about the general aviation industry as long as they can fulfil their allotted task, which is to serve up an incident-free games – not just free of terrorist incident, but with no embarrassing →

intrusion by some halfwit dressed as Batman under a powered parachute, or whatever.

During the planning of the vast restricted area the CAA and NATS were "consulted" in the flimsiest way; they were almost as shocked as GA when the Home Office announced its plans. It has since been made clear that the size and shape of the area is

non-negotiable. The spooks believe they've already erred in favour of GA.

Martin Robinson says: "Dawn Lindsey

and her colleagues at the CAA, and a number of officials at the Department for Transport, have been indefatigable in trying to improve on what the Home Office is offering by trying to get some flexibility into the arrangements, but it has to be said that their options are extremely limited.

"In fact, as far as winning some ground back for GA is concerned, they're reduced to fighting for specific corridors and small-scale local arrangements, largely on the periphery of the restricted area. Some people seem to have gained the impression that these are already assured,

but they have yet to be put to the Home Office and there's no guarantee that they will accede.

"What is certain that all our efforts to change hearts and minds at the Home Office over the issues of transponder equipage and radio use have hit a brick wall. The sad fact is that if you're under the restricted area and you don't have these, then your only course of action is to move out of the area for the two months of the games, if you can. Try as we might, we are not going to make any headway on these issues, and neither is the CAA or any



Chief executive's diary:

Building Rome in a day

Sorry for jumping straight onto my hobby horse but the European Commission has made a rod for all our backs with its insistence on strict deadlines for EASA. The Agency is way behind in its work, yet with Flight Crew Licensing, for instance, the fixed and immovable deadline remains April 8th 2012. We're heading for a regulatory car crash, making bad rules in a desperate hurry with no time for real oversight or consultation in order to meet an entirely arbitrary and utterly realistic deadline invented years ago for reasons few can remember. Yet to the bureaucratic mind, the deadline is more important than the efficacy of the regulation.

Bureaucracy is piled on bureaucracy. This level of official drag on business may be the norm in parts of Europe but it's utterly alien to the UK. A few days ago I was in Brussels for a Eurocontrol meeting on future standardisation issues. One fellow was grinding on about the 93 comments they'd had to a consultation. It took me a few minutes to twig that he was talking about 93 responses to the way the document was formatted, and much more work would be needed before they even began to wonder what to put in it. If bureaucracy had built Rome, it would have been planned for a century and built in a day. Sometimes I want to scream and run away.

Anyway, picking up where I left off in my last diary, on May 10th I went to Gatwick for a GA Strategic Forum meeting. This has been going since 2006 and has done a lot of talking to little effect, but at the top level the CAA has decided it should be made to work so I've raised it up my personal 'must attend' list. Rather than addressing broad, amorphous goals like changing the Civil Aviation Act to remove the bias against GA, it has to be more specific and take aim at the issues we face, such as the future of avgas, barriers to flight training, threats to aerodromes.

On the 11th I was in Iceland wearing my IAOPA Senior Vice President hat to address the AGM of AOPA Iceland. I wrote a story

about flying there in the last magazine, but let me just say it's a beautiful country with unique flying opportunities, and if you can get a cheap flight there, it's worth a visit. Drop me a line and I'll give you some contact details for the AOPA Iceland guys – the welcome is fantastic.

On May 18th and 19th I was at Eurocontrol for a discussion on the amalgamation of all its advisory bodies into one – there have been three up to now. A lot of the stuff we discuss is not germane to GA, but when things like Mode S, 8.33 and TCAS come up we have to be there to fight GA's corner. David McMillan has worked miracles in reforming Eurocontrol in the face of labyrinthine political and practical problems, and the streamlining of the advisory bodies is a good idea – it means much more than having three meetings a year instead of nine.

On the 21st AOPA Chairman George Done and I competed in TopNav in his PA28; we still don't know how we fared, but we're quite heavily handicapped, having won our class four years ago. The worse we do, the better our chances next time. Two days later I was in Brussels for a meeting of the EC's Industry Consultation Body, where the first piece of business is the implementation of IP1, which is the first stage of SESAR, finishing off existing Eurocontrol projects such as datalinks and 8.33. The airlines aren't sure who they want to run SESAR's



deployment – there are a lot of thorny business-related issues surrounding it – and there are powerful voices there with no time for GA, like Airbus. If they get their way we'll wake up one day and find we can't fly without TCAS. You can't turn your back. Next year we have the introduction of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) which will cost the airlines

about €9 billion a year. As with much else in Europe, the bureaucratic cart has got in front of the industry horse – the Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs) which were to have made navigation easier and routes shorter are nowhere near ready. Reducing 67 ATC centres to about 20 is very ambitious and faces political resistance. Getting 36 different ATC computer languages to communicate as one is daunting on a practical level, choosing between future systems like UAT and 1090 for ADS-B is fraught with difficulty. The cost of equipping for all this is massive, and GA can easily get swamped. Luckily we have supportive voices like the head of performance review body, Peter Griffiths, who keep in mind the effect any move will have on the economy of GA. Are the right decisions being made? They weren't on Mode-S. My goal is to ensure that GA can continue to fly VFR non-radio, and if we must be seen electronically it must be with a lightweight, low cost portable system that puts you on ACAS and TCAS and all the rest of it. That's got to be the baseline.

On the 25th I was in Beirut representing IAOPA and meeting the Transport Minister Ghazi Aridi and the acting head of the CAA Daniel Haibi. Lebanon is making a choice



Meeting in Beirut – from left, Haytham Azhari (AOPA Lebanon), Martin Robinson, Lebanese Transport Minister Ghazi Aridi, Hadi Azhari (AOPA Lebanon)

of the politicians to whom we have turned for help.

