



# UAVS Association

By Gary Clayton, Director

## Working Towards Seamless Operation of Manned & Unmanned Aircraft

The Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Systems Association (UAVS) is run by members for its membership and relies totally on funding provided by its members through subscriptions and sponsorship of Association events. It is therefore not restricted by the conditions of any public or government funding and can remain independent and impartial. Its independence means that it can work alongside UVS International within the European arena in striving for similar goals.

UAVS has, since the last edition, changed its Director and Chairman of its Council. It is now headed up by Gary Clayton of EADS, supported by Chris Day of Thales as Vice-Chairman, bringing new ideas to the fore designed to take the Association to the next level of effectiveness.

The Association recently organised the first of a series of «Members Only Industry Days» which will take place 3 or 4 times a year. The initial event was held at Thales Aerospace Crawley where members were given insight into the Hermes 450 and Watch Keeper programmes and their capabilities. The event also included the opportunity to network and form new business relationships and was well received by all who attended.

UAVS is the only trade association in the UK recognised as representing the interests the UAS industry by the UK Government. Through this recognition, the Association has been granted unparalleled access to Government departments, regional development agencies, regulators and other UAS interested parties.

The Association has represented UK industry for a number of years and will continue to do so on:

- the CAA's:
  - UAS Steering and Working Groups
  - the National Air Traffic Management Advisory Committee (NATMAC), and
  - Surveillance and Spectrum Working Group (SASWG)
- the SBAC's Autonomous Systems Strategy Group, and
- the General Aviation Consultative Committee (GACC).

Through its involvement in these groups the Association can ensure both large and small companies' interests are promoted at the top level and disseminates this information on future intentions through its web site to its members.

The impetus provided by UAVS and the Industrial Partners on the Autonomous Systems Technology Related Airborne Evaluation & Assessment (ASTRAEA) Programme over the last 3 years in engaging the UAV community and the airspace regulators has resulted in a significant revision, with UAVS' input and help, of the UK Civil Aviation Authority's Guidance Document on Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operations in UK Airspace, colloquially known as CAP 722.

This Third Edition of CAP 722 was released by the CAA on 28 April 2008 and included new chapters on Autonomy, Sense & Avoid and Civil Operator Qualifications, and major revision to many of the existing chapters. This update to reflect current thinking, systems and requirements does not mean that policy is not evolving and further editions of CAP 722 can be expected in the near future.

The ASTRAEA Programme, originally conceived in a UAVS Council Meeting and headed up by key UAVS members, was completed in December 2008 with a series of synthetic environment demonstrations to the UK regulators, sponsors and UAV industry being provided in October 2008. These demonstrations impressed even those who had been involved in the programme and the consultations leading up to the demonstrations themselves and provided physical evidence of how far this innovative project had progressed. An initial evaluation commissioned by the sponsoring UK Regional Development Agencies concluded that in terms of collaboration and collective effort the ASTRAEA Programme was an outstanding success even if the expected economic benefits had not yet materialised and commented that the Strategic Added Value (SAV) was the best they had seen.

As much as the project had addressed some key regulatory requirements if an unmanned aircraft is to operate in non-segregated airspace, it also threw up a whole new gamut of issues that now need to be resolved. The same Industrial Partners are now seeking funding to continue this essential research as the next 3 years will be extremely important in the evolution of the industry.

UAVS and the ASTRAEA Programme has maintained pressure on the importance of securing the correct bandwidth for secure UAS operations and initiated a UK request at the 2007 WRC for an agenda item at the next World Radio Conference in 2011, this received widespread support and preparations are well underway to provide the necessary research outputs. Preliminary submissions have now been made based on input from various UAVS members and UAVS is quietly confident that this request for dedicated world wide bandwidth will be accepted.

If UAS are to be allowed to operate on a routine basis within controlled airspace, it is a prerequisite that the level of safety of the unmanned aircraft system is equivalent to that of manned aircraft systems. Not only does the control system and its communications system need to be secure but the aircraft and its pilot must be certified to fly. With these parameters the industry can then realise UAVS' original objective of enabling the safe, effective and integrated operation of UAS in both military and civilian environments.

For more information on the UAVS Association, please visit its website at [www.uavs.org](http://www.uavs.org) or contact:

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