

CHIRP GA FEEDBACK

Issue No: 71

1/2017

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EDITORIAL

There are a couple of notable and related themes in this edition of FEEDBACK: changing a plan while airborne and the stress induced by knowing you have made a mistake. Two pilots report changing their plans in flight and subsequently infringing, or getting close to infringing controlled airspace. Preparing for a flight, including planning the route, should routinely include options to cater for bad weather, delayed departures, and available diversions on route. 'Free navigation' (without a line on the chart) is fraught with risk of infringing controlled airspace, ATZs, glider and microlight sites, NOTAMed areas and danger areas. And the concentration required to conduct free navigation successfully can detract from keeping a good lookout and the enjoyment of the flight. All good reasons to include optional routes and activities in the original plan.

In both the reports referred to above, ATC saved the day if not the blushes of the pilots involved. Kudos to the controllers and thank you to the pilots for sharing their lessons with us. But making a mistake in the air makes us prone to additional errors if we dwell on what happened during the rest of the flight. It's hard to do but we have to put mistakes and unplanned occurrences out of our minds until after landing. A sense of proportion might help. If you are squawking (with altitude on) and are listening out on a frequency where you can be contacted by ATC you have already demonstrated your safety-mindedness by participating in a safety system that is designed to minimise the effects of errors. Of course it is embarrassing but don't compound the original error by making another one through lack of concentration. After landing is the time to examine what happened, submit or cooperate with the drafting of a MOR and share the lessons with fellow aviators via a CHIRP report.

A recent comment on FEEDBACK asked whether Mandatory Occurrence Reports (MORs) were an over-reaction to some of the events reported recently. The answer is no! Nobody welcomes unnecessary paperwork but MORs are not punitive. They are a method of gathering information and data. The list of classifying occurrences is set out by EASA under Implementing Regulation ([EU 2015/1018](#)) which became effective on 15 November 2016. The CAA receives about 20,000 MORs each year and on receipt classifies each one on a risk scale of A-E. Some reports prompt investigations but the majority simply provide data that can be used to identify problem areas and provide supporting evidence for regulatory changes. Being the subject of an MOR or submitting one yourself is simply being part of the safety system.

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And a final thought. When an unusual or undesirable event occurs there can be good reasons for announcing it over the radio. It might prompt the pilots and controllers involved to make a mental note of their circumstances at the time. This is the logic behind encouraging pilots to announce an Airprox as soon as they become aware of it. However, unless it is essential, avoiding references on the radio to the requirement for follow-up phone calls, investigations and reports will help avoid the distractions referred to in the paragraphs above.

Ian Dugmore – Chief Executive

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BENEFITS OF LISTENING SQUAWK

Report Text: Flying west into sun on a good VFR evening, my intention was to route over Bovingdon, Tring, past RAF Halton, and out to Waddesdon Manor (NW of Aylesbury) and return.

I only tend to fly with map and planning, rather than iPad inflight systems. I folded my current 1/4mil so Enfield Hertford was East, and Stevenage Leighton Buzzard at the Top, Heathrow south, which fitted the route nicely. Lines plotted.

Conscious of the proximity of Luton, and complicated airspace to West, I elected to set 0013 and monitor 129.55 shortly after departure, per listening squawks. Approaching Cheddington airfield, I noted Ivinghoe Beacon (spot height marked on map 817) and noted, as my folded map showed, that the CTR at the surface would remain South if I diverted from my plans and routed direct from Cheddington to the Dunstable 'Lion', for my passenger's sightseeing benefit, then turned round and came back again to Cheddington, before continuing on my original plan to Aylesbury. I even pointed out to my passenger that the map showed this.

