AIR PROX *Insight*

DIRECTOR UKAB'S MONTHLY UPDATE   February 2022

Photo for illustration purposes only

AIRPROX OF THE MONTH

Do you really know what lies ahead?

Who needs to carry a chart when you've got a tablet — maybe you…

This month's featured Airprox concerns a glider conducting a circuit detail and a military training aircraft in which the crew were conducting a mixed profile sortie including a navigational element.

In the event there was some distraction in the cockpit of the Grob Prefect and a turning point was mis-identified, leading to the aircraft flying through the gliding site's circuit.

One of the main contributory factors to this **Airprox (2021139)** was the fact that the crew was relying solely on electronic charting and didn't carry a back-up chart.

In this case the gliding site wasn't depicted on the electronic chart, and although the original plan catered for the presence of the gliding site, once the student had misidentified the turning point, there was little chance that they could have assimilated the presence of the gliding site with enough time to avoid it.

There were several important lessons identified in this Airprox, not least planning, mentoring and distraction, and it is well worth a read:

https://www.airproxboard.org.uk/uploadedFiles/Content/Standard_content/Airprox_report_files/2021/Airprox%20Report%202021139.pdf

Although this particular charting issue concerned a specific military system, there's a lesson here for everyone who plans and flies solely with reference to electronic planning and navigation aids.

- **Have you selected all the appropriate layers?**
- **Do you know what is and what isn't shown on your device?**
- **Have you planned the flight, or have you simply just input a route in the hope that it would do it all for you?**
- **Have you studied the route well enough to use your tablet as a reference or are you using it as crutch?**
- **What about needing to change the plan? Are you familiar enough with your equipment to make changes without getting distracted?**

In-cockpit aids are designed to release capacity, the amount of information available at one's fingertips is immense, they allow rapid plan and rapid replan and can certainly get you out of a pickle — however, they can also get you into a pickle if used improperly; poor placement in the cockpit can cause an obscuration issue, unfamiliarity with menus and selections can cause confusion and distraction, but most importantly one can be lulled into a false sense of security with the assumption that everything you need is available, selected and correctly configured for your needs.

Suppose it's not receiving power from the aircraft — what do you do if the battery runs out? You don't need to carry much with you but I'd say that an appropriate chart is the bare minimum and it may just be the thing that keeps you out of trouble one day.
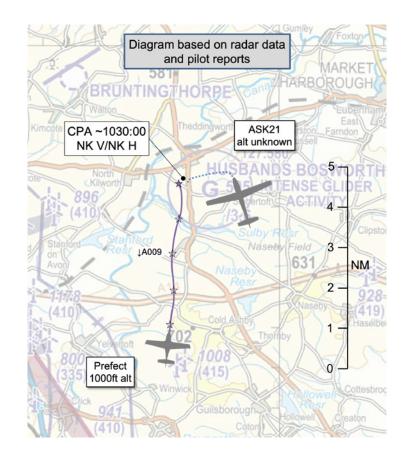
UKAB MONTHLY ROUND-UP

The year has got off to a steady start with the numbers of aircraft-to-aircraft reports sitting at or around the five-year average. But, as has been historically the case, as we move into Spring and Summer and the weather gets better, the days get longer and the opportunities for flying increase, so do the numbers of Airprox.

There were five Airprox that the Board considered to be risk-bearing out of the 21 evaluated. Two occurred in the circuit where lack of integration in the circuit, poor plan adaption and poor situational awareness were all factors.
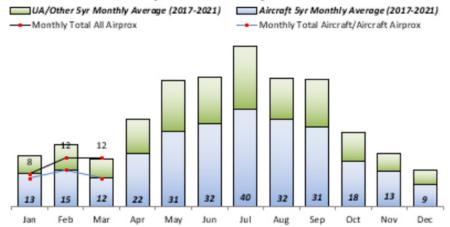
For the three risk-bearing Airprox which occurred in Class G Airspace, the aircraft involved were not communicating at all with an ATSU, apart from on one occasion where the pilot had chosen to take a FIS from London Information.

We have discussed in the past the criticality of the Situational Awareness barrier and it's worth mentioning it again with specific relation to the influence of communication on its performance: Of the 96 occasions where pilots were not communicating at all, had requested only a Basic Service or were in the circuit with an AGO, the Flight Elements Situational Awareness barrier was effective only twice and the barrier was ineffective 71% of the time.

Although I commented last month on communications, I think it's worth highlighting that there are even differences within the type of Service that you may request depending on the provider. Have you ever considered whether the Basic

Diagram based on radar data and pilot reports

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Service you have requested is being provided by a unit with a surveillance monitoring capability (radar) or is it just based on pilots' communications like London Information, for example?

However, regardless of where the Service is coming from we often see comments regarding the 'lack of Traffic Information' or 'ATC should have told me about...'. This is concerning as it a common observation which arises in most Airprox at every Board.

Unless you have requested a Traffic Service or better you should *never expect* to receive Traffic Information, and even if

you are receiving a Traffic Service it's still your responsibility to avoid other users. You should listen out for others on your frequency and in your vicinity, request to upgrade your Service if you need detailed Traffic Information, use all of those inputs to build your own mental model (your Situational Awareness) and combine this with a really strong lookout.