

BMAA goes west

Dorset & Somerset MC hosts the top brass.
Andy Oliver reports

SINCE the Journeyman and the Balladeer are still not speaking to each other, having taken opposing positions regarding the 'Goddin Amendment' on BMAA participation for all syndicate members, Andy Oliver went solo to a recent Devon & Somerset Microlight Club meeting.

President Bernard Bader called for order and some 50 buttocks were placed firmly on seats with as good a show of co-ordination as one can expect at a DSMC bash. The Red Arrows we may not be, but we can put on a good display of hospitality at Dunkeswell, fabled 'Home of the Brave'.

On this cold December evening we had two guest speakers: BMAA Chief Executive Geoff Weighell, and Chief Technical Officer Ben Syson. Taking off into a gentle headwind of beer-laden exhalations, Geoff opened with some aerial photos of the vast office complex that is the beating

heart of microlighting in the UK. From this three-storey semi, just over the road from the Deddington Arms Hotel, a team of 10 (and two dogs) represents the 4000 members.

Geoff appeared pretty pleased to be at a meeting where there was beer instead of tea and biscuits. He must consume a lot of tea and biscuits in his line of work: I counted eight committees and bodies on which he and his team stand.

The BMAA acts as the conduit and lubrication between the eclectic mass of jolly, free-spirited pilots and the iron wheels of bureaucracy. The BMAA is not a regulator, but it smoothes the impact of regulation through intelligent presentation of intelligent argument.

Who is attempting to keep the majority of microlights inside Annex two of the European Aviation Safety Authority classification scheme?

Give yourself one mark if you answered 'the BMAA'.

Who is fighting for the right for the pilots of most types of microlights to check fly their own aircraft, subject to 150h as P1 plus minimal training, and defending self-declaration for medicals? Not the BMAA surely? Wrong.

Who lobbied successfully for the hire of microlights? 'Fraid so.

Who (in a co-ordinated response with the light aircraft, gliding, hang-gliding, and other canvas and string aviation communities) gave strong opinion in our mutual best interest on transponders and the pricing of the radio spectrum?

And who negotiated for the reduction in the Stansted transponder mandatory zone, and challenged other airspace changes proposed for Glasgow, Norwich and Salisbury Plain? This is an issue here in the west, with Exeter Airport's proposed revision almost meaning that one will be infringing EGTE while flying the EGTU circuit.

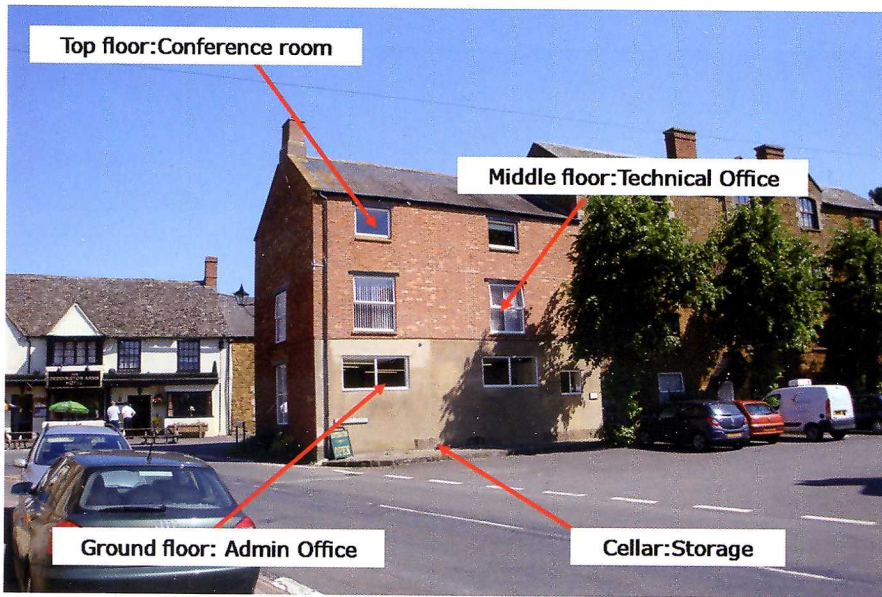
It was pointed out that airspace infringements might appear to be increasing because airports are logging every incident so as to support their own argument for airspace changes. Simultaneously, the BMAA needs to show that its members are responsible, and a threat to neither them-