I turned East and moments later I heard my callsign on the frequency from Luton's controller. I replied. He asked my intentions and said that I was entering (or had entered, I forget in the heat of it) Controlled Airspace, and that I was to turn North West immediately. I did. Luton were using RW26 and I was 10 miles approximately West, so well away from the 'action'. Actually I was very startled by what I'd done and I wasn't sure how I could have done it. I reversed course and returned to base without completing my flight to my final turning point

Lessons Learned - Listening squawk was a saviour. I guess I was being monitored and I was called as soon as I was heading their way. Where I'd folded my map, the CTR D lettering over the centre of Luton town, was exactly on my fold and was overlooked. Looking at the Airspace boxes around Tring and Dunstable which are complex, I noted that I was close to but north of the CTR, starting at SFC level and below the box over Dunstable which I read as starting at 3500. I "assumed" that gliders would operate in clear Airspace, up to 3500.

Even looking at this small slice of airspace over Dunstable now, in my lounge, it's still not really immediately clear where the Airspace is. I can see a very light pink shading in this box but also the bold CTR D SFC 3500 with the arrow pointing to it from BNN VOR leading me to believe that I was outside the surface restriction. I probably saw what I wanted to see but I think the map design made it worse. The bright ambient sun necessitating sunglasses, probably concealed the light pink hue. I diverted from my original route, albeit briefly, which was clearly unwise even in excellent VMC. I knew exactly where I was and I thought I was being good but I think it's a mistake that others could easily make because I was where I shouldn't have been. It worried me even on the return leg of the flight and I hope I wasn't diverted from my primary task of flying safely but honestly I was unnerved by it (am I ashamed to say?). No, I will learn from it. I'll never do it again and the listening squawk certainly helped save anything further.

Apologies to Luton, they probably get this all the time.

CHIRP Comment: We are grateful for this report. Unfortunately Controlled Airspace is often infringed. In the 2 months from mid-Nov 16 to mid-Jan 17 NATS recorded 59 airspace infringements with 2 losses of separation from commercial air traffic. It is also unfortunate that there is no such thing as

a minor infringement. Any uncleared entry into Controlled Airspace can cause disruption and delays to the flow of traffic and the removal of controllers from their consoles while they file a report; depending upon the circumstances, controllers can be unavailable for the remainder of their shift. As noted in the editorial, ad hoc free navigation can result in infringements and mistakes can be very distracting even when, as in this case, ATC have made a good save. The reporter is right to temper his embarrassment with the knowledge that he has learned from the incident and shared his experience. Does anyone doubt the value of listening squawks?

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INFRINGEMENT OF CLASS D AIRSPACE

Report Text: I took off with a passenger on a VFR flight in my flex wing microlight, planning to overfly the city (of Edinburgh), which lies within the CTR of Edinburgh Airport. This was a flight I had done a number of times. I am familiar with the airspace, confident using the radio and working with ATC and have an aircraft with a mode S transponder.

I received clearance from ATC for my preferred routing, not above 2000ft, as expected. Unfortunately, shortly after entering the CTR it became clear that low cloud would mean we could not continue VFR, so we cut short the transit and left the CTR at our planned exit point. On exiting the CTR rather than return to the airfield early I decided we should fly south to my passenger's childhood home at Galashiels. This took us towards rising ground (up to 2000ft) so I started to climb. I cancelled the Basic Service I was receiving from Edinburgh Approach and advised them I would contact Scottish Information. I retuned my radio, and called Scottish Information who told me that Edinburgh Approach had been on the phone and to call them as I had just infringed their airspace by climbing into the CTA at 3,500ft. I descended immediately, then contacted Edinburgh Approach who gave me a Basic Service until I was well outside of their CTA. Following the flight I phoned the Tower to apologise, thoroughly embarrassed that I managed to make such an error.

Lessons Learned - There are some obvious immediate lessons that I have learned from this experience:

- 1) The primary cause of the infringement was my failure to monitor my altitude and stop my climb. I had intended to climb to 3,000ft, which would have been 500ft below the TMA base. At the point I was informed of my infringement I had reached 3,800ft.
- 2) The diversion to Galashiels was not planned, so I had an increased navigational workload in the cockpit to ensure I was on track and was concentrating on the lateral navigation rather than vertical. Though I am familiar with the airspace and have transited under the TMA many times before, on this occasion I didn't pick up the 3,500ft floor of the TMA on my chart as something to watch out for in particular. In future I need to be extra careful when deviating from my flight plan and ensure I consider vertical navigation.
- 3) There was no need to change from Edinburgh Approach to Scottish Information at that particular point. This created a self-inflicted high workload for no benefit. Changing from Edinburgh to Scottish required about 2 minutes of concentration - listening for a gap, speaking, retuning, and changing squawk, then contacting Scottish. Plenty of time for an altitude deviation to develop. In future I will only change frequency when flying straight and level. Given that I was still operating under the CTA, remaining with Edinburgh Approach would have been the better option.

