

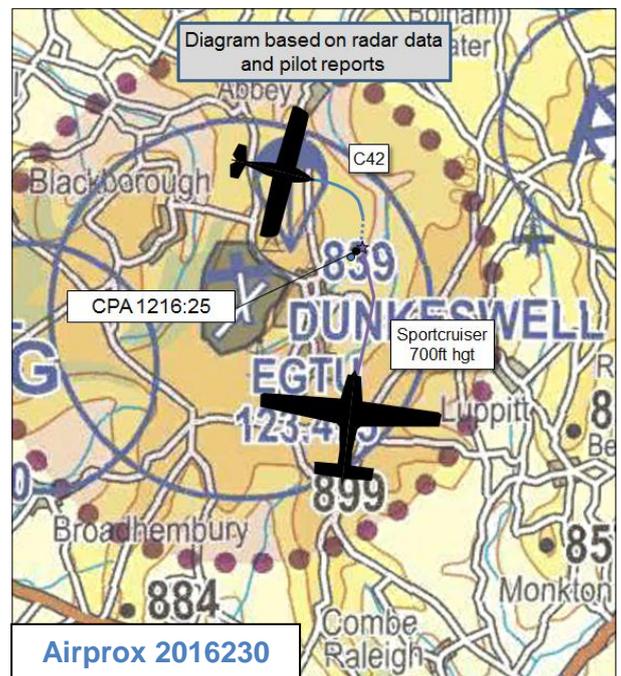
**Avoiding collisions** – a monthly update from Director UK Airprox Board giving some learning themes for recreational pilots.

The Airprox Board discussed 21 incidents during our March meeting, 6 of which involved drones/UAVs. Of the remaining 15 aircraft-to-aircraft incidents, 4 were assessed as having a definite risk of collision (3 x Category A and 1 x Category B). The main themes discussed this month were: 9 incidents involving poor airmanship decisions (of which 7 were incidents in or around the ATZ); 6 late-sightings/non-sightings; 5 incidents of poor controllership/controller error; 3 incidents of poor pre-flight planning or lack of understanding of ATS; and 2 involving pilot inaction.

Of the 7 airmanship incidents in or near the visual circuit, one involved apparently limited pre-flight planning as a helicopter departed a private site near a gliding field; one was a case of sub-optimal lookout as an aircraft flew past an airfield whilst another was joining; one was a late decision by a pilot as he joined a multi-type, multi-runway circuit at an A/G airfield in poor conditions (see my Airprox of the month below); two involved military Tutors coming into conflict with helicopters in the circuit; one saw an unknown helicopter fly too close to a parachute dropping site; and one involved a foreign pilot who may not have fully understood the UK FIS as he made an IFR approach in Class G airspace but was still required to give way to a GA aircraft that was crossing from his right.

My **Airprox of the month** this month is **Airprox 2016230**, a Category A incident which occurred as a Sportcruiser was trying to join the circuit at Dunkeswell. There were multiple runways in use,

the weather was not sparkling, and other aircraft were also joining to various runways or circuit points. The Sportcruiser pilot decided that he didn't have enough SA to continue but, in abandoning his join, was prevented from giving the airfield a wider berth by weather and another aircraft joining from the east. Perhaps somewhat between a rock and a hard place, the Sportcruiser pilot ended up flying opposite direction to a C42 that was downwind. There was a lot going on at this A/G airfield, with everyone relying on each other to follow procedures, make appropriate R/T calls and build their own accurate picture of what was going on in relatively poor weather conditions. The key lesson was to make an early decision whilst



marshalling to join rather than pressing on in the hope of gaining a fuller understanding during the join (when options inevitably become more constrained); holding off for a couple of minutes whilst the circuit calmed down would have presented fewer variables and more options for integrating effectively. The full report can be found at [www.airproxboard.org.uk](http://www.airproxboard.org.uk) in the 'Airprox Reports and Analysis' section within the appropriate year in the 'Individual Airprox reports' tab.