



WHAT IS THE RISK INVOLVED IN ORGANISING OR ATTENDING A UK AIR-SHOW?



The International Institute of Live Events



INTRODUCTION

in the UK air shows are part of the cultural fabric within British society, linked in part to the UK's air superiority in the first and second world war and not excluding the UK's contribution to many coalition wars over the past 20 years.

Aircraft design and engineering has a long and lustrous heritage within British manufacturing, and this can be documented by military and civilian aircraft consistently displayed in what is known as Air Shows.

From the time of writing and the publication of this report in August 2019, the UK will have a further 19 military air-shows before the end of this year. One must draw a distinction between military air – shows and display shows. Although some military air shows participate in air display, there are some shows that are quintessentially display orientated. Apart from the type of shows already mentioned, there are civilian aircraft that also have air shows.

Sometime civilian and military aircraft are combined under one umbrella and titled as an International air-show. As stated, there are many acrobatic and display shows across the UK and the most popular one is known as the Red Arrows. Even those military airmen are selected to be part of the Red Arrows, this group can be categorised as an air display team.



FARNBOROUGH AIR SHOW



The largest international air-show in the UK is Farnborough International Air-show, an event that dates to 1948. This was the first operational airport in the UK which dates back to the 1900s and was owned by the Ministry of Defence.

Farnborough International Air-Show is the largest for several reasons, not just the amount of aircraft but more importantly it's an exhibition with sales that generate in the region of £44.4 billion in new orders during the 2008 Air Show.

To put this into perspective and give you a comparison, the UK aerospace sector has an annual impact to the UK economy of approximately £44 billion in 2007. Sales in the Business Aviation sector amount to £4.2 billion annually. The Economic Impact of Business Aviation at Farnborough Airport (2009) page.57

Farnborough International Air Show draws a significant number of visitors each year and large proportion of those visitors are trade. In 2008, there were over 285,000 visitors to the Air Show and their spending at the Air Show site and within 25 miles of it is estimated at £12.65 million".

The Economic Impact of Business Aviation at Farnborough Airport (2009) page. 25 Farnborough International Airport generates £26 million annually to the local economy according to a report published by The Economic Impact of Business Aviation at Farnborough Airport (2009). As with Farnborough International Air-Show, there are a further ten airports in the UK and mainly in the south which also operate as a Business Aviation airport and deliver their own air -shows each year. As with most other airports Farnborough Airport has no restrictions on operating hours.



CRASHES AND FATALITIES AT AIR-SHOWS



1952 a jet fighter crashed into the crowd killing 29 spectators including the pilot and navigator at Farnborough International Air-show.

Over the past ten years the UK has experienced 10 air accidents at air-shows, this report will document those accidents and ask the question on how to reduce the high rate of air accidents at air – shows.

- 2007, Shoreham air show saw the death of a stuntman when his aircraft crashed.
- 2010, Shoreham air show saw pilot escaped with three cracked vertebrates
- 2011 at a military air show, aircraft crashed, pilot survived
- 2011 an aircraft crashes at the Imperial War Museum in Duxford, Cambridgeshire
- 2011 Bournemouth festival, Red Arrow T1 jet crashes killing the pilot
- 2012 Shuttleworth Military Pageant Air Show, pilot dies when aircraft crashed into field
- 2014 at the Culdrose air day in Cornwall, aircraft crashes and pilot escapes with no injuries
- 2015 RAF trained jet pilot crashes and killed at CarFest motoring event in Cheshire
- 2015 Shoreham air show saw more fatalities, when a jet crashes into four car on the A27 and 11 killed

Before the alarmist jump in and advocate banning all air shows in the UK, there is another way to address this issue. The first and primary role of any air show, is protecting the spectators from potential injury or death.



SUGGESTION TO MITIGATE THE RISK TO SPECTATORS

Airfields are designed with the requirement to handle a major accident, be that through business aviation or air displays. However, not all airfields have the same space or designated land available to cater for a major air accident as a result of an air show. Some air shows are located near high density conurbation and road traffic.

Some airports and airfields that have air shows are located on the coastal regions of the UK and with that in mind, it lends itself to air displays over the sea rather than land mass. This ultimately reduces the risk if an aircraft crashes while undertaking a manoeuvre in close proximity to the spectators.

So, should more air shows be located at coastal regions rather than in land?

For example, Clacton Air-show situated on the seafront, an air show with air display from the Red Arrows. We also have Sunderland International Air Show in the North East, attracts a quarter of a million visitors with air display over the North Sea.

Mitigated risk from injury or death, can be attributed to visiting an air show, that has air display and acrobatic manoeuvres over the sea. One must remember that events such as the ones discussed in this report come with a high-risk factor but high entertainment value. Spectators must determine for themselves how they wish to consume an event and the level of risk when measured against enjoyment.





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