In other words: Aviate, Navigate, Communicate! Beyond this, there are a couple of other lessons learned:

- 4) While inside the CTR I had been paying attention to my altitude like a hawk to ensure that I remained below 2,000ft. Leaving the CTR psychologically may have made me think that I was now out of Controlled Airspace and "released" from needing to pay particular attention to my altitude.

5) Having a transponder, and having told Edinburgh Approach my intentions to contact Scottish Information made it straightforward to resolve the infringement and minimise the impact. I habitually call for a Basic Service on anything other than the most local of flights, and will continue to do so.

6) As always, both Edinburgh Approach and Scottish Information were completely professional, and beyond Scottish Information informing me of my initial infringement it was not mentioned again. Nevertheless, it did cause quite some stress in the cockpit and my performance was impaired for at least 10 minutes afterwards. I have read in CHIRP FEEDBACK in the past that other pilots who have infringed airspace have experienced similar stress, particularly if asked to contact the tower following their flight (gulp!) or been admonished on the radio. I'm very grateful that neither of these things happened to me.

7) I hesitate to suggest what anyone else could have done to prevent something that was entirely my fault, but if Edinburgh Approach had asked if I could stay on their frequency until outside the CTA, I would have done so. I don't know if this would have prevented my infringement but it would have reduced workload and kept me on an appropriate frequency if anything did occur.

CHIRP Comment: Thank you for this thorough report and comprehensive analysis. Many infringements result from high workload and therefore managing workload is highly desirable. It may not always be possible to wait until flying straight and level to change frequency but it makes sense to choose opportune moments for discretionary changes and other actions that draw upon one's available mental capacity. Using the Edinburgh listening squawk rather than switching to Scottish Information was an option. However, in the circumstances in which the reporter was already receiving a service from Edinburgh, he is correct in suggesting that it would have been better to have remained on the Edinburgh frequency until he was clear of the TMA. Of note, and notwithstanding the possible shortcomings of electronic Apps reported elsewhere in this Edition, an in-flight airspace App would have possibly saved the day. Once again, it was good to read about the professionalism of ATC and the lack of any admonishment over the radio.

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NEAR INFRINGEMENT

Report Text: During a local VFR flight from [], my tablet's airspace App showed that the base of Controlled Airspace was FL55. I had climbed to 4600ft on regional QNH of 1017 squawking mode C when I was informed that [] Approach had complained to them that I had infringed their Controlled Airspace. When I queried [the complaint, I was informed] that the base of Controlled Airspace was FL45, so I immediately descended. During the return to [] I was asked to phone [the controlling authority] after landing.

Upon landing, a comparison of the chart on my app with my paper ICAO chart confirmed that the App was missing airway []. This airway has existed since long before this App was first released.

The conversation with the air traffic controller in [] was not at all unpleasant – he very much took the approach of it being a learning exercise for all involved. Because I had reached 4600ft on 1017 I had actually avoided an infringement by about 10ft (at 30ft per hPa the difference between 1017 and 1013.25 is about 110ft). He had been under the impression that I was flying higher than this because my transponder's altitude encoder had said so. My altitude encoder was at the time operating off cockpit pressure rather than static pressure (a plumbing fault that has since been rectified), which would account for the over-reading.

An email conversation with the makers of the App on my tablet proved interesting. After checking they confirmed that it was indeed missing [the airway], and they explained that all this data is not only entered by hand but that it needs a fair bit of tweaking to get all the airspace boundaries to align neatly. Up to now I had naively assumed that populating the database of such Apps was simply a matter of the manufacturers entering the published co-ordinates and that the software did the rest.