"The flight plan requirement will remain, and the spooks are saying that the issues of capacity will be dealt with, although exactly what they mean by that and how it will be handled is unclear. Discussions on this subject have been



answers from government on Olympic restrictions in the House of Lords but was

some of the most frustrating I've ever had, marked by extreme inflexibility and a total lack of response to argument."

As reported in the last issue of *General Aviation*, AOPA's President Lord Stevens sought

effectively stonewalled. He asked what volume of traffic was expected in the restricted area, what mechanisms were being put in place to manage that traffic, what assessment had been made of the loss of earnings to aviation businesses, and what compensation was available. For the government, Earl Attlee played a dead bat, addressing only the issue of the additional commercial movements during the Games, referring to GA activity as 'leisure flights' and claiming NATS was still working on flight plan reception and handling issues. There would be no compensation. ■

between the EASA and FAA approaches, and EASA is courting them to lure them onto the European road. I urged them to look closely at FAA systems, which serve to support the aviation industry where EASA's approach restricts and damages it.

Into June, and on the 3rd I was at one of the UK Department for Transport's regular briefings on EASA. These are fairly informal exchanges; because EASA has had its remit extended into air traffic management, the ATM people are coming up against the problems we've been having for years – they're saying how difficult it is to deal with an Agency that doesn't obey its own rules in terms of how it consults and operates. The whole of the aviation industry is finding dealing with EASA extremely challenging. Our own regulator and our government people need to work harder in Europe to uphold our interests, but there's still this debilitating notion that we're 'bad Europeans' if we speak up. We are supposedly reducing red tape in this country, but Europe is going mad with red tape. The French protect their industry – we must do the same.

On the 7th and 8th I was in Cologne for the EASA Advisory Body meeting; EASA's Executive Director Patrick Goudou attended and repeated his increasingly threadbare mantra about EASA being concerned with safety, safety, safety. In truth, it's EASA first and the rest can go hang – regulations are written to protect the Agency. They don't have enough money, enough staff, they don't have the right people in the right jobs, their attitudes are elitist and obstructive. And thanks to the EC, they're operating to ridiculous deadlines. You couldn't create a better framework for bad regulation if you tried.

On the 13th June I went to the three-day EASA-FAA conference in Vienna, where the recently-signed bilateral agreement on aviation, the BASA, was debated. Two oversight boards have been established, one to look specifically at technology matters. The main board, known as BOB, is unwieldy – all the European states are represented, as is the EC, EASA, the Parliament, the FAA and the industry. The primary objective is to look after Boeing and Airbus and ensure that no silly requirements are imposed on them; there will be a broader reliance on each other's systems, and acceptance of STCs will be easier. Of great interest to GA is the first

annexe, which will be on licensing. This is a fairly long-term debate and there certainly won't be anything in place in time for EASA's 2014 deadline on third-country licence issues, so one would hope some flexibility can be found. IAOPA will be sticking to private pilots' concerns when it comes to tackling the N-reg issue – political arguments about transatlantic employment rights are for others. The most impressive presentation of all in Vienna, with the possible exception of one from the American Airline Pilots Association, was by the CAA's Gretchen Burrett, who was light years ahead of some of the other people on the panel. Patrick Goudou, in summing up, said EASA was going to be more risk-based in its approach. Ten years late, but welcome nonetheless.

A quick stop in London for a change of underwear and I was off to Sywell for Aero Expo. Those who went will agree that it was a pleasant event in a good location, and AOPA will continue to support it. I was able to meet a lot of members old and new, and it was gratifying to hear that the work we do is appreciated.

On June 20th we had the AOPA Instructor Committee, where the main topic was Europe and FCL; Nick Wilcock represents AOPA on EASA's new Partnership Working Group which will be trying retrospectively to improve regulations already imposed. I sincerely hope this important group can be made to work, but it's a bit of a strange beast with no formal status within EASA. Still, it's the best forum by which industry can influence EASA on these issues, and Nick Wilcock has a really good grasp of the complexities.

We had the AOPA Executive Committee on the 22nd, and I gave my regular report. On the 24th I went to the Airspace Initiative Co-Ordination Group, ASICG, which is the over-arching body that deals with infringement issues; it has Olympic issues in its brief, and although we can't give specifics yet, things are happening – the CAA, the MoD and everyone else is trying to thrash out workable solutions to problems, but it won't be right for everybody. I don't think the Home Office will budge an inch from the basic flight plan, transponder and radio requirement. Nothing we have said has even remotely touched them.

On the 27th and 28th I was in Brussels at the invitation of the Commission to take part in a 'fitness check' on some existing regulations. This is what the EC calls 'smart regulation' – as opposed to 'dumb regulation' I suppose – trying to ensure after the fact that the operation won't kill the patient. Most don't concern us – the common rules for the operation of air services in the EU, the code of conduct for computerised reservation systems – but one of them, 785 2004, covers the insurance requirement for air carriers and operators. This is the statute that forces warbirds like the B-17 Sally B to carry the same insurance as a 737 in scheduled service, even though Sally B flies as much in a year as a 737 does on a Monday. The EC says it's aware of the issue, but didn't specify what they're going to do about it. This is also where the proposal to ban all flights of between 100 and 300 nm is under discussion – a nonsensical proposal which is part of the environment lobby's attack on aviation. The EC seems to be looking for long grass to kick it into, which is wise. I went on to a meeting with the EBAA and GAMA with whom IAOPA has a working arrangement to share information and adopt a common approach to this 'better regulation' process.

