

Biennial Hot-Topics Discussion - (Irv Lee)

(If printed, this document's latest version is: <http://www.higherplane.flyer.co.uk/bfr-ground.pdf>)

The following items provide a summary of recent known changes for private pilots in the UK, and future expectations, current in Summer 2011. This menu is provided as a basis for further discussion, research and expansion by pilots and instructors but is not claimed to be definitive or complete, and has no legal basis. Any legalities mentioned must be checked with authoritative sources. The topics, content, and information can change reasonably quickly, note **latest additions or changes are colour-highlighted**.

NOTAM checking:

- Official Site: <http://www.ais.org.uk> - Efficient use techniques e.g.: 'Narrow Route Brief' for cross countries, NRB "doglegs" via navaid offsets, and 'Point Brief' for local flying.
- **NATS Approved UK graphical NOTAM** via <http://www.skydemonlight.com> - demo, including 'traps'
- AIS freephone 0500 354802 (+44 208 750 3939) for daily warnings of Restrictions of Flying, etc.

Going Abroad: There are new systems and requirements:

- AFPEX Online System – awareness of existence and requirements to register
- Fax / contact numbers now at Swanwick. Reply fax number on faxed plans.
- The need for PLB/ELT in France, even over land (exemptions for specific categories of ULMs/ microlights)
- Factory-built (non-EASA) permit aircraft need DGAC permission to fly to France until general agreement reached (in 2011?).
- Awareness of growing (uncoordinated) Mode S transponder requirements in Europe

Charts:

- Awareness of useful auto e-mail updates alerting changes to your existing VFR charts during its period of validity – see 'VFR Charts' tag on <http://www.ais.org.uk> and sign up.

Weather:

- Newer (late 2006 design) Metform 215 gives cloud tops as well as cloud bases.
- TAFs: Newer format with date included in time groups, some extending to 30 hours

ATC Services/Transponders (See links tag on FlyOnTrack www.flyontrack.co.uk for more detail):

- New ATSOCAS in UK (Basic, Traffic, Deconfliction, Procedural Services). CAA CD has further information
- The spreading concept of 'Listening Squawks' (monitoring codes) and where trials are held around the country.
- Use of 'Charlie' (ALT) is now **expected** whilst airborne if aircraft fitted with Mode C, even when not specified by ATC. **Non-Use of Mode C when available in aircraft** is regarded as 'reckless' & considered during assessment for any prosecution.
- 'Transponder Mandatory Zones' (mode C required) under the Stansted CTA stubs.

PPL:

- Recent (AIC White 53/2011) says pilots **must** now have a JAA medical to revalidate a 'non-NPPL' rating (eg: SEP rating) or a JAA medical expired in the past year to allow for temporary loss of medical at revalidation time. Pilots using recent allowance of a full PPL, SEP rating & NPPL medical must **get a JAA medical or apply/pay for NPPL ratings before SEP rating expires**.
- 'English Proficiency' statement needed on licence if it is an ICAO compliant licence for flying abroad.

NPPL:

- All NPPL ratings follow a new revalidation scheme with 2 yearly expiry dates. Old NPPL-SSEA ratings on the rolling validity scheme (i.e. without expiry dates) are no longer valid.
- Cross-counting of hours between NPPL ratings is allowed for revalidation - see AIC White 43/2010 on the topic.

Permit Operation:

- Many permit aircraft now allowed overflight of built up areas, subject at least 1000' agl (still need to be able to glide clear).

Infringements:

- Useful countrywide 'local' VFR guides, Hot News, Useful Links, listening squawk tables and Radar Replays, pilot reports on FlyOnTrack, <http://www.flyontrack.co.uk>
- For pilots flying near the London area, a DVD of briefings, tips, gotchas, and video shots of routes is available free from NATS "VFR Around the London TMA" - see <http://www.airspacesafety.com>

Future:

- **EASA licensing from April 2012**. Nothing yet 100% definite, but some cutover period expected for current licences, possibly as far as April 2015 for private purposes (or possibly 2014 if you fly a UK aircraft on a foreign ICAO PPL). Eventually an EASA licence to be needed for flying EASA certified or EASA permit aircraft. JAA licences become EASA licences on renewal after cut over date, other conversions yet to be published. Latest CAA interpretation: <http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?gid=2061>
- **Olympics**. Wide ranging security restrictions around London July to September 2012 period, with temporary shorter restrictions over certain events away from London. Current indications mean compulsory and accurate flight plans via AFPEX (no faxing), permission codes issued for each flight, compulsory radio contact during flight, and transponders for all VFR flights within the wide London restriction area. <http://olympics.airspacesafety.com/> Also, extra controlled airspace around certain airfields for periods within that July to September 2012 period