



AIRPROX *Insight*

DIRECTOR UKAB'S MONTHLY UPDATE

February 2020



AIRPROX OF THE MONTH

Unhappy Camper

For illustrative purposes only

Be cautious as you join the circuit, you might not have the full picture...

As a Pietenpol Air Camper was joining right-base for Runway 06 at Old Sarum the pilot was aware of a departing aircraft and, seeing a Cessna 208 downwind, he thought it was simply in the circuit and another aircraft was departing.

Unsurprisingly, he was startled when the Cessna turned towards him, especially as the pilot hadn't made any transmissions to that effect.

Unfortunately the Cessna pilot (who had been at Old Sarum to be checked-out on para-dropping) wasn't aware of Old Sarum's current departure system which explains (on its website) that joining and departing aircraft should keep the Alderbury VRP on their right to ensure geographical separation.

On his previous para-dropping flight the Cessna pilot had departed by climbing downwind, which was standard for

those flights. Believing that downwind departures were fine, he decided to turn left from downwind rather than the normal departure of turning towards Alderbury from the start of the crosswind turn after take-off.

There are a couple of lessons here (**Airprox 2019221**). First, make sure you check an airfield's procedures: in this case the Old Sarum website was clear as to the required departure procedure but, in some mitigation to the Cessna, the AIP entry was not.

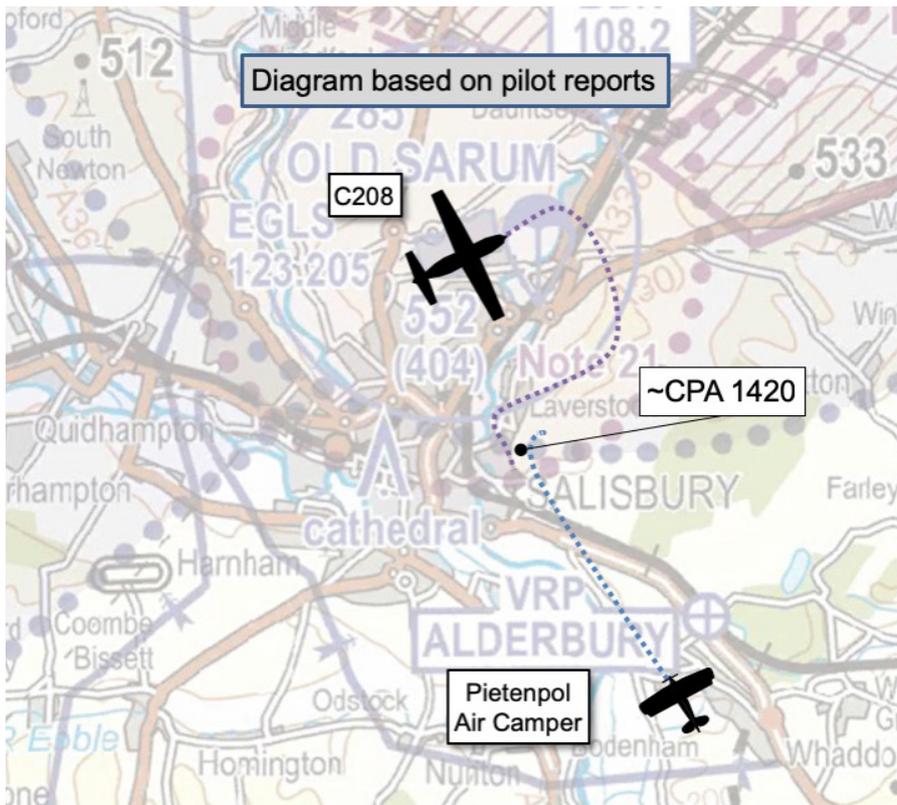
Second, if you are going to depart downwind (or do anything that is non-standard) make your intentions known by communicating that fact in your departure and downwind calls: the Cessna pilot didn't make a call, and if he had the Pietenpol pilot would have had invaluable situational awareness and could have factored the Cessna's departure into his joining plan.

