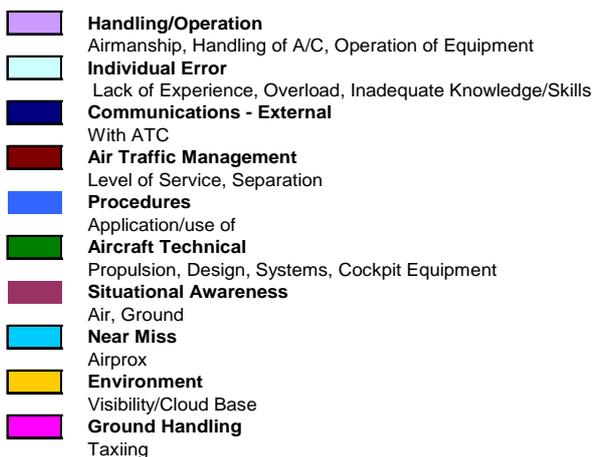
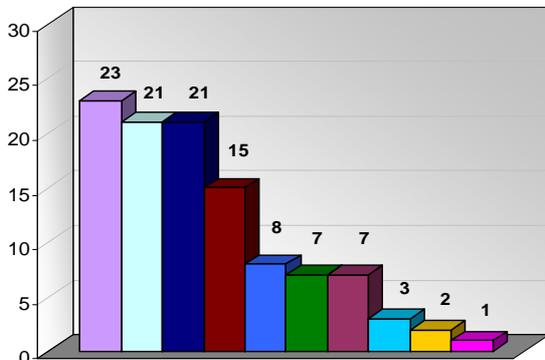


CHIRP GA FEEDBACK

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GA REPORT ISSUES - MAY2010 - APRIL 2011



GA REPORTS RECEIVED LAST SIX MONTHS: 25

AN UNPLANNED INFRINGEMENT

Report Text: I flew my Mooney to Northern Ireland to deliver a musical instrument that I had sold. I had arranged for the buyer to meet me at the airfield to collect the instrument. When he arrived he brought two of his grandchildren and they wanted to look around the aircraft which I was happy to facilitate. I then thought that it would be a real treat for them to go for a short flight around the area and offered to take the three of them flying which they gladly accepted.

It is unusual for me to take people on an unplanned recreational flight away from my home base. There was also the added complication that I fly on an American licence and the rules for night flying are different. In order to undertake this flight legally, I needed to be back on the ground within an hour of sunset and this was a factor in me not doing my homework sufficiently well to

be 'fully' aware of the airspace restrictions around the Belfast area.

I did undertake the necessary pre-flight checks, briefed my passengers and departed the airfield, expecting to be below the base of cloud at about 2,400 ft which had been the case when I had arrived about an hour and a half before. I had a current 500,000 CAA chart with me but I was relying on my Garmin 695 to display the airspace, as it was relatively dark in the aircraft by this time. I continued to climb and called the airfield on the radio that I was going to Belfast Approach and would call back on my return.

As soon as I called Belfast and before I even had time to give them my position they told me that I had infringed their airspace. I was shocked that I had infringed Controlled Airspace, I don't make a habit of it and with the workload of trying to sort out the situation, it seemed to get worse when the controller said that he would be filing a report and then Belfast City came on the radio and said that I had infringed their airspace too and they would be reporting me.

I fully accept responsibility for these infringements and I am not making any excuses. It was poor flight planning on my behalf which came about because I was rushing to get airborne and back on the ground within 60 minutes of sunset. Lessons definitely learned and I hope that this can be an example to other pilots to learn about flying from that.

The only comment I would make is that to be told twice that a report would be filed had a very dispiriting effect on me both then and after the flight. I am a relatively experienced pilot who flies in most weather and uses my Instrument Rating privileges routinely. I was upset with my own stupidity in not taking sufficient care in flight planning; this coupled with the distraction resulting from the controller's proclamation that I was going to be reported for an infringement definitely had a deleterious effect on my flying after that. In fact I did a baulked landing because I approached the airfield too fast which in a Mooney is definitely not a recipe for a good landing. I ended up having to do a go around and even the second approach wasn't up to the standard which I normally expect from myself.

I think that it might be worth NATS considering instructing their controllers not to tell pilots that they are going to file a report on them until after the flight is ended. Of course it is essential for controllers to maintain separation between aircraft and whatever is necessary to achieve this objective must be done but to upset or distress a pilot unnecessarily could cause a bad situation to become much worse.

CHIRP Comment: This report is a good reminder that even an experienced pilot can make a basic planning

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error and then become distracted by an unanticipated in-flight situation.

NATS advise that a review of NATS policy regarding the filing of a Controlled Airspace infringement and the notification to the pilot concerned has recently been undertaken.

