

CIMP

United Kingdom National report.

By Peter Saundby.

During the year 2013 there were thirteen fatal accidents with sixteen deaths in United Kingdom general aviation. One aeroplane accident took place in Italy. These included eight light aircraft, two helicopter and three micro-light aircraft. The only reference to a possible medical cause was that following a fatal accident when an aircraft hit the water while flying in sea fog; it was said that incapacity could not be excluded, but the body of the pilot was not recovered and he had no instrument flying rating or experience. It was found after a fatal micro-light accident which hit power lines, the aircraft was de-registered and the pilot unlicensed. Following a minor accident when an aircraft left the runway with a student pressing the wrong rudder pedal, the student said that he suffered hearing problems which had not previously been apparent! Sadly in 2014 we have already suffered five fatal accidents, one being to a helicopter in Austria.

The transition to EASA medical standards continues to cause problems. The UK CAA has exercised derogation in respect of insulin dependent pilots but the problem of pilots who have had a single fit many years ago, remain on treatment and have continued flying, albeit without passengers has yet to be resolved. Medical costs are greatly increased; General Practitioners cannot grant a LAPL with limitations, so those pilots with problems have to be referred to an AME who too often refers them further for specialist opinion. Faced with large costs most give up flying (except Annex 2 aircraft) resulting in the loss of experienced oversight from aeroplane and gliding clubs. The political outcome was seen in the recent EU elections!

There have been developments of flight safety management in gliding clubs. Essentially these consist of recording every incident however trivial coupled with a no blame culture. Where established we have a ratio of incidents to accidents of 40:1, and an analysis of these incidents leads to curative instructional and supervisory intervention.

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References:

<http://www.gasco.org.uk/> <http://www.aaib.gov.uk/>