Finally, always expect the unexpected. Integrating with other aircraft in the visual circuit is one of the most common scenarios for Airprox so, whenever you're conducting a join, always bear in mind that you might not have heard a radio call (although there was none in this case) and ask yourself the question "What would I do if that aircraft suddenly turns/climbs/descends as I join?"

Full details of this incident can be found in the links on these pages and 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

Some 30 Airprox were reviewed at the January meeting; eight were SUAS incidents and 22 manned aircraft-to-aircraft. Eight were assessed as risk-bearing with three



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 five 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).

With all incidents now hopefully reported for 2019 (we sometimes receive a couple of late ones a few weeks after the end of the year), 2019 has been our busiest year for manned-aircraft-to-aircraft incidents in recent times (203 is well above our expected five-year average of 179).

My hope is that this reflects a healthy culture of reporting Airprox that might not otherwise have been notified rather than there having been more incidents per se, but I've no way of knowing either way. There is cause for optimism about SUAS incidents, though, as these have reduced compared to the previous year with 125 SUAS reports in 2019 compared to 139 in 2018.

In this month's reports, perhaps reflecting the fact that most dealt with the summer when GA flying sharply increases, the most frequent theme was non- and late-sightings (16 incidents). Although something of an occupational hazard in Class G airspace, their predominance

nonetheless reflects the importance of a robust lookout at all times.

Once again, sub-optimal pilot planning, decision-making or execution of the plan was the next most prevalent theme (seven incidents), and task focus (largely manifesting as distraction from lookout) was evident in five. Lack of, or sub-optimal, Traffic Information was evident in three incidents, and this was matched by pilots not effectively communicating their intentions to other pilots or controllers in three incidents.

Two other issues also caught the Board's eye. The first was associated with a couple of incidents where aerobatic aircraft were not transponding. Although the Board understood that these aerobatic pilots were trying to avoid nuisance alerts to TCAS-equipped aircraft in their vicinity as they conducted high-energy manoeuvres, the seemingly common practice of turning off transponders during aerobatics was contrary to the requirements of SERA.13001 and, in so doing, denied ATC and other TAS-equipped aircraft valuable situational awareness.

The CAA might wish to investigate the prevalence of this practice and provide guidance that also acknowledges the undesirable nature of potential TCAS alerts in other aircraft that might be operating in adjacent airspace.

The second issue regarded LARS coverage where it was noted that several incidents had occurred where there were gaps in LARS coverage either due to radar performance or weekend operations when many ATCUs might not be operating.

The Board continually bangs the drum about pilots not requesting a surveillance-based ATS, but the response is often that there isn't one available due to patchy LARS coverage or resourcing. The Board felt that LARS coverage was another issue the CAA might wish to review, not just in terms of resourcing but also regarding actual versus theoretical radar coverage across the UK's airspace.

The Board made five recommendations in January, with some involving more than one incident as detailed below. These multi-incident recommendations were associated with a spate of Airprox involving single-pilot survey aircraft; the Board felt that there was scope for applying more mitigations to mid-air conflict than were adopted by these operators. The other two recommendations referred to unclear or incomplete AIP entries for Gloucester and Old Sarum airfields.

AIRPROX RECOMMENDATIONS

2019201

2019208

2019226

The P68 operating company considers further mitigations to MAC for survey operations.

2019227

The Cessna 404 operating company considers further mitigations to MAC for survey operations.

2019201

2019208

2019226

2019227

The CAA to consider mandating additional cockpit crew to enable enhanced lookout for single-pilot survey operations.

2019210

Gloucestershire Airport to clarify their AIP entry regarding departure procedures.

2019221

Old Sarum to review their AIP entry to ensure coherence with the Old Sarum website and proprietary flight guide information.

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