Lessons to take away:

- 1) Just as with general A to B navigation, do not rely on GPS charts as your primary means of airspace awareness. Use the ICAO chart as the primary source, and your App as a support aid. If you insist on using an App foremost in flight, check every bit of airspace on your route against the chart beforehand or on your own head be it if you infringe.
- 2) Do not depend upon the ATC service which you are in contact with to warn you of the possibility of infringing local Controlled Airspace, even if they do have SSR and you have mode C.
- 3) For those readers who spot that had I not been squawking mode C ATC would not have known of the apparent infringement and I would have avoided any possibility of incurring their wrath, remember that the main reason for using a transponder is the far more serious concern of collision avoidance. The displeasure of NATS is vastly preferable to an encounter with an Airbus A320 in its native environment.

In short, use every resource at your disposal, but be wary of their limitations.

CHIRP Comment: Official charts provide a definitive reference whereas 3rd party Apps must be used with caution. That said, the benefits of using electronic Apps far outweigh the possibility of shortcomings. Nevertheless, it is important to carry an up-to-date chart with the track annotated on it in case electronic devices fail in flight. Drawing the line on the chart provides an opportunity to familiarise oneself with the route and confirm it is clear of controlled airspace and other navigational hazards. We agree wholeheartedly with the reporter's remarks about value of squawking with altitude. Clearly, it is important to ensure that the altitude readout is accurate but the benefits of being conspicuous on ATC radars and the collision avoidance systems carried by other aircraft outweigh any other consideration. Finally, it was good to read that the conversation after the flight with the controller was conducted amicably and professionally.

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GLIDER IN PROXIMITY TO CLOUD

Report Text: I was routing down from [] to [] at FLO60 on an IFR flight plan. My route was one I had done before: [] - Aberdeen - Newcastle - Durham - Linton - Cranwell - BKY - []

I was receiving a Deconfliction Service from Durham as I was 90% IMC at my level with heavy rain showers and broken (7 oktas) cumulus. At the time in question I popped out of IMC into a "hole" in the clouds and to my 11 o'clock at 1/2 a mile was a glider circling in the hole in the clouds at the same level. Durham had no contact with this glider on their Radar at all as I asked. I asked for and was granted an immediate 70 degree right turn until it was felt I was clear of the traffic, when I was then released back on track.

Had the glider been 1/2 mile to the right then I would almost certainly have hit it. It was flying in what "it" felt were VMC conditions totally oblivious to the fact that other aircraft were flying in straight lines, not circling, through IMC conditions. As it is a lightweight aircraft it did not paint on radar.

Lessons Learned - The lesson to me was that even in IFR flight there is always the unexpected. A suggestion to avoid this in the future is twofold:

1. Gliders MUST always be aware that if they are surrounded by cloud towers then although they might be in VMC, the aircraft around them will be in IMC flying in straight lines from point A to point B passing from cloud to cloud and thus WILL NOT see them until it is too late.
2. Like Yachts, Gliders cannot easily be seen on radar and therefore need to augment their ability to be visible on a compulsory basis, either using radar reflectors aka yachts or with transponders so that at least something is reflected back to the ground that they are there.

It was only by chance that this glider did not have another aircraft hit it, the hole it was circling in was not that big.

CHIRP Comment: Gliders can be encountered anywhere in UK Class G airspace up to FL195. They are hard to see and don't reliably paint on ATC radars. In Class G airspace all pilots share an equal responsibility to avoid collisions. Powered aircraft are required to give way to gliders except when approaching head on, or approximately so, and there is a danger of collision; in this case both aircraft shall turn to the right. These responsibilities apply equally to flights under VFR and IFR. The reporter had sensibly agreed a Deconfliction Service for his IFR flight in IMC but the glider did not provide sufficient radar returns for ATC to alert him to its presence. Unless some form of electronic conspicuity is fitted the only reliable way of avoiding gliders is to see them. Therefore when operating under VFR pilots (both Power AND Glider) must observe the appropriate rules for separation from cloud (for flight above 3000ft: 1500 m horizontally and 300 m (1000ft) vertically clear of cloud) in order that they can see and be seen. The fitting of appropriate electronic conspicuity devices to gliders and powered aircraft is strongly encouraged.

