

GENERAL AVIATION FEEDBACK

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EDITORIAL

In the last edition of FEEDBACK we published an article entitled **Protocol for Airspace Infringement** about the way ATC speak to infringing pilots over the RT. We pointed out how important it is for pilots to try to put the cause of the incident to the back of their minds and concentrate on the flying and landing safely before trying to analyse the flight. The same report was included on the agenda for the CHIRP Air Transport Advisory Board in July in order to bring the issue to the attention of all UK ATCOs and FISOs through Air Transport FEEDBACK.

Two comments were made that you may find interesting. First, professional commercial pilots have the same difficulties as GA pilots in avoiding the distraction that comes from unusual occurrences, particularly those resulting from their own performance. Second, infringements cause great stress to ATCOs who are required to separate commercial traffic from intruders by breaking them off standard arrival or departure procedures. If the controller sounds a bit sharp, it may be because he/she has suddenly found themselves in stressful situation. I confess this latter point had largely passed me by until now. The bottom line of course is to minimise the number of infringements. Unless you intend to enter controlled or restricted airspace, plan to avoid it by sensibly wide and deep margins and stick to your plan.

You will hopefully be aware by now that CHIRP is switching from hardcopy distribution of FEEDBACK to electronic distribution. Many of you have taken the trouble to write to us about the change – thank you, all. The majority of comments have been to regret the passing of the paper version. We regret it too. Ideally we would have both hardcopy and electronic distribution, but we simply cannot afford the printing and insertion costs any longer and this will be the last hardcopy.

The positive aspect of this is that registered pilots should all receive an e-mail with a link to download the latest edition of FEEDBACK. I do understand that many people prefer a paper version but I hope you will give the electronic versions a fair trial. As always, I welcome your comments by any means you choose but the pigeon loft has only limited capacity.

Ian Dugmore – Chief Executive

ENGINEERING EDITORIAL

As the end of summer approaches many in the general aviation community think about putting their aircraft into storage for the winter.

In my role as Deputy Director (Engineering) within CHIRP, I have heard from several inspectors regarding the importance of effective aircraft winter storage. There is always a need to ensure adequate steps are taken to ensure the safety of the structural elements of the aircraft. Like all machines, aircraft are vulnerable to the effects of corrosion regardless of the material used during manufacture. Many machines will have had effective corrosion inhibiting treatments applied during the build phase. For others, corrosion protection is limited. Preventative treatments applied effectively can help slow the corrosion process, although they never stop it completely, and they need to be checked periodically for integrity. Sadly there is not a one size fits all solution to the problem; each case needs to be assessed individually.

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Owners should take some simple steps to ensure their aircraft has been set up to overwinter. Clean the aircraft and inspect all structural attachments for wear and fatigue. Check the application of protective inhibitors, corrosion preventative treatment, painting etc. as they all have a part to play determined by the material used. Rectify any problems found at the earliest opportunity. Ensure the aircraft is stored (if possible) in a clean dry place or area. Try to ensure the area selected will not lead to the aircraft being damaged during storage.

The technical departments of associations such as the LAA and BMAA can offer good advice and often publish articles on overwintering and the effects of corrosion. Take the opportunity to read some back copies of their magazines for helpful advice.

All these steps will help ensure your safety next spring when you take the aircraft out of storage and start to think about getting back in the air.

Bruce Hunter – Deputy Director (Engineering)

CHIRP 5-Year Review – a ‘Call for Comments’

The latest 5-Year Review of ‘Aviation CHIRP’ is underway. To help the Review Committee with its work, we would greatly value views from air traffic controllers, cabin crew, engineers and pilots, whether or not you have ever filed a CHIRP report. Comments are invited on the extent to which CHIRP improves safety for aviation communities in the UK.

Do you know of a safety issue that was raised through CHIRP which would otherwise have remained unknown or would not have had the right prominence?

What does CHIRP provide uniquely or in addition to other safety reporting mechanisms?

What are the benefits of the CHIRP programme, to individual people and to the community as a whole?

Please comment freely, not just in relation to the questions above. You can send an email either to the usual CHIRP address – mail@chirp.co.uk – whence it will be forwarded or you can email directly to the Review Committee’s unique address – chirpreview@gmail.com

Please contribute to this Review, as soon as practicable and ideally by the end of October 2014 as the Review has to be completed by mid-December.

Thank you in advance,

Peter Hunt

Review Committee Chairman (Independent)

COMMENTS ON GAFB 59

Report Text: I am writing in response to your editorial in GA FEEDBACK Issue No.59. I am pleased to see that a review on joining airfields is under way, as I have had occasional misgivings over the standard overhead join. I was particularly pleased that you put in print the need to look out, listen out, and fly defensively and BEHAVE IN A COURTEOUS MANNER. Not many people spell out the last point! I look forward to hearing the findings in due course.