On July 6th I did a BBC Radio Berkshire interview on Olympic airspace and the impact on places like Popham and White Waltham, then went to Gatwick for a meeting of the General Aviation Consultative Committee where, among other issues, we received an update on the CAA's Safety Programme. For GA they're going to focus on risk management and decision-making of pilots, which is a good way to go. Dealing with the CAA after a spell in Europe makes me appreciate how lucky we are in Britain; under the current management, relations between the CAA and industry have never been more positive, even while the CAA cedes more and more responsibility to EASA, which believes that its regulatory mistakes can be solved by more regulation. I went from the CAA back to Brussels to listen to that chap making a fantastic meal of the format of a document on which a regulation might one day be written – it's a parallel universe out there.

Martin Robinson

More hassle in the Channel Islands

New restrictions have been imposed on VFR flights to the Channel Islands because a new multi-million pound ATC system is apparently unable to cope with the traffic handled by the old one.

Since June 30th, all VFR flights to Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney have been made subject to prior permission via a 17-step online system which largely duplicates the information already provided in VFR flight plans, which are also mandatory when flying from the UK to the islands, as is the filing of a GAR form.

The restrictions, which according to the islands' authorities will last for "about three months", are all the more bizarre because there are no restrictions on VFR flights across the Channel Islands Control Zone – you just can't land.

Furthermore, GA IFR flights are unaffected.

AOPA is fighting the PPR mandate, which it believes will result in a further reduction of air traffic to the Channel Islands, where aircraft movements are already down by about 20 percent in two years. AOPA's Channel Islands Chairman Charles Strasser believes the new requirements will put GA pilots off coming to the islands and his view has been borne out by the number of regular visitors who have written to the islands' authorities saying the PPR demand is a step too far.

Pilots based in the islands will themselves be worst affected because they will be unable to return home without gaining a VFR slot via the online system.

Charles Strasser says the PPR demand betrays inadequate performance of systems and equipment which is "not fit for purpose". He has produced statistics to show that by comparison with air traffic control areas elsewhere in the world the Channel Islands, with some 130,000 movements a year, are a quiet backwater, yet pilots there already operate under Class A airspace restrictions. He has engaged in a spirited debate with the authorities on radio and in the islands' newspapers and has faced personal insults for his temerity.

Charles Strasser says: "This has come

about as a result of the installation of new computers and radar equipment in the new multimillion pound tower at Jersey Airport. Despite extensive training before the delayed launch last December, and over six months of operational use by fully qualified, skilled and licensed air traffic controllers, the new system can apparently not even handle the movements easily coped with by the old system, further reduced by the approximately 20 percent reduction in traffic since then.

"Clearly the system, as at present installed, is therefore not fit for purpose. We have requested an independent investigation and scrutiny of this. We have also repeatedly asked for the movement capacity of the system ordered, the capacity delivered and the reduced capacity limit now operated on, together

all the Channel Islands' air traffic."

The existing requirement for VFR traffic to file a flight plan should give ATC all the notice they need of VFR movements. Mr Strasser says: "ATS in New York, Los Angeles, Frankfurt and Berlin (for example) manage ten or more times our volume of traffic using only simple radio communication methods, without any kind of flight plan or notification from VFR aircraft. It is astonishing, therefore, that Jersey ATS should attempt to present their overlay of additional prior permission requirements, as a 'a relatively normal course of action'.

"The Channel Islands Zone is unique. Nowhere in the free world does a zone with so little traffic impose the requirement that every VFR flight in or out of the zone must file a flight plan. Thus, Jersey ATC

already has a vast amount of information and prior notification of VFR traffic, compared to ATC in any major airport in the USA or Germany.

"We would like to understand why Jersey ATS appears to be incapable of executing its responsibilities without an extraordinary overlay of restrictions that are not needed by any other ATS unit in the western world managing similar traffic volumes.

"Jersey ATS points to its new computer

system. Obviously, every ATS unit in the world at some point changes its computers. We are not aware of any occasion that incredibly busy zones like those in the USA or Germany have needed the restrictions that already exist in the CI Zone, let alone additional 'prior permission' restrictions.

"It is a matter of record that the new system, planned and specified in 2008, now has significantly less traffic to cope with in CI airspace. There is no conceivable reason for ATS to need restrictions that could not have been foreseen years ago. Therefore, AOPA CI does not accept the proposals or explanations of Jersey Airport and ATS management, nor do we believe our communities should accept their negative economic and reputational consequences."

Pilots wishing to fly into the islands must first register on www.cicz.co.uk, then conform to the 17-step permissions process. ■



the new system can apparently not even handle the movements easily coped with by the old system

with the comparative actual movements, individually for the three peak months last year. This information has not been forthcoming."

He goes on to say: "This is an extraordinary encumbrance relative to our modest traffic volumes and the existing requirement for all aircraft to file a detailed flight plan. It is claimed this is necessary because of the new computer system introduced in 2010. Jersey ATS have failed to consult the general aviation community properly at any point in this process, and AOPA CI's feedback in private has been ignored.

"Not only do we believe that the prior permission requirement is unnecessary, we think it is wrong that an organisation entrusted with a duty of care for aviation safety should use these principles to cover up its apparent inability to properly plan to serve

What's wrong with Part M?

After many requests from IAOPA, EASA has finally agreed to a review of the Part M maintenance requirements as they apply to GA, where increased cost and bureaucracy has been a constant complaint.

EASA's Deputy Director of Rulemaking Eric Sivel has asked for feedback on how Part M is operating in the general aviation sector ahead of a workshop in September or October which will assess its impact on the industry. The request creates an official channel for the torrent of complaints about Part M which have fallen on European politicians for years, but which EASA has been reluctant to address.

Part M was a maintenance revolution foisted on the GA industry despite the fact that the old systems were working perfectly well. It paid insufficient heed to 'proportionality' and imposed similar requirements on GA to those for commercial air transport. While many commercial outfits had to hire more staff to deal with the new paperwork GA outfits were often unable to do so, and aircraft were immobilised for long periods while documents going back 20 or more years were sought out and meticulously cross-checked. EASA initially recognised the problem and promised a 'Part M lite' for general aviation but there has never been any real alleviation.

