



AIRPROX *Insight*

DIRECTOR UKAB'S MONTHLY UPDATE

January 2019



AIRPROX OF THE MONTH

Task-focused Troubles

Concentrating too hard on a join can bring extra risks, especially if you have restricted views ahead

As many pilots know, White Waltham is busy with constrained joining procedures because of its proximity to Heathrow CTR. In this case a PA-28 and Christen Eagle came into conflict while coming in from the west.

Both were joining overhead at the standard modified overhead join height of 1300ft parallel with the runway. The faster Christen Eagle came in behind the PA-28 but its pilot hadn't assimilated the Piper pilot's calls as he joined ahead.

For his part, the Piper's pilot had heard the Christen Eagle pilot's joining call but, although aware there might be a conflict

that he would need to be cautious about, he was taken by surprise when the Christen Eagle overflew from behind, descending and missing him by only a few feet.

The Christen Eagle pilot didn't see the PA-28 but, fortunately, the PA-28 pilot's student had allowed their height to decrease to 1230ft by mistake, otherwise the encounter could have ended in disaster.

Although a missed radio call is something that happens now and again, we all need to remember during our pre-joining checks that missed calls or even other radio-failure joiners are always a possibility and so that needs to be factored

in to your decision-making process.

As you approach the 'honey pot' of an airfield where everyone is likely to be following the same track or routing to the same point at the same height during the join, it's vital that lookout efforts are redoubled for just such a reason. Don't let yourself become task-focused on the procedure itself, especially if you're in an aircraft with restricted views ahead such as with the Christen Eagle.

Alongside making all the right calls in the right place and following the prescribed route, weaving the nose, dropping a wing to mitigate blind-spots, and meticulous

attention to clearing your path ahead (above and below) are all essential elements of any airfield join.

Full details of the incident can be found here **Airprox 2018180** or at airproxboard.org.uk in the 'Airprox Reports and Analysis' section within the appropriate year and then in the 'Individual Airprox reports' tab.

UKAB MONTHLY ROUND-UP

Twenty-nine Airprox were reviewed at the Board's December meeting, 19 of which were drone/sUAS (Small Unmanned Aircraft System) incidents. Of the ten aircraft-to-aircraft incidents, four had a definite risk of collision (three were Category A with providence playing a major part, and one was Category B where safety was much reduced as a result of serendipity, misjudgement, inaction, or late sighting).

The overall number of aircraft-to-aircraft incidents was just above the expected five-year annual average at 181. In contrast, there have been 132 reported drone/SUAS incidents, well in excess of 2017's levels (113).

