



Microlight pilot prosecuted for flying through class D airspace

A microlight pilot, who flew illegally through Manchester Airport’s controlled airspace, causing significant delays to passenger aircraft, has been successfully prosecuted by the Civil Aviation Authority.

Air Traffic Control at Manchester Airport, spotted an unknown aircraft entering the Manchester Control Zone (CTR), at 4.10pm on Friday 20 January 2017.

The Manchester CTR is [class D controlled airspace](#), which means all aircraft require air traffic control clearance before entering the airspace.

Robert Bawn was pilot-in-command of the unknown aircraft, a Quik GT450 microlight, and he remained inside the Manchester CTR for 25 minutes. Air traffic control had tried to contact the pilot via radio, however it later transpired the microlight did not have a functioning radio. Mr Bawn had also failed to take any paper charts or electronic navigation aids.

As a result of Mr Bawn’s actions, arrivals into Manchester Airport were suspended. In total, 15 passenger aircraft were delayed, which resulted in a combined delay of 166 minutes.

Mr Bawn was not traced on the day of the offence but came forward following an appeal for information made by Manchester’s air traffic control.

Appearing at Manchester Magistrates’ Court on Thursday 20 July 2017, Mr Bawn, aged 64, of Chester, pleaded guilty to one count of flying within class D controlled airspace without air traffic control clearance, in contravention of the Air Navigation Order 2016.

He was fined £1,675 and ordered to pay the CAA costs of £750.

Speaking after the case, Rob Gratton, Principal Airspace Regulator at the CAA, said: “This is yet another example of a pilot being unprepared for a flight.

“It is essential all pilots undertake proper pre-flight planning by carefully plotting their entire journey. Backup charts should be carried and where possible airspace alerting tools should be carried.

“This incident, which caused huge stress for air traffic controllers and substantial delays for hundreds of passengers, could have been easily avoided.”

A spokesperson for Manchester Airport said: “We take any incursion into our airspace incredibly seriously and welcome the verdict.”

Notes to Editors

The CAA is the UK's aviation regulator. Its activities include: making sure that the aviation industry meets the highest technical and operational safety standards; preventing holidaymakers from being stranded abroad or losing money because of tour operator insolvency; planning and regulating all UK airspace; and regulating airports, air traffic services and airlines and providing advice on aviation policy.