



AIRPROX *Insight*

DIRECTOR UKAB'S MONTHLY UPDATE

October 2022



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AIRPROX OF THE MONTH

When things don't go according to plan

Sound pre-flight prep and contingency considerations allow you to adapt the plan - and plan for adaptation

Following on from last month's Insight about considerations to think about when flying near minor aerodromes, I thought this month's Airprox of the Month (**Airprox 2022091**) would increase the radius a little and talk about issues concerning flights near to ATZs or controlled airspace.

There can be little doubt that portable electronic flight planning applications have made the job of aircraft navigation a lot more straightforward, but over-reliance on 'moving maps' can lead to a loss of overall awareness of where you are

relative to the airspace around you (see the February 2022 Insight for more detail).

This Airprox occurred when a Eurostar EV-97 and a Grob Tutor got closer to each other in the Cosford ATZ than the pilots would have liked. The EV-97 was flying in company with an Ikarus C42 due to concerns the EV-97 pilot had over engine performance.

Both were equipped with electronic conspicuity equipment which picked-up the approaching Tutor, so they decided to deviate from their planned track to keep their distance. Although the weather was

suitable for their flight, it certainly wasn't a day where there was a bright blue sky and so the pilots didn't have the option to climb above the Tutor. Instead, they decided to turn right towards the Cosford ATZ, and soon found themselves inside without having first spoken to the controller.

Looking at the diagram of the aircraft tracks, there might have been an option for the microlight pilots to have turned left, away from Cosford rather than towards it, but there may also have been other reasons why this might not have been an option.

So, what can we learn from this? Well, to start with, the visible area on a mobile phone or tablet running flight navigation software will not be particularly large, so you might not be able to see what airspace or hazards are beyond the edge of the screen – this is where pre-flight preparation and contingency planning are really useful.

When planning, take a good look at what's around your planned track, not just what is within five miles of it. Also, note down the frequencies of airfields you plan to pass along the way – you don't have to use them all, but at least they'll be to hand if things don't go exactly as planned.

When route planning, GASCo advocates the 'Take 2' principle – in a nutshell, plan to avoid airspace by at least 2 miles horizontally and 200ft vertically (available at this link: <https://www.gasco.org.uk/resources/publications/take-two>). These buffers won't take long to erode if things don't go according to plan, so don't forget to take your paper chart with you (we all still have those, don't we?) as it can be invaluable for re-planning your routing in the air.

