



# AIR PROX *Insight*

DIRECTOR UKAB'S MONTHLY UPDATE

May 2020

## AIRPROX OF THE MONTH



Photo for illustration purposes only

# Attitude or altitude?

## If a potential conflict is looming, why not simply change your height?

**A** PA-28 pilot on a CPL nav-ex to the north of Gloucester saw a second PA-28 manoeuvring in the area to which he was heading, so he correctly turned away to re-start the leg but, as he approached again, the other aircraft turned back towards him and he had to orbit for avoiding action.

The second PA-28 pilot (aircraft B in the diagram) didn't remember seeing another aircraft in close proximity and, because there was 400ft vertical separation, the Board was unable to determine whether he saw the other PA-28 (A in the diagram) and wasn't concerned, or didn't see it at all.

There are a number of points in this encounter; first, although it was important for the student pilot to maintain his planned routing for the nav-ex as closely as possible, this shouldn't have been at the expense of safety, and the pilot could have easily changed his altitude to

increase vertical separation. Too often we see Airprox where pilots have pressed-on along their route when a simple height change would have been enough to avoid conflict.

In this incident (**Airprox 2019303**) the pilot of PA-28(B) had been receiving a Basic Service from Gloucester ATC, but the PA-28(A) pilot didn't call until after the event. Pilots shouldn't expect Traffic Information when receiving a Basic Service, but they might get situational awareness by hearing others on frequency, so the PA-28(A) pilot had effectively denied himself the opportunity to receive situational awareness on the second PA-28. Furthermore, Board members thought that had the pilot of the second PA-28 informed ATC that he was manoeuvring, this information might have been passed to others in the area.

Although it wasn't known whether

the second PA-28 pilot had looked and deemed the area sufficiently clear, or he hadn't seen the first PA-28 at all, it served as a reminder that when executing aerobatics or general manoeuvring it's important to ensure adequate look-out, including clearing turns where necessary, before each manoeuvre to ensure the airspace is clear.

Finally, the Airprox was not reported on the frequency at the time, and so the PA-28(B) pilot wasn't initially aware of the Airprox and could not subsequently remember the details, and that's a reminder of the value of timely reporting and on an ATC frequency wherever possible.

Full details of the incident can be found at the link within this note or at [airproxboard.org.uk](http://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

Due to the continued exceptional circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic, the UK Airprox Board meeting on April 22 was once again a 'virtual' meeting via tele- and video-conference. Fifteen Airprox were reviewed by members through a combination of written contributions and dialling-in for portions of the meeting to discuss incidents appropriate to their specialisation.