The problems include the fact that recommendations in manufacturers' manuals now have the force of European regulation, which means that liability lawyers for foreign companies are effectively writing European law. Where these recommendations are interpreted literally, for example in Sweden, maintenance has become a near-impossible task.

EASA specifies that descriptions of problems in Part M should be accompanied by proposed solutions, and says that some areas where they are particularly interested in receiving feedback, *inter alia*, are format of the rules, generic maintenances programmes and indirect approval procedures, approval and acceptance of repairs and modifications, acceptance of

components from the US and Canada, scope of work authorised to the pilot-owner, and scope of work authorised to independent certifying staff.

Martin Robinson says several IAOPA-Europe representatives will be attending the workshop and arrangements are being made for the co-ordination of submissions for feedback. "We are pleased that EASA is taking steps to address this situation and will work to ensure that the recommendations brought out at the workshops are acted upon," he said. ■

May's Airbox Aware winner

AOPA and Airbox award an Airbox Aware anti-infringement tool worth £150 to one new member drawn from a hat each month. The May winner was Simon Blaxsell, who will be using it in his work as a flying instructor. Simon got his PPL in 1984 and added a CPL in 2001, followed by an FI rating in 2003. He got his IMC in 2006 and became an IMC instructor three years later, and a GR examiner in the same year. He flies most light singles but predominantly the PA28 and C172, and does ground instruction for PPL exams, flight training for PPL, Night and in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. Simon says: "Aware will be a very useful aid as a backup to well prepared and flown pilot navigation exercises."



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Biggin Hill signs with Strasser

Biggin Hill has become the 206th British airfield to sign up to AOPA's 'Strasser Scheme', under which aerodromes agree to waive fees for GA pilots forced to make emergency or precautionary landings.

There remain only six airfields in the country now refusing to join the scheme, which aims to promote safety by removing the fear of excessive charges from pilots

who are making decisions on unplanned diversions, often in stressful circumstances. For initiating the 'Strasser Scheme' and for his persistence over the past 11 years in getting almost every UK aerodrome to participate, AOPA's Channel

Islands Chairman Charles Strasser was awarded the 2010 Civil Aviation Authority GA Safety Award.

Apart from initiating and promoting the scheme, Charles Strasser also mediates in case of disagreement between a pilot and an airfield over whether fees should be levied.

Biggin Hill had previously declined to join the Scheme, saying it was a de facto

participant and had adopted its tenets independently. The airport's Managing Director Jenny Munro has now decided to formally commit the airport to the Strasser Scheme.

Charles Strasser says: "This is very welcome, and my thanks go to Ms Munro. I obtained considerable help in achieving this long-sought signature from my fellow flying Rotarian John Bowden, and I extend my grateful thanks for his help in negotiations."

The Strasser Scheme was born after the CAA produced CAP 667, which warned of the dangers of 'press-on-itis' and urged aerodromes to remove obstacles to easy diversion. CAA CAP 667 9.2 (c) says: "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."

While making the recommendation, the CAA made no move to take the matter further. So Charles Strasser, a member of the AOPA Board, took it upon himself to sign up aerodromes to a scheme under which they agreed to comply with the recommendations in CAP 667 9.2 (c). The Ministry of Defence was quick to commit all RAF, Navy and Army air bases to the Scheme and they have proved invaluable to aviators in trouble. Over the past 11 years Charles Strasser has succeeded in getting all but six aerodromes to participate (Heathrow, Gatwick and London City have not been approached). He has also mediated during differences of opinion between pilots and airfields. These have been pleasingly rare, and there has been no suggestion that pilot misuse of the Strasser Scheme has been an issue.

The six hold-outs are Belfast International, Cardiff, Carlisle, Leeds-Bradford, Luton and Manchester. ■



AOPA 2011 AGM

2.00 p.m. Friday 16th September 2011
at the Victoria Charity Centre
11 Belgrave Road, London, SW1V 1RB

The formal notice follows:

THE BRITISH LIGHT AVIATION CENTRE LIMITED

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45th Annual General Meeting 2.00 p.m. Friday 16th September 2011

1. Apologies for absence
2. To confirm the Minutes from the 44th Annual General Meeting
3. To receive and approve the Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2011.
4. The election of Directors to the Board of Management. The following Directors are due to retire by rotation: Geoffrey Boot, John Pett, Chris Royle and Charles Strasser. Geoffrey Boot, John Pett, Chris Royle and Charles Strasser offer themselves for re-election. The election of other properly nominated Members of AOPA.
5. To appoint as Auditors Messrs Waller & Byford, at a fee to be fixed by the Board of Management.
6. To conduct any other business which may properly be dealt with at an Annual General Meeting.

By Order of the Board

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Say again?

The safety ramifications of the use of languages other than English in the IFR system have been highlighted by an airprox over France involving a member of AOPA UK. The pilot was flying IFR at FL11 in his Cirrus when he became aware through his ACAS system of another aircraft passing close behind him. At the same time, he could hear ATC having a conversation with another pilot in French. He thought no more of it until weeks later he received a letter from the DGAC telling him he was

under investigation following an airprox and asking for his version of events.

The pilot contacted AOPA, and Chief Executive Martin Robinson became aware of a safety anomaly when he discovered that under French national law, a Frenchman is entitled to speak French in France whatever the circumstances. This law is the product of national angst at the creeping encroachment of the English language, but it does not sit well with the requirements of aviation safety. ICAO's Paris office is trying to persuade the French to adopt an English language requirement in the IFR system, at least in the busy sectors, but so far there has been no agreement.

