



AIRPROX *Insight*

DIRECTOR UKAB'S MONTHLY UPDATE

March 2023



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AIRPROX OF THE MONTH

Are you really being seen?

There's quite a variety of electronic conspicuity devices available, but not all see each other... is there any more you can do?

There's a lot of chat these days about electronic conspicuity (EC) devices, and a question that crops up regularly is 'which one's the best?'. Sadly, there's no straightforward answer and, even if there was, it's probably not for me to suggest one particular piece of equipment over another.

Most of us are probably aware that the 'equipment of choice' for glider pilots is FLARM, which has served them very well for a number of years. However, owners and pilots of powered aircraft have adopted a number of other EC devices and not all are capable of detecting FLARM, which brings me to this month's featured Airprox (2022199) where a Socata TBM 930 and a DG300 glider flew into proximity 1nm south-east of Aston Down glider site.

The glider pilot was thermalling when they saw the TBM 930 shortly before it passed over the top of them, too late for any avoiding action. The TBM 930 pilot was conducting a VFR transit and had chosen their transit altitude to remain above the maximum winch-launch height of the gliding club, but also to try to keep

a reasonable distance below cloudbase to help see gliders. The TBM pilot reported seeing gliders, but none were close enough to be of concern.

The reason I have chosen this specific Airprox is because, unlike the majority of Airprox involving gliders, on this occasion the glider pilot was not only equipped with FLARM but also with a SkyEcho 2 device. Once again, I am not promoting the use of any specific manufacturer's equipment, but this particular configuration of EC equipment is worthy of some discussion.

The glider pilot was aware that their FLARM was only really likely to alert them to another glider operating nearby and had clearly considered this was insufficient for their needs, so they carried a device (the SkyEcho) that outputs ADS-B so that other aircraft equipped to receive such ADS-B signals could detect them.

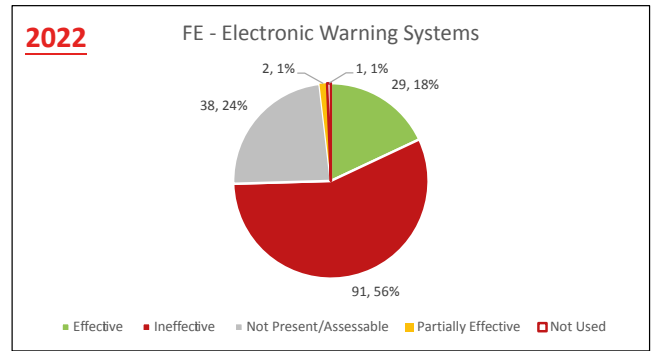
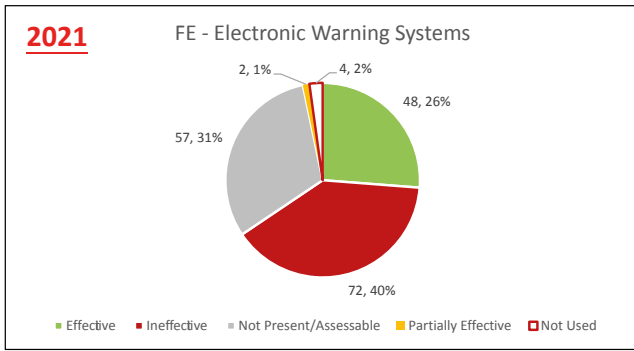
Unfortunately, on this occasion there was no equipment on the TBM that could have detected the ADS-B out signals from the glider and so the pilot had no warning of the glider's presence.

The TBM 930 was equipped with a Mode S Extended Squitter transponder

and was, therefore, also broadcasting ADS-B signals that the glider's SkyEcho 2 should have received. However, the SkyEcho 2 was not connected to any equipment that could display this. It might seem a bit odd for the glider to have a capability of detecting aircraft through a device but then not using that source of information but, as explained to me by a glider pilot, none of the FLARM displays commonly used by glider pilots can connect to the SkyEcho 2's Wi-Fi interface.

Displaying information from the SkyEcho 2 would have required installing another, separate display in the glider's narrow cockpit. There probably wasn't enough room for two displays, and it's no surprise that, operating close to Aston Down, the pilot chose to display the FLARM information.

There is quite a variety of EC devices on the market and compatibility of these devices has long been a concern to the UKAB. We see an increasing number of Airprox involving aircraft that are equipped with EC devices – more so in 2022 than in 2021 – but sadly that is leading to more occurrences of



incompatibility. I have included a couple of charts to show graphically the difference in the performance of the Electronic Warning Systems barrier between 2021 and 2022.

