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To all glider pilots

AIRSPACE SAFETY 2017

During 2015 and 2016, 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 another busy year. Thank you very much in advance for your support.

An airprox is a situation in which, in the opinion of a pilot or air traffic services personnel, the distance between aircraft as well as their relative positions and speed have been such that the safety of the aircraft involved may have been compromised. Every year, there are a number of high risk airprox, ie those where good fortune is likely to have saved the day.

Collisions between gliders and aircraft other than gliders are rare. 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. We share the sky with other GA, commercial instrument traffic, military operations, drones, emergency services and others. It is crucially important that we operate responsibly to help to maintain the existing reasonable level of safety in Class G. So we all need to take appropriate precautions, including:

- Understand the airspace in which we operate and who might be flying where, including knowing where instrument procedure traffic is likely to be operating
- Plan ahead to avoid if we can the known busy areas, e.g. close to or above airfields, instrument procedural areas, and instrument approaches
- If we can't avoid, let others know we're around by talking to the controller by radio in good time
- Where carried, electronic conspicuity equipment should be switched on
- Those of us who use GPS moving map PDAs, Oudies, etc should use a helpful UK airspace file that includes ILS approaches and useful airspace information. Please refer to <https://members.gliding.co.uk/airspace/airspace-files/>
- Only utilize an airspace LoA when fully briefed on all the relevant detail.

Planned UK ½ mil chart changes noted on the NATS AIS website are; Southern 02/03/2017 (Edition 43), North 30/03/2017 (Edition 40), and Scotland 09/11/2017 (Edition 32)

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, e.g. "3 miles west of Cranfield at 2500 feet" and our intention, e.g. "climbing in a thermal before heading NE". It's important to aviate, navigate and communicate in that order. We are advised that ATC are more interested in hearing from you rather than what radio licence you may be using.

Thanks for reading this important message.

John Williams (Airspace Committee), Liz Sparrow (Competitions Committee),
Peter Moorehead (Flight Operations Committee), Pete Stratten (Safety Committee)