CHIRP Comment: The CAA Visual Circuit Working Group has concluded its work and the results will inform the development of the Skyway Code. First though, the [CAA's VFR guide](#), which contains a mixture of airspace classifications, Rules of the Air and air traffic procedures will be updated to include changes resulting from the Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA). Updates to the VFR Guide will be suitable to be imported into the Skyway Code, which will provide guidance on the Rules of the Air in plain English with diagrams and examples just like the Highway Code - hence the name Skyway Code. In time the document could include all sorts of practical advice including how to join and leave a circuit etc. and clear up some of those anomalies in how the Rules of the Air apply (or not!) to aircraft in the circuit.

COMMENTS ON GAFB 60 – NOTAM INFORMATION

Report Text I print out NOTAMs at our local airfield on a daily basis, using a figure of 8 route centred on our Airfield, to obtain the information, and post them on the notice board for the use of all members. For a long time there was a NOTAM for "kite flying at []". Despite having searched several times, I never found this kite. There are always NOTAMs for formation flights out of our local RAF stations, even when the RAF are on holiday. There are usually NOTAMs for military exercises, admittedly in our area, as well as out to sea, well outside the route of my hypothetical flight. I rarely see, or hear the aircraft involved in these exercises. There are a number of other NOTAMs posted daily, for events that simply do not occur every day. Many of "my" pilots have stopped reading the posted NOTAMs, and

just ask me if anything has come up that may be of interest. Most being unnecessary repetitions, automatically posted, and just occupying space which could be better used, they merely distract attention from those which should be noted. For my imaginary 30 mile trundle, I am invariably warned of Chart errors at Manchester. Now, the supreme stupidity, I am warned to avoid the Sea of Azof, and the Ukraine as a whole. As long as this apparent "cover your [Six]" mentality exists on the part of officials responsible for NOTAMS, pilots will fail to spot the important NOTAM, but the authorities can say, "It was NOTAMed, you should have seen it".

CHIRP Comment: It is essential that all aviators make themselves familiar with relevant NOTAMS before flight. The practice of nominating a competent and responsible person (e.g. a club CFI) to read and promulgate local area NOTAMS on a chart is sensible and widely used; it just requires a few precautions to ensure that the geographical and date/time boundaries are also clearly displayed.

Many pilots find it is easier to access NOTAM information presented graphically on web-based flight planning systems but it is not necessary to construct a route to conduct an area search; web-based planning systems and the AIS website allow point/radius searches to be conducted around selectable locations or geographic points. It is also important to take some time to explore how to get the best from NOTAM searches; on the AIS website selecting those relevant to VFR flights will reduce the number of returns compared with VFR and IFR. All that said, CHIRP agrees that much unnecessary information is currently included in NOTAMS; this superfluous information serves only to distract from what is relevant and important. We look forward to the outcome of the CAA project to address the issue.

UNSERVICEABLE COMPASS

Report Text I had booked a Cessna 152 and, for the first time for months, all the grass areas were fully serviceable so circuits were in order. The aircraft snag sheet listed a leaking compass and operations staff also drew it to my attention, adding that the scale was virtually unreadable but, as I only intended to do circuits, I considered that the compass was not really necessary. After fuelling the aircraft, I went through the usual procedures and on completing vital actions I called, "Ready for departure", which was acknowledged.

I entered the runway, set the DI to runway heading as the compass was unserviceable, and took off. After a couple of circuits I began to feel uncomfortable when I found out how often I wanted to refer to the compass even when doing circuits but was unable to reset the DI when downwind. Then on calling, "Final for [R/W]" the A/G operator informed me that I appeared to be on [a different runway] so I went around again, cursing myself for such a mistake, and so decided to call it a day after my next landing. Accordingly, I completed the circuit and landed full stop.

Afterwards it was clear that I had greatly underestimated the importance of the compass even for circuits, and when I called on final I had not yet used the available visual clues to locate the temporary threshold markers in use at that time, which would have shown me my error.

Lessons Learned: I was wrong to accept the aircraft with an unserviceable compass. In future I shall take more time to think through the full consequences of unserviceable equipment of any kind before accepting an aircraft.