"It makes a mockery of ICAO's insistence on English language proficiency," Martin said. "I can understand French or other languages being used in VFR flight, but in the IFR system it's vital that everyone understand what's going on at all times. Because this pilot did not speak French he was unable to build a picture of the activity around him, to the detriment of his safety and that of others."

AOPA assisted the pilot in the preparation of his response, and he later received a reply from the DGAC which indicated that the file on the incident was being closed. He remains unaware of the details of the airprox. ■

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Members Working Group goes on the road



The AOPA Members Working Group moved to Coventry Airport for its May meeting, on a grey day which discouraged flying in – the long journeys some members had made by road encouraged discussion of tele-conferencing, which has since been tried on an experimental basis and shows promise.

The meeting was held in the Airbase museum offices at Coventry, and if you haven't been yet, it's well worth the trip. They have a fantastic collection of aircraft, including the Air Atlantique fleet, which they endeavour to keep airworthy. Museum's the wrong word for it, really – it's a working engineering hangar which just happens to keep aloft some of the most iconic aircraft in the country. They have the world's oldest jet, and you can get rides in their

Rapide. Have a look at www.airbasecoventry.com and make plans to drop in when you're in the area.

The MWG meeting was chaired by Chris Royle, and members included James Chan, Auri Stephenson, Richard Warriner, Pauline Vahey, Timothy Nathan, Nick Wilcock, and Pat Malone. AOPA Chairman George Done was present – Martin Robinson was in Lebanon.

The group discussed a wide range of topics, starting with preparations for the AOPA Bonus Day at Duxford on September 10th; there's been a review of what went well and what went less well last year, and this year should be smoother. Auri Stephenson remarked that she'd been at White Waltham when Martin Robinson had delivered the 'Robinson Roadshow' – it was a superb presentation and enthused a lot of people, but there was nobody there to take memberships so an opportunity was lost. It ought to be possible to

dragoon a volunteer into dispensing memberships, perhaps the AOPA Regional Rep or just a passing AOPA member...

The website has been updated, looks much better and has more functionality – have a look at www.aopa.co.uk if you haven't been on for a while. Chris Royle said there was a new volunteer on board, Alex Berry, and thanks were due to James Chan, Mick Elborn and Mike Cross. More work needs to be done, and some of it is in hand.

Heavy-handed police handling of GAR submissions came in for discussion; this is something member John Murray has been engaged in. It was suggested that a 'crib sheet' stating exactly what is and is not required could be produced for every AOPA member to produce to police if unreasonable demands were made by police.

A discussion document on 'AOPA past and future' was circulated briefly before being deferred until everyone had had a chance to read it; the situation with the AOPA Regional Reps was also touched upon. The AOPA office has taken responsibility for administering the reps, and there have been suggestions that they could usefully be got together for a meeting. Plans were laid to experiment with teleconferencing, using a hub operated by Timothy Nathan – who also updated members on the situation with the onerous Olympic Games airspace restrictions in the Home Counties.



Top: the unique aircraft at Airbase include a Canberra, DC-3 and DC-4

This photo: some of the members at Coventry – James Chan, George Done, Auri Stephenson and Richard Warriner

George Done reported on the Maintenance Working Group, which he said was getting quite busy as a result of EASA's Part M maintenance requirements. Maintainers feel oppressed, he said; they are subject to unpredictable inspections by authority figures who are often out of the airlines, who are sent out to do their inspections after a one-week course and who are highly variable in their approach.

Other topics discussed included communications, the magazine, and the workings of EASA on FCL issues. ■

What is AOPA?

The AOPA Members Working Group has suggested that the background of AOPA be explained from time to time in this magazine because there are a lot of misconceptions about what the Association is and who runs the show.

AOPA is a not-for-profit organisation that is owned entirely by its members and owes nothing to any corporate body or agency of government. If anyone asks you who owns AOPA, you can say that you do – presuming of course that you've paid your subs.

AOPA's stated aim is to defend all forms of general aviation from unreasonable restriction from whatever source, and to make the best possible case for its members who may find themselves in conflict with the authorities. It also mediates between owners and engineers, airfields and pilots, flying schools and students – any aviation-related matter.

AOPA's strengths lie in the fact that it takes no money from any regulator or state authority and can thus represent pilots without fear or favour; it represents all of general aviation rather than one segment; and it is an integral part of a global entity, which is vital in an increasingly global industry and regulatory structure.

AOPA, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, is the trading name of the

Virtual members' meeting

The Members Working Group's first teleconference was facilitated through Timothy Nathan's 'Gotomeeting' hub, for which chairman Chris Royle and all members extended their thanks to him. Given that it obviated the need for a trip to White Waltham for all concerned, it worked out very well. There were a couple of minor equipment glitches, people sometimes got stepped on and it calls for a different moderation technique in order to ensure that everyone can say their piece, but communication was relatively straightforward – which is fitting, because communication was the main topic for the discussion.

The idea was to bolster AOPA's system for disseminating news between magazines. It was agreed that this has to be done without imposing any more work on the office and in particular on the Chief Executive; it might be possible to do a monthly, or even weekly, enews for the UK if someone can be found to do it. At the moment, because of the publication schedule of the magazine it may be four to six weeks before a formal AOPA or IAOPA communication is issued on a particular topic.

This person would have to have some

journalistic knowledge, and could also help with the magazine, whose editor Pat Malone made the point that even though the magazine seems to give a comprehensive account of what AOPA's doing, it's not really doing so – meetings such as those of the Instructor Committee and the Executive Committee are very rarely mentioned because he can't get to them, and more help would be useful. To this end, Pat agreed to put an appeal for a suitable person (someone who is politically and aviation savvy with some journalistic skills and abilities) in the August edition of

GA (see adjoining notice).

All members like the magazine and it's seen as a significant member benefit. Although reading journals and newspapers on iPads and the like is becoming more common, there are many advantages to the conventional printed page. The importance of clear and timely communication with members was reaffirmed.