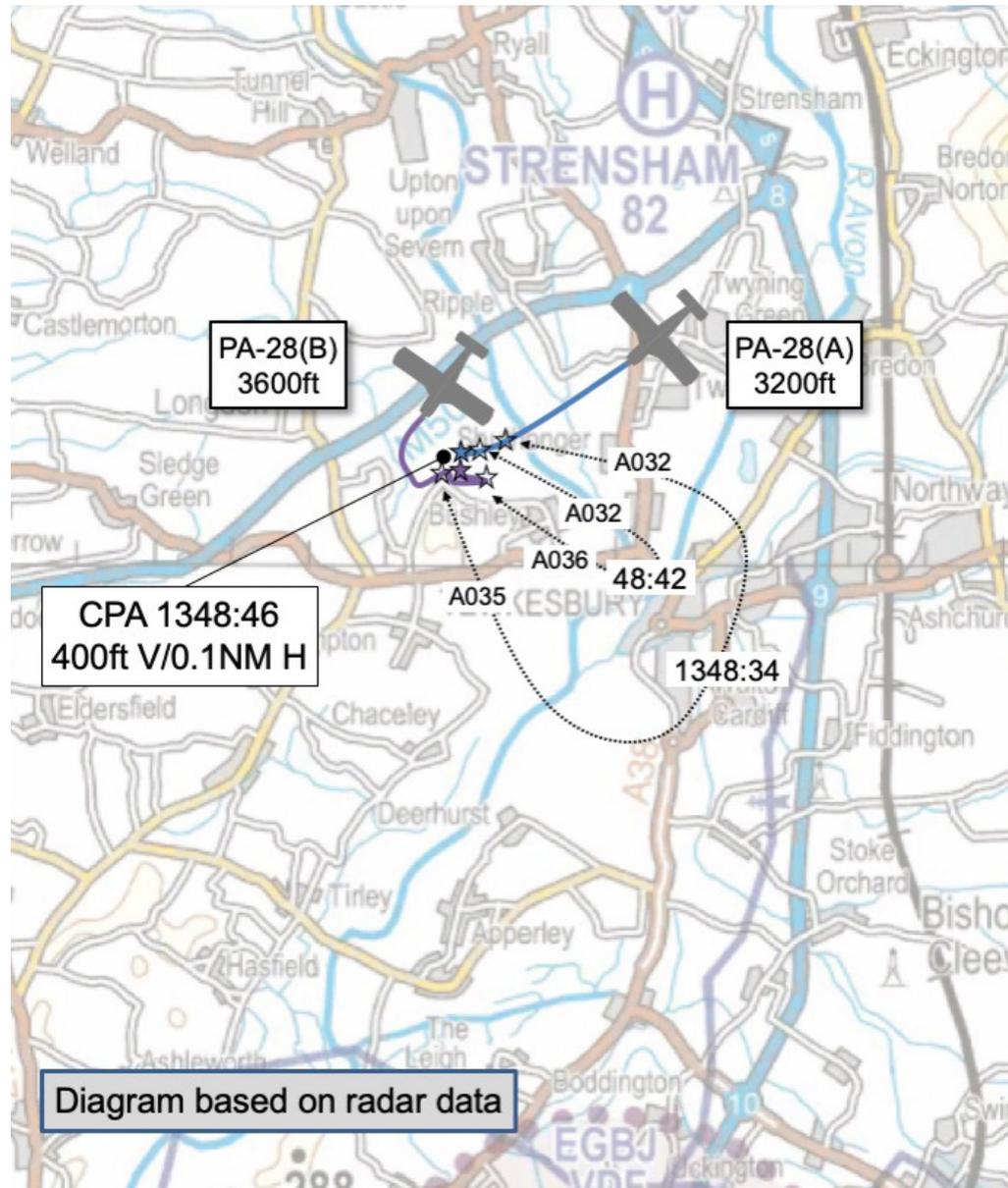
Although not all Board members were present for the whole meeting and, as a result, the usual wide-ranging discussions involving all Board members were more limited, formal assessments and associated comments were still able to be agreed.

Due to the constraints of homeworking due to the coronavirus, fewer Airprox than usual were assessed this month. Of the 15 Airprox assessed, two were SUAS incidents and of the 13 manned aircraft-to-aircraft incidents, five were assessed as risk-bearing; one was Category A (where separation was reduced to the bare minimum and only stopped short of an actual collision because providence played a major part) and four were Category B (where safety margins were much reduced below the norm through either chance, misjudgement or inaction; or where emergency avoiding action was only taken at the last minute).

There has been a lower level of reporting in-year, and levels are likely to remain well below historic norms due to significantly reduced flying activity as a result of this year's restrictions.

This month's most frequent themes centred around planning. There were six instances of ineffective planning and three of a lack of plan adaption, and a linked theme of four examples of ineffective communications, including joining the circuit in the wrong direction, not effectively using pre-flight planning tools, pressing-on despite situational awareness of another aircraft in the vicinity, and not contacting ATC early enough.

Late-sighting and non-sighting were factors on five and six occasions respectively, with obscuration due to terrain, cloud or IMC also a factor in four of these. Distraction also featured, in all cases work-rate related rather than simply not paying attention, but nonetheless highlighting the need to adequately divide attention between in-cockpit tasks and look-out.



Unusually, inadequate regulation or procedures featured in four Airprox and the Board made recommendations for two of them, with local investigations already identifying the need to review procedures in the other two.

The Board made three recommendations during the meeting as shown right. The first involved an incident where a parachutist from Dunkeswell landed outside the drop zone close to the North Hill gliding site — during their discussions the Board thought that there could be better liaison between the two clubs; the MoD recommendation was as a result of an incident between military aircraft in the low-flying system; and the final recommendation was to tighten-up lifting procedures for helicopters operating on oil platforms.

**Airprox Recommendations****2019298**

Dunkeswell airfield and the Devon & Somerset Gliding Club to reach agreement to include parachuting operations within their Letter of Agreement.

**2019300**

MoD to consider the introduction of a flow arrow for the Honister Pass.

**2019323**

The CAA considers reviewing the UK AIP, ENR 1.6, paragraph 4.5.5, to define the point at which the 'lifting' call is to be made. ■

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