CHIRP Comment: We are grateful for the reporter's open and honest report and agree with his lesson learned. Operating without a compass, even in the circuit, can sap a pilot's capacity to a considerable degree. The report demonstrates another well-known Human Factors phenomenon: an initial misperception is very hard to correct; having mis-identified the landing area, the pilot's mental model was set until some over-riding factor [in this case the call from the A/G operator] broke into the model. The absence of the compass removed one of the safety cross-checks that could have allowed the pilot to realize his error without the external intervention.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF OPERATION

Report Text I flew into an airfield where a military Volunteer Gliding School (VGS) also operates. On the day in question civil aircraft were flying right hand circuits with the VGS operating circuits in the opposite direction. I was on base leg and had almost completed the turn onto final, when a VGS aircraft called "Final." I could not see any other aircraft ahead and was concerned that the VGS might be higher than me in my blind spot, in which case a go-around could cause me to climb into his path, so I reported that I too was coming onto final. Having no visual contact still, I was about to ask for the position of the No1 aircraft when I spotted the VGS aircraft ahead and to my left just turning onto final approach, so I initiated a go-around immediately.

It was later explained to me that the VGS pilots call "Final" as they start their long oval turn from the downwind leg, a position that Flying Club and other civil aircraft would describe as "Late downwind." I did not know this and failed to see the VGS aircraft because I had been looking in the wrong place. I was not aware that the RAF "Final" call is made from the civil "Late downwind" position, so I should like to see this information published in the airfield information, perhaps with a cautionary note. It would also be useful to have a simple diagram of simultaneous VGS & civilian circuits showing their relative circuit size, shape, and height and radio positional calls.

CHIRP Comment: This report highlights an issue that regularly catches out civilian pilots. Almost all military circuits are flown as ovals with the 'final' call made immediately after the aircraft commences its descending turn from downwind. [CAA Safety Sense Leaflet No 26](#) covers the subject well. Although military procedures add another

element of complication for civilian pilots, disparate operations such as those reported are not confined to military airfields; gliding, parachuting and powered flying are often co-located and different circuit patterns are routinely available for aircraft with significantly different levels of performance.

Aerodrome authorities must ensure there is an authoritative document readily available for resident pilots and visitors alike which contains clear instructions and explanations of compatible procedures. Pilots have a responsibility to take the time to read and assimilate this document and to comply with its content. Once both these are done it can be quite a lot of fun and very satisfying to operate safely into a busy aerodrome where there is a lot going on.

UNEXPECTED GUST DURING TAKE-OFF

Report Text I recently upgraded from a flexwing P&M GT450 to a QuikR. This is a great wing and I had been becoming familiar with the different handling characteristics especially take-off and landing.

With a 2 day window of fabulous weather forecast, I decided on a trip with a friend to Gigha, a small island off the coast of Kintyre on the west of Scotland. We landed in perfect conditions and the following day did some island hopping and returned to Gigha again in near perfect conditions late afternoon. I had done plenty of take-offs and landings on the Gigha strip which is 07/25, grass, bumpy in places and 720 metres long x 60 metres. There is no wind sock but there appeared to be a slight touch from the South West and 25 was the obvious runway. On this take-off, I had reached take-off speed on 25 when a southerly gust of wind caught the port side of the wing and the aircraft veered right toward a side fence. Fortunately, I reacted quickly, pushed the bar out and the aircraft lifted off and cleared the fence probably only just. A normal climb out followed and I landed safely on the strip with no further problems. I took off and landed again no problem. I then noticed a small wind turbine to the south of the field about 100 metres away facing south and spinning merrily. Very strange but a gust from that small sea breeze was what had hit me and the small turbine had been a clue that it was there.

It is hard to believe that I would or could have done anything different. It was the fact that it was so unexpected on a beautifully calm day that still surprises me. Ironically, the next day when I returned to [my home base] a fresh to strong wind was almost directly across the Gigha runway from the south. This forced me to angle across the runway for take-off. I was 2 up and loaded and the plane took off without a problem.

Lessons Learned: I assume that I must have been hit by a sea breeze gusting periodically from the south. This would have been impossible to predict and the lesson learnt is never to be complacent at any time in flight but particularly in take-off and landing regardless of apparent weather conditions. Take time to make sure all checks are complete and this will ensure the aircraft is properly set up to cope with unexpected issues during the take-off and landing. Don't be distracted from this task by anything or anyone.

The QuikR has different take-off and landing techniques from the GT450 I'd flown for a long time and I'm still getting used to that with around 15 hours and 20 take-offs landing so far. What might have happened is that at take-off speed, the nose wheel which will be light has hit a bump on the grass runway and this has angled it toward the fence. I will have reacted by straightening it instinctively and hence maintained the new direction. In retrospect, I feel I may have been in awe of the beauty of my surroundings and this led me to be slightly casual/complacent on that particular take-off. I reacted in time but may have reacted quicker and more safely had I anticipated the unexpected.