Teleconferencing, it was thought, can augment but not replace face-to-face meetings; single topics can be discussed, although there's a limit to how many people can get in on a debate. There's a tendency to defer to the most forceful, which has to be guarded against. All in all, a very good start. ■

Help wanted

A major part of AOPA's work is explaining to the membership what you're getting for your money. It's all well and good rushing around trying to ensure that general aviation is not ground to dust and that pilots' and owners' interests are defended, but the members also need a full account of what's being in their name and with their money. For this we have the website www.aopa.co.uk, the bimonthly magazine *General Aviation*, a monthly news bulletin that goes to AOPA's local representatives, occasional ad hoc emails to members, and a Europe-wide enews that also goes out monthly to 23,000 pilots. It's getting to be a bit of a stretch, and given that AOPA hopes to further improve its communications with members, we're looking for capable help.

Do you have journalistic or communications skills, and a basic knowledge of general aviation? Can you volunteer some time to help the Association? The subjects we deal with can sometimes be complex and arcane; can you sort wheat from chaff clearly and concisely, without waffling on like I'm doing in this 'help wanted' notice? We're particularly keen on improving our electronic media service to members. If you think you can help, contact pat@richmondaviation.co.uk. Vast rewards are on offer, largely in the hereafter.

British Light Aviation Centre Ltd. This is a company limited by guarantee, which means it has no shareholders. Instead, its members guarantee to contribute a maximum of £1 each to the creditors should the company fail.

The Articles of Association set out, among other things, who can become a member – a qualified pilot, a flying club, an associate and so forth – what the voting rights are, how the Board is elected and dismissed, how members can be expelled, the objects of the Association, the protocol at meetings etc. The Articles give the members, through elected representatives, control of the organisation and explain in some detail the required operating procedures. These Articles are governed by law and can only be amended with the consent of the membership. They're on file at Companies House.

Some elected representatives are Board members, others sit on such bodies as the Instructor Committee and influence AOPA's actions that way. Board members, who are unpaid, have traditionally been people with enough of an interest to give their time to the corporate governance of the Association.

The origins of AOPA go back to 1928, when the Council of Light Aeroplane Clubs was formed as a subsidiary of the Royal Aero Club, which had extensive social as well as aviation interests. The Council split from the Royal Aero Club after the Second World War and became independent as the

Association of British Aero Clubs and Centres. In 1966 it merged with the Aviation Centre of the Royal Aero Club to form the British Light Aviation Centre. BLAC still exists today – AOPA is its trading name.

In 1967, AOPA in the United States suggested BLAC Ltd should become AOPA UK. Increasingly, aviation was controlled internationally, and it was important to be able to influence the development of standards on an international level. Eurocontrol had been up and running since 1963 but the main target was ICAO, which had been setting international standards for aviation since 1947. ICAO was willing to recognise AOPA as the voice of general aviation if it could show that it represented six countries. Thus, International AOPA was born, and today it has 66 national AOPAs in membership.

Apart from accepting common rules, the national AOPAs have no control or influence over each other. The rules say there can only be one AOPA in each state, it has to be autonomous and free-standing, and it can not accept any government funding or control.

Many important figures in the aviation world have helped to build AOPA. Professor George Done, AOPA's current chairman who also deals with members' engineering queries, is a world-renowned expert on flutter and helicopter aerodynamics. He was an aerodynamicist on the Delta Dart project and is a former Dean of the Aeronautics

Department at the City of London University.

CEO Martin Robinson brought a new dimension to AOPA when he began helping out as a volunteer in the office in 1991. A City broker specialising in pension loanbacks, he left to become a commercial pilot before getting sidetracked. Martin brought the benefits of his commercial background to AOPA and has made innovations which many members today take for granted. He added legal services and started sitting in on CAA interviews with accused members, and revamped the members' magazine, which used to be called Light Aviation and appear in black and white three times a year. Now, as *General Aviation*, it is published bimonthly and sets a high standard for aviation publications everywhere. He has encouraged member participation, and set up the Members' Working Group.

Nationally and internationally, AOPA today is in a stronger position than it has ever been. Through AOPA, general aviation's voice is heard from ICAO in Montreal to EASA in Cologne, Eurocontrol in Brussels and in countless other forums. Internationally, AOPA-UK is part of an organisation with 460,000 members, including 23,000 in Europe.

If you have any questions about AOPA's structure or how it is run, email them to pat@richmondaviation.co.uk. ■

See you at Duxford on September 10th

Duxford, one of Britain's most fascinating and GA-friendly airfields, is staging an AOPA Bonus Day on Saturday September 10th at which you'll be able to get the most up-to-date information on the vital issues facing GA pilots in Britain, direct from the horse's mouth.

The coming year will be one of revolutionary change in GA, with EASA taking responsibility for flight crew licensing from April 8th, 2012. The CAA's Head of Flight Crew Licensing Cliff Whittaker will be explaining the changes, and you'll be able to put any questions you have

directly to him.

AOPA's Chief Executive Martin Robinson will be there to fill in the blanks in your knowledge on any other subject – and of course, Duxford is a fantastic fly-in destination, home to the Imperial War Museum's aircraft collection, and there's a discounted landing fee on the day of £7.

The September 10th event follows the successful AOPA Bonus Day at Duxford last year, which attracted some 50 aircraft and 160 visitors, and is open to AOPA members and non-members. A great programme has been put together for the 2011 day, which has five 'flavours':

- 'A guide through the flight crew licensing minefield' by Cliff Whittaker, CAA Head of FCL
- 'AOPA's views on key issues facing GA' by Martin Robinson, AOPA CEO.
- Questions and discussion – have your say.
- Meet AOPA people.
- Enjoy a day at Duxford at discount prices, with lunch included

This year the Imperial War Museum has generously provided the use of the AirSpace Conference Centre for the day. Presentations will be given in the purpose-built Marshall auditorium, with refreshments and lunch being served in the adjacent Concorde meeting room.