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FORCED LANDING

Report Text: I was flying with my neighbour on a sight-seeing trip. I had fuelled the aircraft and had 9 gallons of fuel indicated. The flight was planned to last 1hr 15mins. On our return to the airfield I noted that I had 3 gallons indicated with 20 nm to run. As I made a joining call some 10 nm W of the field I looked again and noted 3 gallons still remaining. At that point the aircraft was at 1500' agl and was positioned for an overhead join. Abruptly the engine stopped. No coughing or temporary restoration of power. I entered a 50kt glide, selected carb heat, switched between the main and aux tank (noting the gauge was showing 1 gallon remaining) and identified a suitable field. I had numerous options. Selecting the best, I declared a PAN with the local military zone controller and then continued with my emergency shutdown drill, reminding my passenger to tighten his harness. He was extremely calm and remained so as I made an into wind landing on a recently cropped field. The aircraft came to a halt within 100m with the propeller having stopped just on touchdown. I turned off all switches and we exited the aircraft. I then called the military zone controller to confirm we were safe and on the ground.

Lessons Learned - I trusted my old gauge when I should have taken more fuel before the flight. I should have trusted my instincts and not believed we had 3 gallons left for such a long period of flight. I benefitted from being well versed in flying PFLs in the local area and converted my practice into a real approach and made a safe landing in a farm field.

CHIRP Comment: The reporter has correctly identified his mistake in trusting the fuel gauge. In many GA aircraft, particularly older types, dipping the tanks before flight is the only way to be confident about an aircraft's fuel state. That said, the reporter is commended for his cool head and presence of mind in carrying out a near text-book forced landing. A Mayday call would have been more appropriate than Pan, but the important point was to alert ATC and that was done successfully without compromising the priority task – flying the aircraft. Well done!

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ARTCC FREQUENCY MIS-SELECTED

Report Text: I departed Liverpool on a solo IFR flight to Carlisle, a route I had flown 8 weeks beforehand. Flying the POL4T SID, Approach passed me to the local Scottish Control frequency 128.05. After a short interval, I was further passed to Scottish 136.575, who cleared me DCT RIBEL and, later, DCT Carlisle at FL100.

The filed route follows N601 but the base of the airway rises to FL125 during the day at ERGAB. I was therefore expecting the Radar Control Service to terminate and to free call Warton for a LARS. In anticipation, I entered Warton's frequency into the standby of Box 1 (a Garmin GNS430); at this time, I was in and out of cloud, which was moderately turbulent. As I proceeded, I received no sign-off from Scottish but I thought perhaps I had misinterpreted a NOTAM to the effect that areas associated with

N601 had been extended to H24, meaning I would not exit CAS as in the past. Moreover, I could still hear RT to Scottish so felt confident that I hadn't missed a call.

As I approached Carlisle, still listening to Scottish, I called 'Ready for Descent'. The controller responded with surprise, saying that my callsign [] was not on his list. Staring at Box 1 in some consternation, I realised that 128.05 was the active frequency. I apologised and returned to 136.575. On making contact, the controller advised he had been trying to call me for 20-30 miles; in view of the extended time out of contact, it was probable that some paperwork would be coming my way. I apologised and explained that the radio had inadvertently been reselected to the previous Scottish frequency. He cleared me to call Carlisle and the flight proceeded normally thereafter.

After landing, I was told that Scottish had telephoned earlier, asking if I was on the Carlisle frequency, which at that stage I was not.

Fortunately, I was heading away from CAS during this event. However, I do realise that in different circumstances, such as the LTMA, a failure to be listening to the correct frequency could be much more disruptive.