In general, the policy is to seek to identify an infringing aircraft by means other than by VHF RTF, record the details of the infringement and conduct a subsequent investigation after the flight/series of flights had been completed. NATS emphasise that it is their policy to provide reassurance to a pilot in the type of situation described in this report; however, in some cases, it might be necessary to advise a pilot of the infringement at the time.

If you suspect that you might have inadvertently entered Controlled Airspace, advise ATC as soon as possible and seek assistance.

A GREAT DAY FOR FLYING.. HOWEVER?

Some balloonists will be already aware of this incident; however, the reporter's 'lessons learned' relating to pre-flight planning and exercising good judgement apply equally to other areas of General Aviation.

Report Text: As part of celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first female aviator to gain her FAI licence in 2010, I had planned a balloon flight on Christmas Day and had invited two women pilots-under-training (PuTs) to join my husband (instructor and long standing examiner) and me.

We planned to try a new launch site right in the heart of Bristol; the weather looked very promising and the team was called 'on'. As temperatures were around minus 5 degrees a burner test was essential and proved that pressure was indeed very low. But we also detected a leaking tank (alas the spare tank was left at home!). Nevertheless we thought we had sorted the problem with a bit of silicon spray and commenced with our flight preparations.

Calling Bristol ATC, we got no reply. Maybe they were closed? Indeed the sky was empty but beautifully blue! On this flight, we let the PuTs do the inflation and most of the flying under our joint supervision.

The take off was fine, light north-westerly winds took us right over the Avon river and on a good track just skimming the rim of the ATZ zone. Once airborne I called Bristol ATC again, but no reply. Made a blind-transmission and asked my student to climb to our permitted altitude of 1,500ft where we found that the wind direction had veered significantly, tracking us to the right towards the zone. Temptation arose in our minds: if the airport was indeed shut, why not fly towards the zone? A chance that is rarely available - except if we have another ash cloud of course!

But at that same moment we heard a hissing noise and found that the tank was leaking again. With only two tanks on board this was a situation not to be messed with. We shut the gas off and started to look for the next best landing site. What a shame though to cut such a beautiful flight short and not make the attempt to overfly the airport!

We landed safely near a roundabout on a grass strip in one of the outskirts of the city after 25mins in the air. Lessons Learned:

1. Always carry enough tanks with you (have one as stand-by ready in the car/trailer) in case there is a problem. And treat any gas leak definitely as an emergency!
2. A 'no-reply' from ATC does NOT mean the airport is closed, so treat airspace as open unless you are able to confirm the contrary. Do not get tempted to think "it's a lovely day, great weather; let's fly on and cross a closed airport!" (In retrospect the decision to land saved us from pushing on towards the airport and possibly infringing the airspace)
3. Read the NOTAMS before ANY flight! We as balloonists who mostly fly only in a very confined area and normally don't venture towards different airspace tend to forget this quite essential piece of flight information. Had we thought about checking the NOTAMS, we would have known that it would have been OK to cross Bristol airport!
4. If you instruct students, be even more on the cautious side! YOU should be the example of good airmanship; of treating potential emergencies as a serious safety issue. Don't ever play them down and adhere to any air traffic rules and air law!

UNEXPECTED AEROBATICS

Report Text: I flew to ZZZ and approaching the airfield became aware of a conversation on the radio that was not the usual "pilot to A/G operator" or "pilot to local traffic". I eventually realised it was an aerobatic pilot and his trainer on the ground. They were practising above the final leg of the circuit. They acknowledged my presence between themselves and apparently moved out of the way; I landed without incident, though a bit nervous.

On another occasion I transited the same ATZ with the acknowledgement of the A/G operator and on this occasion I had to warn an aerobatic pilot that he was getting very close to me.

I'm a relatively low hours pilot and I have no idea what the protocol for this is but I noticed a similar incident reported in CHIRP issue 45. Here the CHIRP comment stated that the airfield authority should ensure that these activities can be co-ordinated with normal operations and should promulgate procedures. You also stated that using the airfield VHF to mentor aerobatics was inappropriate.

On the occasions described, the airfield authority apparently took no role in the activity, not least the absence of a NOTAM. For all I know there was a sign on their notice-board but that's not much use for arriving pilots. In one case the mentor got involved on the radio but the A/G operator did not.

I know that A/G operators have very few absolute responsibilities in law but if they are not required to manage movements then it is not appropriate to allow aerobatics in the circuit without adequate notification.

In contrast, I have seen aerobatics much more professionally handled elsewhere; this has included

NOTAMs, radio transmissions to close the ATZ and even a ground tannoy if I remember correctly.

Lessons Learned: I have learnt to keep eyes and ears open but I think ZZZ needs to re-consider aerobatics in their ATZ.