There will be ample time for networking and meeting old friends and new, and time

to visit Corporate members' displays – all just a step away from the mezzanine viewing gallery overlooking the magnificent exhibits in the AirSpace hangar.

The morning programme includes the keynote presentation by Cliff Whittaker followed by question time on that topic, which promises to be a lively affair. After a buffet lunch, Martin Robinson will run through AOPA's position on the key issues affecting GA. There will then be time for a general discussion and an 'Ask AOPA' session where AOPA staff and members involved in particular projects will be available to answer your questions. The presentations and discussion, with lunch, will begin with refreshments at 11.00 and run until 15.30.

Museum

A new feature for this year will be expert-led guided tours of the Museum in the morning and afternoon – perfect for either yourself, or your guests while you are attending the presentations. Additionally, Classic Wings will be offering attendees discounted flights in their de Havilland Rapide.

If you are not an AOPA member and want to know what the Association can do for you, come along. If you are a member, bring your aviation friends – family will also enjoy the day at Duxford.

A ticket for the day, including admission to the presentations, a buffet lunch, tea or coffee and discount entry to the Museum, will cost £20 per person. In addition, the discounted landing fee for all visiting aircraft will be £7. If you're driving in, Duxford is right next to the M11 and there's ample parking.

For full details and booking, check out the AOPA website www.aopa.co.uk. You can also book your landing slot on the website. ■



Above: flights in a Rapide will be on offer
Left: members at last year's AOPA Bonus Day
Below: some 50 aircraft flew into Duxford last year



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Wind turbines – again!

Strong concern is growing within GA because future safety is being eroded at many aerodromes and airstrips due to a steady increase in the number of applications for wind turbines; this sparked the General Aviation Awareness Council (formed by and originally administered from AOPA) to draw together almost all organisations and many individuals involved in the problem. The gathering was at the Royal Aeronautical Society on 20th May, which made this report just miss publication in the June issue.

The overall situation was described by Charles Henry, the GAAC Chairman, as probably the biggest single long-term problem likely to affect GA. (Note: the reference to 'long term' as most people agree that the difficulties over EASA and over airspace restrictions during the Olympics, are the more immediate concerns.) No-one present dissented from this view; even Renewables UK (formerly the British Wind Energy Association), the industry's trade body, commented that they refused to support many of the applications, as some were destined to be sited in unsuitable positions. Many proposals, however irresponsible, are easy to promote, as landowners willing to have turbines on their property are paid very substantial sums.

Regarding protection from developments that affect flight safety, there was considerable discussion about owners of airstrips not notifying their local planning authorities that they exist. Some said that such people had the responsibility to do so, while others supported those who had good cause not to publicise their sites. The key reason for this was that they wished to discourage uninvited pilots from flying in without prior notice. Whilst fully understandable, this precludes the opportunity to apply for safeguarding.

Civil Air Publication (CAP) 764 – CAA Policy and Guidance on Wind Turbines – calls for developers to consult all stakeholders and lays down recommendations for minimum distances from runways at which turbines should be erected. Unfortunately there have been numerous cases in which both these have been ignored. An encouraging outcome of the meeting, though, was that the CAA wishes to be informed when there is no such consultation or when a local authority refuses to consider a flying site's application to be safeguarded. The person to contact is Paul Askew, Renewable Energy Projects Officer, Directorate of Airspace Policy, CAA House, 45-59 Kingsway, London WC2B 6TE (Tel: 0207 453 6529).

Another significant issue is the lack of research that has been carried out on the scale of turbulence created by wind turbines. There have been many – sometimes conflicting – reports on this. Although there was some detailed investigation several years ago, it was based on computer modelling and not on practical in-flight experience. The CAA is seeking funds so that this important task can be tackled, but in today's economic climate it may not come to fruition in the near future.

Whenever there is a proposal for wind turbines (or anemometer masts) to be erected near a flying site, AOPA should be notified at the earliest opportunity. So far your association has been involved in such problems at 36 UK aerodromes or airstrips, some of which have been or are threatened with severe operational constraints or even closure. Viewed solely from the flight safety angle, AOPA is able to put forward strong reasons why aircraft and turbines cannot co-exist in the vicinity of active GA bases.

The subject affects everyone who flies GA aircraft; the GAAC is to be congratulated on bringing the matter to a head by coordinating the thoughts and problems of all parties actively involved. – David Ogilvy



More on aerodromes

by David Ogilvy

Although wind turbines continue to be in the lead on problems facing operators and users of GA flying sites, they are not the only obstructions to success that are causing concern.

High on the list is **Denham**; here various proposals for the route of High Speed 2 railway extend from blocking a safe forced landing area under the climb-out/approach path to the 06/24 runway to a later plan in which the branch line to Heathrow could cut across the runway itself. Various messages of objection from AOPA (and others) have not produced even the basic courtesy of acknowledgements, let alone responsive replies. What does this tell us about democracy?

Among a wide variety of difficulties facing owners of smaller sites, **Northrepps** is seeking support for permanent planning permission and **Slinfold** is threatened with a large number of new houses that could create a so-called 'congested area' (see Rule 5 of Rules of the Air) under the circuit. Twelve aircraft owners have been told to remove their machines from **Wombledon**, in Yorkshire, despite the absence of any alternative homes within reasonable reach. On a happier note, though, an application



to erect a substantial building on the hard runway at **Enstone**, which might have led to the airfield's closure, has been refused unanimously by West Oxfordshire District Council. Full marks to a local authority for that.