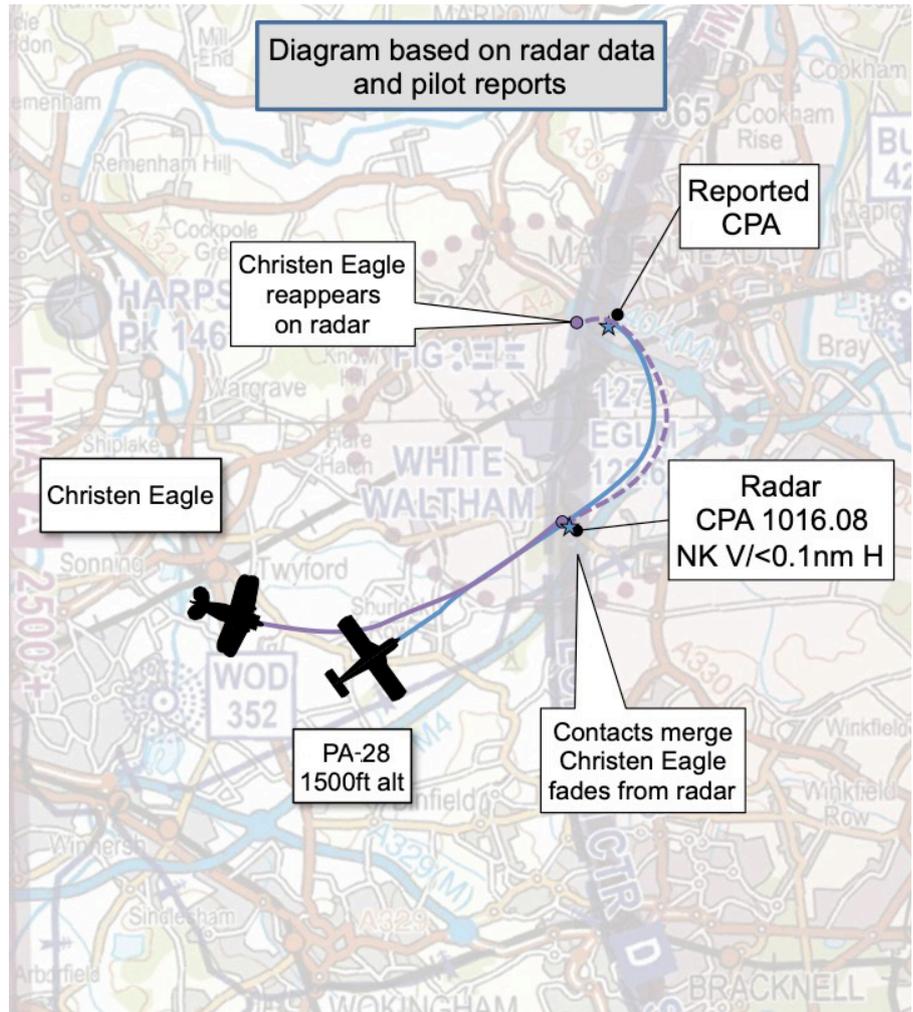
This month's predominant themes were poor lookout and non-/late-sightings which, added together, accounted for six incidents. Given that most incidents occurred in see-and-avoid Class G airspace this isn't perhaps surprising. However, in at least two incidents the Board felt the subject pilots should have been doing more to enhance their chances of seeing the other aircraft by paying more attention to lookout.

That said, the vagaries of the human eye in the aviation environment were acknowledged (and note that the UKAB 2018 Magazine has just been published with all sorts of good information about this - you can [download a copy here](#)).

Inaction featured in three incidents where pilots could have done more when becoming aware of the other aircraft; one was particularly disappointing when a pilot didn't give way because he thought he would carry on rather than cause his student problems by deviating from his student's navex track.

The Board emphasised that 'avoiding' doesn't necessarily have to be in just the horizontal plane, climbing or descending would have been an option in this case if it was important not to overload the student by turning off track.

The remaining incidents were a mixed-bag of causes with no clear trends other than quite a few where pilots could have

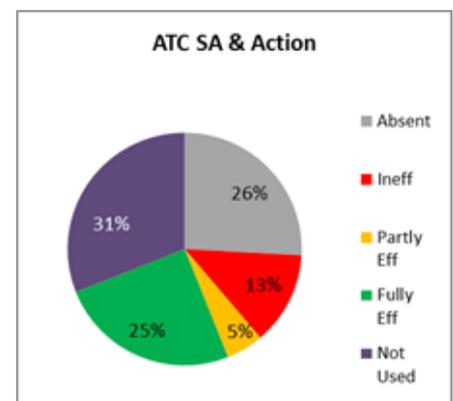


helped themselves by seeking a more appropriate air traffic service other than a Basic Service (or no ATS).

We've talked many times before about the value of a surveillance-based Traffic Service, but the message still appears to fail to register with some who either anticipate they will not get such a service and so don't even ask, or who think that they will receive Traffic Information when under a Basic Service (which they might, but which is not the intention or expectation with that level of ATS).

Just to amplify the value of talking to ATC, here's the associated safety barrier pie chart that shows how this barrier has performed for the 116 incidents assessed so far in 2018. As you can see, ATC was not available for 26% of the incidents and there's not much we can do about that in the short-term. The striking statistic is that ATC were not used to provide Traffic Information when it might have been available in 31% of the incidents. Although this includes times when a surveillance-based service was not available, a good

proportion of these latter incidents include ATC not even being called up, or pilots asking for only a Basic Service when a Traffic Service could have been used. ■



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