Insurance guide

Control Type	Built / use	Hull Comp	Pilot Comp	Hull Ground	Third Party	Passenger	Student cover
450kg Three-Axis	Factory	C, O, T	O	C, O, T	C, O, T	C, O, T	C, O, T
	Home	C, O, T	O	C, O, T	C, O, T	C, O, T	C, O, T
	Instruction	C, O, T	O	C, O, T	C, O, T	C, O, T	C, O, T
450kg Weightshift	Factory	C, O	O	C, O	C, O, T	C, O, T	C, O, T
	Home	C, O	O	C, O	C, O, T	C, O, T	C, O, T
	Instruction	C, O	O	C, O	C, O, T	C, O, T	C, O, T
115kg Three-Axis	Factory	O, T	O	O, T	O, T	N/A	O
	Home	O, T	O	O, T	O, T	N/A	O
	Student solo	O, T	O	O, T	O, T	N/A	N/A
115kg Weightshift	Factory	O	O	O	O, T	N/A	O
	Home	O	O	O	O, T	N/A	O
	Student solo	O	O	O	O, T	N/A	N/A
115kg Parawing	Factory	O	O	O	O, T	N/A	O
	Home	O	O	O	O, T	N/A	O
	Student solo	O	O	O	O, T	N/A	N/A
Footlaunched Single Seat		O	O	O	O, T	N/A	O
Footlaunched Two Seat		O	O	O	O, T	O, T	O
Footlaunched Instruction		O	O	O	O, T	O, T	O

KEY
 C = Crispin Speers & Partners (CSP); 020 7977 5699
 O = On Risk; 08000 43 93 42
 T = Traffords; 0870 9000 331 (primarily for BMAA members)

PLEASE NOTE
 1 This is a general guide only. Insurance companies will assess each risk individually before deciding whether to offer cover.
 2 Not all insurance policies are the same. Read the small print carefully!



Top: The luxurious, modern BMAA office complex, home of blue sky thinking
Below (l to r): Ben Syson, Geoff Weighell and DSMC's Bernard Bader and Tom Brearley

selves nor others. Hence the work with the Airspace & Safety Initiative's Communication & Education Programme (ACEP), the General Aviation Safety Council (GAS-Co), and the Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme (CHIRP). Hence more tea and biscuits.

CTO Ben Syson took over for the second leg of the evening. Different territory, but similar comprehensive scope and extensive benefit to members. His team issues or renews 2000 permits to fly in an average year. Even those with only passing familiarity of engines and airframes will recognise the balance between letter and spirit of the law that informs the work done on type approvals (both factory and amateur builds), amateur completions, modification and repair approvals and continued airworthiness.

At engine off, approval was shown by the audience, via warm applause.

Over the years the BMAA has established the trust of the authorities. It is authorized to certify aircraft and modifications with manufacturers. It does this at about 50% of the CAA fee. It is consulted by the Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB).

It is contracted with the CAA to specify pilot training and administer licens-

ing, annually recommending that some 400 tyro bird-blokes and bird-birds be awarded the NPPL. It was clear that the BMAA does multiple important things for our sport, with very thin resources.

Questioned on the 'Goddin Amendment', Geoff Weighell was pragmatic and open in his answer. In effect, 'we moved too fast for due consideration of the implications, the merits of the arguments and the feeling of the members.' So with admirable humility the motion was withdrawn, pending the consideration judged due. Now that's what I call member orientation.

Readers can peruse the BMAA website for publications, information, chapter and verse. Indeed, you are encouraged to do so, since it might cut down the 40 or so daily emails the BMAA receives from people (and I quote) who 'can't be ar**d' to RTFM. If this is a new technical term for you, three of the words are 'read', 'the' and 'manual'.

It is 113 miles, as the Thruster flies, from Deddington to Dunkeswell, and us yokels appreciated the time and effort made by our representatives, who stated that they would be pleased to speak at other clubs. We certainly recognize a good thing when it is explained to us. □

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