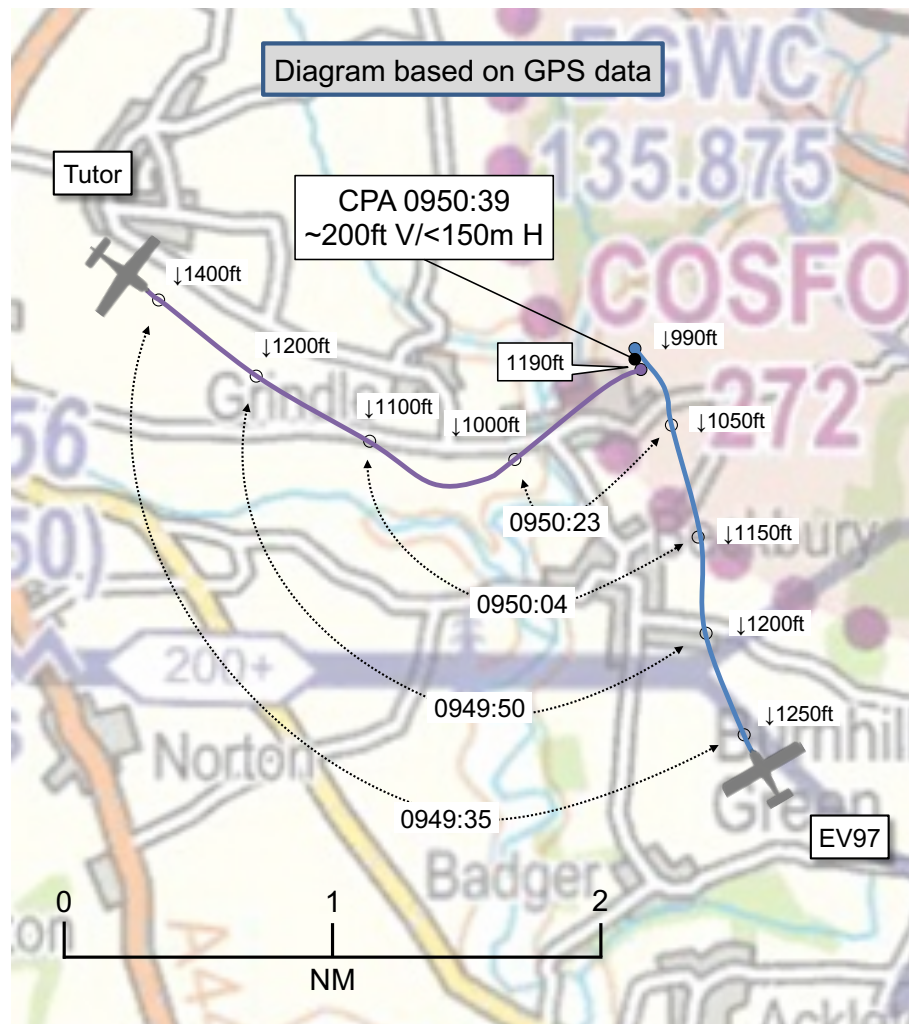
It's good to see pilots carrying electronic conspicuity equipment and being proactive with the information it displays. In this case, the pilots decided to take early action to try to avoid what they deemed to be a potential conflict – they weren't to know that the pilot of the other aircraft was actually going to turn towards Cosford.

It's worth re-stating that, while it's for individual pilots to determine their own needs in respect of electronic conspicuity equipment, additional funding has been made available for electronic conspicuity devices through the CAA's Electronic Conspicuity Rebate Scheme, which has been extended until March 31, 2023. A word of warning, though – electronic conspicuity devices absolutely cannot 'see' everything that's airborne and so a disciplined lookout is still essential to a safe flight.

<https://www.caa.co.uk/general-aviation/aircraft-ownership-and-maintenance/electronic-conspicuity-devices/>

UKAB MONTHLY ROUND-UP

We evaluated 28 Airprox this month, including 15 UA/Other events – 14 of which were reported by the piloted



aircraft, one by the UA flyer and two were fully evaluated as reported by the UA flyer in one instance and a piloted aircraft in the second.

Of the 15 full evaluations, seven were classified as risk-bearing – three were category A and four category B. The Board also decided to raise a recommendation; it followed the consideration of an Airprox between a Sonaca S200 and a PA-28 flying in a busy visual circuit at a training airfield.

The airfield in question is home to more than one flying training school, and demand for circuit work is high. The airfield has published limitations on the number of aircraft allowed to conduct circuit training at any one time, but the rules do allow other aircraft to join to land or depart.

The problem is that, if the pilot of a joining aircraft doesn't quite get it right, it can have a knock-on effect on other aircraft in the circuit, and that is exactly what happened here. The pilot of the joining aircraft found themselves close

to another aircraft already established on downwind (the PA-28) and so elected to go-around from the end of the downwind leg. Unfortunately, the joining aircraft was also a PA-28 and so the pilot of the following aircraft (the S200) mis-identified the joining PA-28 as the PA-28 they had been following around the circuit.

To cut a long story short, the S200 pilot thought that they were following the correct aircraft and positioned themselves onto final at about the same time as the pilot of the PA-28 established in the circuit was doing so, and the two aircraft found themselves halfway down final, side-by-side.

The Board's Safety Recommendation is for the airfield to review its circuit occupancy levels, mindful of the fact that there might often be solo students in the circuit.

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