CHIRP Comment: We are indebted to the reporter for another honest report; we agree with his analysis of the events and lessons identified.

Although the GT450 and QuikR are similar in appearance, the latter has a wing designed for higher speeds. In the gusty conditions described by the reporter it would be possible to take off at minimum speed and with minimum roll authority. In such conditions microlight instructors suggest it would be wise to build a higher than normal airspeed on the ground to give better control authority after lift-off. All aircraft types, no matter how similar in appearance have individual handling characteristics and anyone switching types should obtain 'differences training' as part of the transition.

REFUSED TRANSIT OF AIRSPACE

Report Text My wife and I were en route to Manchester Barton for the first time, having ensured we had obtained all relevant information about their procedures. We were flying a microlight which we have owned for a number of years and both of us have a current radio licence which we use on most flights.

At about 10.40 local (25 minutes before we landed at Barton) we requested a transit of the Manchester zone whilst we were on a heading of approx. 360° passing Ashley just before Crewe. Our request was for a transit from VRP Holmes Chapel to VRP Irlam. The response from Manchester Zone was, "Remain clear of airspace, use low level corridor", with which we complied. As I was then preoccupied with the route change and I did not wish to increase any in-cockpit stress I did not pursue the matter any further. The reason for requesting the transit was due to the fact that we were:

A. Flying in unfamiliar terrain but had done a fair amount of planning familiarising ourselves with VRPs using both maps and photographs.

- B. As P1, I was unhappy about flying at such low altitude in such a confined space.
- C. I felt that operating in such a zone would be a useful experience which might well be needed in the future. We had got the ATIS which had just been updated to: - Alpha.
- D. I did not think that the zone was very busy and got the impression that we were refused as a matter of course.
- E. How is one expected to learn the procedures within the increasing No. of zones if one is refused entry into them as a matter of course?
- F. I thought that if a controller of the zone was in contact with us directly both of our situations could be made easier, as on my last MATZ penetration I had been requested to turn west to help separation. That worked out fine.

Manchester ATC comments: The request for the routing made by the pilot is highly unusual and would not normally be issued to a fixed wing aircraft for the following reasons:

- The route passes through the 23R and 23L climb out at 3-4nm, likewise the 05L/05R final approach track.
- Extensive co-ordination is required between the Manchester Radar controller and Manchester Air Controller(s).
- Co-ordination is required between Manchester Radar and the Barton AFISO.
- There are issues with aircraft leaving controlled airspace (Manchester CTR) in the immediate vicinity of the Barton ATZ. There have been instances of aircraft infringing the Barton ATZ and aircraft calling Barton late and not complying with the standard overhead join.

When requested, Manchester will often give helicopter traffic a direct routing from the south to Barton but this will invariably involve a routing to remain west of Knutsford and not above 1000ft, which would not necessarily be an appropriate clearance for a fixed wing aircraft.

Generally the Manchester approach controller will assist VFR traffic as necessary, particularly in the event of poor weather, pilots uncertain of position, unfamiliar with airspace, student pilots, etc. In this case the pilot showed a professional attitude in terms of pre-flight planning and, when refused transit, did have an alternate plan and did not pursue the matter on the RT but followed up the issue through the correct channels.

CHIRP Comment: There are always a number of factors to be considered when selecting a route and CHIRP does not encourage pilots to push themselves into situations in which they are uncomfortable. However, use of the Manchester transit corridor is not considered to be particularly demanding. That said, there was no harm in seeking a zone transit for all the positive reasons listed by the reporter; the airspace is Class D like many other zones where transits are routine, albeit with some rerouting, often through the aerodrome overhead. While there is concern that some units seem to deny zone transits as a matter of routine, transits can take some time depending upon the cruising speed of the aircraft ; also a route through the overhead at Manchester is likely to pass over a number of built up areas leaving few options in the event of an engine failure. Of the things that can be said with some certainty, it is impossible to judge from the RT on one frequency whether a zone is busy or the impact a zone transit might have. The route requested would have crossed the runway centreline at 3-4nm and Manchester has an average of 500 movements each day. Although there was no requirement for the controller to justify the refusal on the RT, it would have been nice to have given an explanation. However, if an explanation is not forthcoming, the reporting pilot was absolutely correct in not pursuing it over the RT. Perhaps the most important lesson to come out of the incident is the necessity of having prepared a 'Plan B'. By all means ask for a zone transit but always have an option planned, and studied, in the event that the transit is denied.



If you would like to submit a report to CHIRP, you can do so by [submitting an electronic report](#) via our secure website or [download a report form](#) from our website and post/fax to us.



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