CHIRP Comment: If aerobatics are being flown in the overhead of an active airfield, the airfield authority has a responsibility to provide adequate warning to other pilots. This may be by promulgating the information in a NOTAM, in the AIP and/or Flight Guide entry and also by alerting pilots communicating on the airfield R/T frequency. It should be noted that an Air/Ground operator does have an obligation to notify other aircraft of such activities.

In relation to R/T communications, mentoring/instructing using an assigned Air/Ground RT frequency is not an appropriate use of that facility.

This matter has been raised with the airfield concerned and brought to the attention of the CAA.

IFR ROUTING PROBLEMS

Report Text: On an IFR flight plan from France to White Waltham via JSY ORTAC SAME (filed plan to Norry).

On entering Solent airspace London handed me over to the Solent controller at FL70. The controller then vectored me and descended me to 5,000' Solent QNH. On reaching the edge of his TMA he stated "Resume your own navigation". I indicated that I was in IMC; "You might want to call Farnborough".

Farnborough was very busy. When I did get identified and with a traffic service, the controller advised "multiple glider contacts". I am left with very little choice but to descend through cloud layer looking for possible gliders which most likely will be just below the cloud layer.

This situation is not unique; this is the third occasion in past year that this has happened to me. Talking with colleagues, who have similarly been "dumped" the problem seems to be with Solent. It can be done correctly if co-ordinated properly. For example, yesterday returning from Angers on an IFR flight plan the very busy London controller was excellent keeping me at FL80 until GWC then asking me to descend to 4,000ft on direct track to ODIMI while handing me over to Farnborough on their approach frequency 134.350 not the busy LARS frequency. Farnborough then descended me into their overhead at 2,400ft for a VFR recovery back to White Waltham.

There are published arrivals for Blackbushe, Fair Oaks etc which I use for White Waltham. I would be happy to fly more track miles to avoid the Lasham and Popham overheads and descending from CPT would certainly work for White Waltham.

IFR flying is supposed to be safer but these uncontrolled terminations of the flight plans are dangerous; a more systematic process needs to be established for the IFR/VFR transition.

An agreement or procedure needs to be established for the termination of IFR procedures into the London Area.

CHIRP Comment: It is important to note that the difficulties that the reporter experienced are not related to a specific Air Traffic Services Unit but are directly

associated with the difficulty of integrating the routing of non-scheduled IFR arrivals into airfields in the vicinity of the London TMA with the high intensity opposite direction standard IFR departure routings from the major UK airports; this is particularly the case for IFR arrivals from the southwest, such as that described in this report.

To assist pilots with planning IFR arrival routings to UK destinations including some minor airfields, NATS publishes a 'Standard Arrival Routes' document; this can be accessed via the NATS AIS website [AIP page]. If your destination is not referenced in the SRD, planning your routing in accordance with that to an adjacent airfield in the SRD will result in a higher probability that ATC will route you accordingly. An additional advantage of using an SRD published route is that your flight plan will be accepted by the Flow Control Management Unit, Brussels.

The specific circumstances of this incident were referred to NATS and were the subject of a detailed investigation. This identified that a contributory factor was that there was no direct controller-to-controller telephone link between Solent and Farnborough; arrangements are now in hand for a direct line to be installed. Also, two important points for pilots emerged from the investigation. The first is that co-ordination of inbound IFR traffic from the southwest below FL90 with London Terminal Control is not normally possible due to the outbound Standard Departure profiles. The second is for pilots to make their intentions known on initial contact with Solent to assist the controller in planning their routing/descent profile.

In reviewing this incident the GA Advisory Board noted that releasing aircraft to descend in the vicinity of Lasham, with its associated high intensity gliding operations, did not accord with good practice. The Board endorsed one of the conclusions of the NATS investigation that a procedure needs to be established to avoid situations such as the reporter experienced.

One final point, as the reporter notes, if you do not wish to descend in an area of high VFR traffic density and if necessary will accept a longer routing, advise the controller accordingly at the earliest opportunity.

INCORRECT AIR/GROUND FREQUENCY

Report Text: With three miles to run to my home base I changed to the Air/Ground frequency and advised my intention to join the circuit downwind with a blind call to ### Traffic. Before take off I had received a radio check of '5' and the R/T reception throughout the flight had been excellent.

Calling 'downwind', 'base leg', 'turning final on 27' checking right for any traffic and then confirming 'Final 27' I landed normally and vacated the runway to park and shut down.

Within a minute or so another aircraft landed and shut down, the visiting pilot approached me and enquired if I had been using my radio in the circuit. I confirmed that I had, but he then said he had heard no transmission and had had to abort his 'long final' approach, as I had 'cut him up'. Having had radio problems recently, yet convinced that my radio was now working correctly, I did nonetheless apologise for my apparent bad airmanship.

