

4th March 2016

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To all glider pilots

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AIRSPACE SAFETY 2016

During 2015, we wrote to you with some very important information about airspace safety. This letter aims to remind us all about a number of key issues ahead of what we hope will be a busy 2016. Thank you very much in advance for your support.

Collisions between gliders are unusual. And collisions by gliders with aircraft other than gliders are extremely rare. However, a number of high risk 'Airprox' occur each year within Class G airspace. Statistics clearly demonstrate that the mid-air collision risk increases significantly when in close proximity to an airfield. If a glider ever comes into contact with a Commercial Air Transport aircraft, we can expect gliding to change forever.

So in addition to maintaining effective lookout at all times and always obtaining permission before entering an ATZ, we all need to take appropriate precautions, including;

- plan ahead to avoid if we can the known busy areas, eg, close to or above airfields, instrument procedural areas, and instrument approaches
- or if we can't avoid, communicate by radio in good time

As previously noted, air traffic controllers have been advised how extended radio calls can be very distracting for glider pilots. We have been advised that where we provide situational awareness information, it is certainly helpful to describe our position, eg, '3 miles west of Cranfield at 2500 feet' and our intention, eg, 'climbing in a thermal before heading NE'. It's important to aviate, navigate and communicate in that order.

During late 2015, we received feedback that the number of awareness radio calls made by glider pilots at airfields with instrument traffic is increasing and that the quality of radio communication is improving all the time. We are also advised that ATC are more interested in hearing from you than what radio licence you may be using.

Those of us who use GPS moving map PDA's, Oudies, etc should upload a helpful UK airspace file that includes ILS approaches and useful airspace information. Please refer to <https://members.gliding.co.uk/airspace/airspace-files/>

Thanks for reading this important airspace safety message.

John Williams – Airspace Committee
Liz Sparrow – Competitions Committee
Peter Moorehead – Flight Operations Committee
Don Irving – Instructors Committee
Pete Stratten – Safety Committee