Reverting to wind turbines, these are creating potential problems at **Brighton** (the home of many significant historic aeroplanes) in East Riding of Yorkshire; also at **Glebe Farm** airstrip in Avon and an active aerodrome at **Thornhill** near Stirling. A turbine has been erected in the direct line of the runway at **Truro**, with no prior consultation, despite the local authority being fully aware of the aerodrome's existence.

We have been advised to expect a rash of new applications for wind farms, and that many are likely to impinge on operations from flying sites. The majority of these may be in Scotland, where strong winds and open spaces predominate, but no part of the UK is exempt, so AOPA is likely to face numerous calls of 'Help!' We will continue the fight for the freedom of flight, but when a threat appears, please let us have chapter and verse **immediately**. We have just lost one chance of possible success because the aerodrome concerned failed to notify us until after the deadline. To be effective, AOPA must be the first and not the last port of call. ■

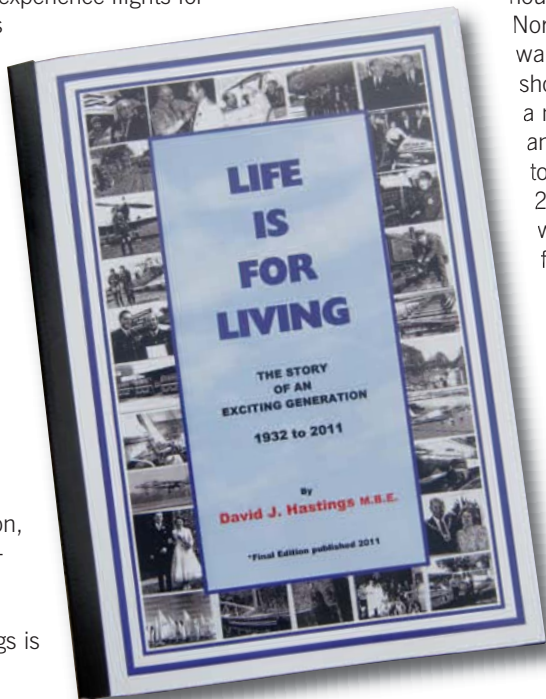
Left: the local authority allowed a turbine to be erected in line with Truro's runway

No risk, no reward

Life is for Living is the name of the book – the aviation memoir of David Hastings MBE, and the sub-title is ‘the story of an exciting generation 1932 to 2011’. Today’s general aviation pilots can read it and weep. Hastings is one of those ‘doers’ who seem to be getting increasingly rare. A PPL since 1963, he was a Director of Norfolk and Norwich Aero Club, worked on the Air League Youth Training Scheme, served the Scout movement for 24 years flying many air experience flights for scouts and Girls Venture Corps, was a Duty Officer with the Royal Observer Corps, Chairman of the 2nd Air Division USAAF Memorial Trust... the list would fill a book. He was a founder of the Norfolk Vintage Pilots Association, and he’s a long-time AOPA member.

David Hastings is a gentleman of

mature years, and it’s difficult to get away from the fact that as far as flying is concerned he and his contemporaries had the best of it. His flying history would profoundly shock civil servants and no-win, no-fee liability lawyers. As a PPL he flew the Wallis autogyro without benefit of lessons, mixed with Lightnings at Coltishall and went night flying at Swanton Morley with goose-neck flares. His twin rating, on a Gemini, cost £6 an hour. When Norfolk and Norwich Aero Club wanted to hold an air show they did so with a minimum of fuss and no bureaucratic tomfoolery, attracted 20,000 people to watch club members flour-bombing and made a ton of money for the club treasury, and his birthday treat was a flight in a Lightning during which he joined the 1,000 mph club and got plenty of stick time. He once flew a Whirlwind in exchange for a go in the Wallis, and I



love the story of how, coming home from America, he was picked up at Heathrow in the club’s Rockwell Commander, parked at Gate 50.

There’s so much more in his book, including descriptions of his Transatlantic flight in the CAF’s B-24 Diamond Lil, and of how he almost killed himself more than once, which is against the law now. What has the next generation to look forward to? Accidental death is a tragedy, but the greater tragedy is the suppression of the spirit, and in aviation we have gone too far in seeking to nanny the appetite for risk out of our youth. If we all die of old age having lived the lives of shopkeepers, we will not have lived at all in the sense embodied in Hastings’ book. Can the tide be turned? – Pat Malone ■



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Annual General Meeting

The 45th Annual General Meeting of the British Light Aviation Centre Ltd, trading as the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association of the UK, will be held on Friday 16th September 2011 at The Victoria Charity Centre, 11 Belgrave Road, London, SW1V 1RB, commencing at 2.00 p.m. The formal announcement and agenda of the AGM appears below.

A set of the financial accounts for the year ended 31st March 2011 will be provided in advance of the meeting on the AOPA website www.aopa.co.uk together with the minutes of the 44th AGM and brief personal details of the members offering themselves for election and re-election. These data will also be available at the AGM.

Any member wishing to elect another member to the Board of Management must provide notice in writing or email to the AOPA office at least 35 days in advance. A statement of willingness to serve will be expected from the proposed member together with appropriate personal details. Proxy voting is permitted, either by nominating in writing or by email a member who will be present at the AGM as proxy, or by nominating the Chairman as proxy.

Following the formal business of the meeting, there will be time for informal reports from the Chairman and CEO and for general discussion.

Tea, coffee and sandwiches will be available for those attending from 1.00 p.m. and it is expected that the meeting will finish by 3.30 p.m. *The VCC require an attendance list for security purposes, and it is therefore important that members who intend to attend are requested to please let the AOPA office know in advance, either by telephone (020 7834 5631), email (info@aopa.co.uk), or by post to AOPA, 50a Cambridge Street, London SW1V 4QQ. This is equally important in planning for the refreshments.*