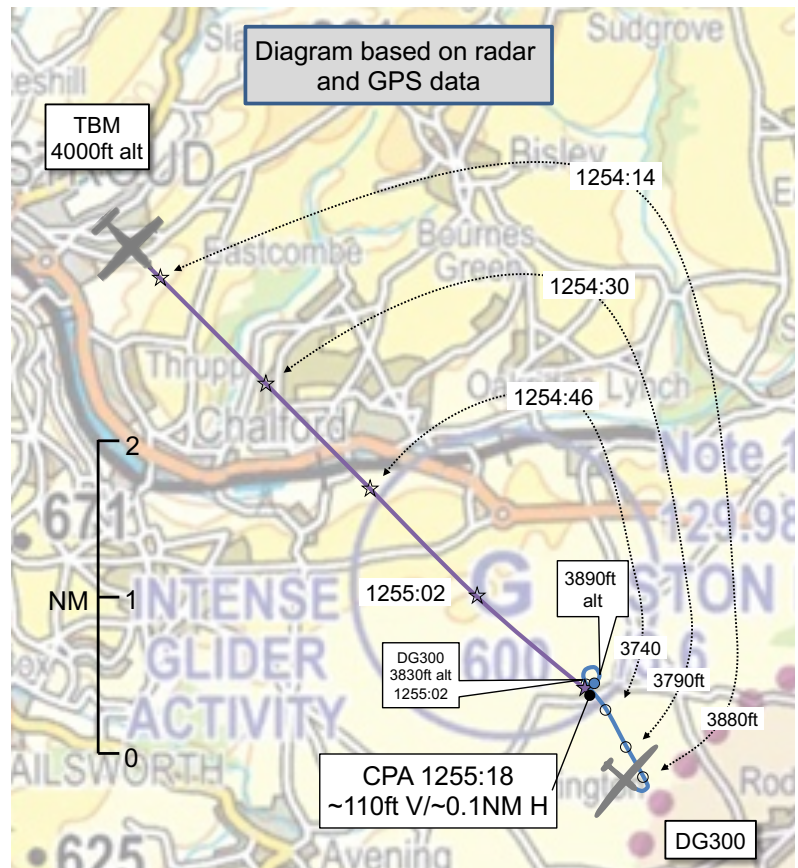
Finally, I have been reliably informed that DfT funding for the CAA's EC rebate scheme will continue beyond the end of March 2023. So, if you already have an EC device but think that you might benefit from wider coverage by employing another, different device, then why not consider taking advantage of this scheme to bolster yours and others' awareness of what might be flying in the vicinity of your aircraft? It might also be worth considering the DfT and CAA joint declaration on electronic conspicuity standards, made in December last year, when deciding on the type of EC equipment you might wish to use.

UKAB MONTHLY ROUND-UP

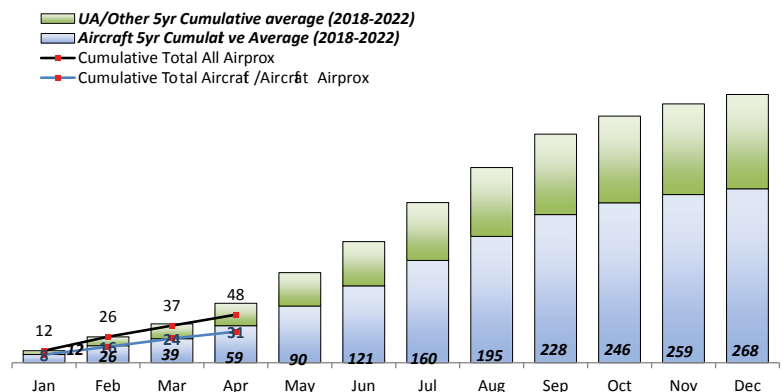
This month the Board evaluated 28 Airprox, including seven UA/Other events (all of which were reported by the piloted aircraft). Of the 21 full evaluations, eight were classified as risk-bearing – one was category A (serious risk of collision existed) and seven were category B (where the safety of the aircraft was compromised). The Board made one Safety Recommendation at the March meeting: that 'Lakenheath ATSU review its employment of STCA in support of UK FIS with regard to the potential for controller desensitisation.'

The graphic right shows that it continues to be a steady start to 2023 in terms of reporting, with numbers at or slightly below the average for this time of year. Following-on from the article above, now would be a good time to review what might be needed in terms of electronic conspicuity equipment for the forthcoming main flying season. As I have already pointed out, it seems that the [DfT rebate scheme](#) for certain types of EC equipment is going to be available beyond the end of March this year.

Remember, EC equipment is not only useful in what it shows to us, but also in allowing other pilots and/or controllers to 'see' our aircraft – we do not necessarily need to exploit the information that the equipment receives (although this would still be the better option) because it will also be transmitting our location in whichever protocol(s) it uses.



2023 Airprox - Cumulative Distribution



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