However, he then asked me which R/T frequency I was using and I told him, only to learn that he had been using the old frequency which had been changed twelve months previously and widely advertised. Nevertheless he was convinced that his latest flight guide update still referenced the old frequency. He had also phoned for PPR earlier but had not asked for, nor had been given, the new frequency with his permission to land.

As it happens the pilot had been escorting another, less experienced pilot, who had carried out a 'touch and go', which I had observed as I was on my downwind leg, again with no R/T transmission as he too was using the old frequency.

Lessons Learned: Never assume anything!

1. Always check the frequency in use when contacting an airfield for PPR. Frequency changes do happen and can cause problems such as this. It is the pilot's responsibility to use the correct frequency.
3. Always thoroughly check visually for other aircraft on final or long final when on base leg. The other aircraft was there but I did not see him.

CHIRP Comment: The details of unlicensed airfields are not promulgated in the UK AIP; thus, Pilot flight guides and websites are two of the principal sources of information; however, it is important that the information is up-to-date. If it is not, notify the airfield operator.

Also, as the reporter notes, it is good practice when contacting an airfield prior to departure to enquire whether there have been any recent changes to local procedures.

Lastly, if for whatever reason, it is not possible to establish two-way RTF contact the best course of action is to make a standard overhead join or follow the recommended local circuit joining procedure.

HELICOPTER DOWNWASH - BEWARE

Report Text: I flew into ### on a cross country. On the approach I noticed a Robinson R22 helicopter hovering near the edge of the runway [approx. 10 feet].

As I rolled out on my landing run I passed near to the R22. I then had difficulty controlling my aircraft during the landing phase due rotor downwash on the landing run. Luckily no contact with the hard runway was experienced.

Lessons Learned: Next time I notice a hovering helicopter near the runway I will carry out a go around and complete another circuit.

CHIRP Comment: The downwash effect from a helicopter is considerably more powerful than that from a fixed wing aircraft of a similar weight. As a guide, the downwash from a helicopter that is hovering or hover taxiing extends to a minimum distance of 3 x the rotor diameter (not radius) in still air and may be significantly greater in a downwind direction.

For large military helicopter types a greater separation is highly advisable for light GA types.

BACKTRACKING

Report Text: Last summer, after refuelling at a Northern England airport, I requested taxi instructions for

departure to my destination in Scotland. I was told to hold at the Run-up Area and wait for a student GA pilot holding at C [mid-point of the main runway] to depart. The wind was favouring a take-off on Runway 25.

I heard ATC instruct the student to backtrack Runway 25. I then witnessed his aircraft turn right into the runway, not left. ATC acted in an exemplary manner; the controller immediately pointed out the error to the student and told him to reverse his direction back towards the threshold of Runway 25. He then instructed me to take-off immediately from Holding Point C on Runway 25 (using the runway available from that point), which I did without difficulty or delay.

My report relates to the lack of definition anywhere in CAA documentation of the term 'backtrack'.

I have repeatedly asked the CAA to define the word 'backtrack' in CAP 413 - Radiotelephony Manual, where it is alluded to several times, to no avail.

Why is it that such a simple improvement to our vocabulary of Pilot-Controller Communication cannot be incorporated into CAA Civil Aviation Publications for the general enhancement of safety on the ground?

CHIRP Comment: The commonly accepted definition of the term 'Backtrack' is to enter the runway in use and taxi in a direction opposite to the direction of take-off/landing.

It is reasonable to expect that, if the term 'Backtrack' is in common use, a definition of the term should be promulgated in CAP 413 and the Manual of Air Traffic Services - Part 1. The reporter's suggestion has been referred to the CAA.

AIRPROX REPORTING

Report Text: At a recent CAA Safety Evening, I mentioned that I was still troubled by an Airprox which I had experienced at Oxford in 2007 and which I feared could easily happen again. I was advised to write to CHIRP about it.

I am enclosing a copy of my letter about it to the Airprox Board who would not take any action because I had not reported it immediately.

CHIRP Comment: An enquiry to the Director UK Airprox Board (UKAB) revealed that although the close encounter had occurred in August 2007, the letter to the Airprox Board was sent in January 2008. The Director UKAB has emphasised the importance of reporting your intention to file an Airprox as soon as practicable, including by R/T immediately following an incident. This will enable the Airprox Board to initiate tracing action if required and to obtain the relevant VHF/radar tapes, which are only retained for 30 days.

The incident in this report is being followed up separately.

ANYTHING TO REPORT?

Due to associated costs, we are no longer including report forms with GA FEEDBACK. If you would like to submit a report to CHIRP, you can do so by submitting an electronic report via our secure website www.chirp.co.uk or download a report form from our website and post/fax it to us (see P1 for our contact details).