Lessons Learned - I'm sure I'm not the first pilot, and won't be the last, to have the wrong active frequency in a radio with a flip-flop active/standby selector. My buttonology for entering frequencies is careful, but on this occasion it appears I pressed the flip-flop button first and then entered my expected next frequency, thus overwriting the desired active frequency.

Lessons:

- Check the correct frequency is still active after entering a standby frequency.
- Extra care is needed if in turbulent conditions.
- Be thorough in periodic FREDA checks - really check the active frequency. Still hearing the expected ground callsign is not enough. This is especially important in single-pilot operations.
- Listen to 121.5 when able so there is a secondary means of making contact.

Suggestions:

- When searching for a lost radio contact, ATC units could also contact the previous sector in case of inadvertent reselection like mine.
- NOTAMS (and CAS definitions) related to geographical areas should be presented in a simpler manner that can be more readily comprehended.

CHIRP Comment: The reporter has correctly identified the cause - a simple mistake that anyone could make - and appropriate lessons to avoid a repetition. When pilots do not check in or respond to calls on the RTF, ATCOs routinely attempt to make contact by liaising with the previous agency/controller; this had either not occurred or been unsuccessful in this incident. Under EASA reporting regulations ATCOs are required to submit a MOR if aircraft are out of contact for a prolonged period. Advising pilots about the need for follow up action may allow them to make a mental note of the circumstances but risks a distraction during a flight in which an error has already occurred.

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INFRINGEMENT OF DONCASTER CTR 1

Report Text: Presented with a "window of opportunity" during a period of family issues and commitments I recently planned to hire and fly a PA28 Cherokee from [] to Sandtoft. However on the morning of the flight I decided to request a change to the cheaper Cessna 150L.

I had already pre-planned the PA28 using Sky Demon GPS on a mini iPad which I now updated – I also routinely draw lines on a map and include printed data from Sky Demon. My mini iPad is an early version matched to a GNS 2000 blue-tooth device. Pre-flight, start-up and take-off were as normal and I set course for my first waypoint changing to London Information with no acknowledgement from [the departure airfield] Ground Radio.

Confirmed my first turn at Market Harborough with London Info when I realised that the GPS combination was not working, no quick solution so grab map and CRP1, find and confirm position and continue on - updating London at waypoints as requested. Approaching Gainsborough I requested descent from 3000ft to 1500ft in preparation for approach to Sandtoft and London advised me to squawk 7000 and free-call Doncaster Radar. Contact was made and as I approached the M180 I requested a frequency change to Sandtoft which was approved. Reception was intermittent but I eventually made contact with Sandtoft and requested joining and landing instructions. Reception was broken but I noted Runway 05 and the QFE. I could not see the airfield so called for clues getting no reply. By this time I realised that I had drifted further West than intended, nearing the M180/M18 junction to the North of Doncaster's Runway. Executing a sharp left 180 deg. turn, tracking back along the M180, I called Sandtoft, who replied and at the same time picked up the airfield ahead. So requested approach from left base and landing on 05, parking up as requested.

Reporting to Control I was handed a message to ring Doncaster Radar, which I had expected, but was unable to talk to the Supervisor and having passed my details was advised that he would contact me in due course. The Controller at Sandtoft was concerned that I had not received his radio messages although he had heard all my transmissions. Analysing communications on the flight up to Sandtoft I noted that conversations between other traffic and London Information had seemed broken at times but appeared of no immediate concern to me – or had I missed something?

Having re-set the GPS, checked the radio, headset and connections the return trip was uneventful apart from the continued occasional intermittent reception. Subsequent discussion with our Flying School Staff revealed that other users had experienced similar occurrences. The aircraft is due for an electronic upgrade.

CHIRP Comment: Intermittent technical faults are often difficult to resolve but should be reported and recorded in the aircraft tech log in order that pilots are forewarned of potential problems before they fly. The reporter may have been distracted by the intermittent radio reception but the incident was caused by a navigational error despite him wisely carrying a paper chart to use when there were problems with the GPS. Sandtoft is on the edge of the Doncaster CTR and beneath the CTA which has a base of 1500ft. Since the preferred join at Sandtoft is from the overhead at 1500ft there is little room for error vertically and laterally, so particular care is required in planning. The reporter might also have been predisposed to an error through the family issues he reported. Pilots might usefully consider the acronym 'IMSAFE' before flight as a prompt to consider whether there are personal factors that might affect their performance: IMSAFE = Illness, Medication, Stress, Alcohol, Fatigue and Eating.

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TAKING-OFF INTO TRACK OF LANDING AIRCRAFT (1)

Report Text: I was the pilot of an aircraft waiting at the hold to depart and noted an aircraft that wanted to use the hard runway to depart contrary to the grass runway that was in use.

Its pilot was advised that the runway in use was [], he insisted that he was going to use the hard runway. He then subsequently advised that he was going to take-off on r/w [] as he felt the wind favoured that runway. He was again advised that the grass runway was being used but he advised that he was exercising his pilot's discretion.

He took off across the track of landing aircraft which, in order to follow the airfield's circuit pattern for that runway, had to make an offset approach and would not have seen the departing aircraft.

I felt that the actions of the [departing] pilot were very dangerous and could have led to a serious accident which, being near the ground, would have resulted in a number of fatalities. The airfield was very busy with an aircraft in the circuit and numerous aircraft landing and taking-off as the airfield operators would confirm if asked.

Lessons Learned - As I was a pilot observing the actions of the [departing] pilot, I was horrified that a qualified pilot could consider such action and take such a risk. This is a case where the airfield ought to be able to instruct the pilot that he could not use the runway he wished to use in view of the danger to landing aircraft and if he continued against those instructions report him to the CAA.

CHIRP Comment: Please see the CHIRP comment for the report below.

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TAKING-OFF ACROSS THE PATH OF A LANDING AIRCRAFT (2)

Report Text: I have a very embarrassing human factors admission to make which is entirely my fault – see below.

On the day of the incident, whilst the longest runway at our local (uncontrolled) airfield was the designated in-use runway, I elected to use an alternative (into wind) runway for my take-off.

When ready for departure, the circuit was busy and another aircraft was almost ready to enter the main runway to take off. Rather than wait for it all to calm down and then take my turn, for some reason I decided to take off in between one aircraft landing and the next one, on the basis that I would only be crossing the active runway for a moment and could do this without impeding anyone else's activity. I called that I was taking-off from the minor runway, whereupon the pilot on final informed me that he was landing. I responded saying to the effect that it was OK as I had plenty of time to stay clear of him, and proceeded with my take-off which was uneventful and (as far as I am aware) so was the landing of the aircraft whose path I had crossed.

Although mathematically my reasoning was accurate (there was probably a good 15 seconds between our paths crossing), it was nonetheless unsound for several reasons:

- 1) It was a contravention of SERA.3210 (c) (4) (Right of way), which states that “An aircraft...shall give way to an aircraft landing or in the final stages of an approach to land”.
- 2) One can imagine scenarios in which some form of failure during my take-off run could result in my coming to a halt at the intersection in front of the landing aircraft.
- 3) Even with everything working as expected, my action could have negatively distracted the landing pilot during the phase of flight in which we need a high level of concentration.

I have been flying for nearly 30 years, during which time I have avidly read “I learned about flying from that” reports, GASIL reports, CHIRP reports, and books about pilot error, and take safety very seriously. And yet I can still fall victim to impatience. I have a rule with flying and driving which I failed to follow this time – if you're rushing, wait. None of us can ever be too vigilant.

CHIRP Comment: This report does not refer to the same incident as the previous report. They occurred at different aerodromes but both places provide Air/Ground radio communications services. Although the reports speak for themselves – and we are grateful to both reporters – it is worth noting that Air/Ground operators can pass traffic and weather information but “Personnel providing an Air/Ground Communication Service must ensure that they do not pass a message which could be construed to be either an air traffic control instruction or an instruction issued by FISOs for specific situations.” Aircraft commanders may elect to use any available runway provided that their aircraft movements can be safely integrated with other traffic.

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