



# AIRPROX *Insight*

DIRECTOR UKAB'S MONTHLY UPDATE

March 2018



**AIRPROX OF THE MONTH**

## Dropping in **downwind**

**If you don't know who's where in the circuit for whatever reason, it might be time to call off your plans and have a rethink**

**S**mart motorcyclists tend to think ahead and ride defensively, and a healthy dash of both of those in flying never goes amiss — after all, as in motorcycling where another driver might not be aware of you, the same can be true in flying.

Take the case of the C152 and C172 which came into conflict at Cumbernauld

([Airprox 2017231](#)). The 172 pilot was joining from the south to practice a forced landing while the 152 was already in the circuit and just turning downwind.

Although the 172 pilot tried repeatedly to get a picture of the traffic from the air-ground operator, lack of effective communication between the two of them meant that in the end he only assimilated

that the circuit was active. Although he stated his intentions to join 'high left-hand downwind for a glide-in', he hadn't been able to establish where all the other aircraft were before descending during the downwind leg in front of the 152.

Meanwhile, the 152 pilot (one of two 152s in the circuit) couldn't get his downwind call in due to the high volume of transmissions. As a result, the 172 didn't have that form of situational awareness on the 152 either.

So, what to do? Ultimately, the Board concluded that the 172 pilot would have been better advised to have either held off or remained above the circuit until he had positively established where all the circuit traffic was and could then integrate effectively.

That said, they also wondered whether the 152 pilot might have been more proactive in generating more separation on the 172 given that he had seen him descending ahead and had more situational awareness than the first pilot — essentially, defensive flying as in defensive motorcycle riding.

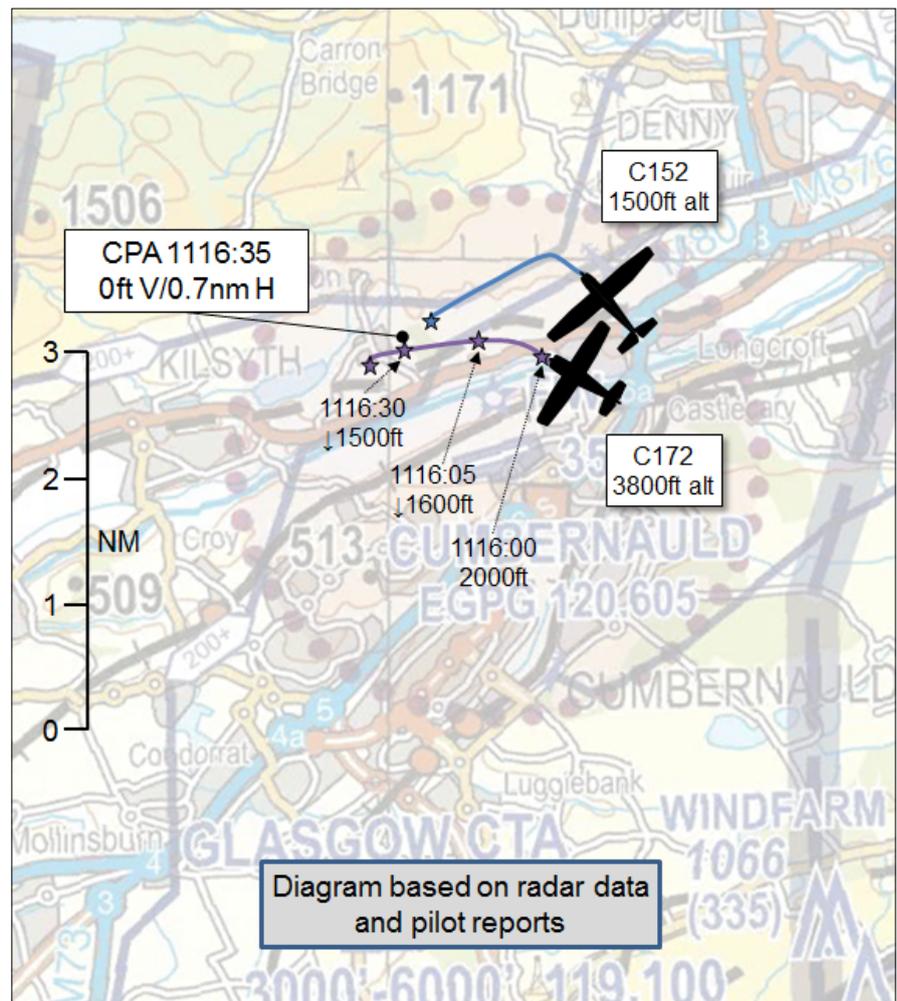
Some members questioned whether the air-ground radio operator could have been more forthcoming, but you can't expect any form of Traffic Information from an air-ground operator other than information based on calls made to them by other pilots; they might not even be in a position where they can see the airfield, although in this case the operator was in the Tower.

Full details of the incident can be found 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.

Flying in the circuit should be one of the most regimented and predictable of activities a pilot conducts, yet we have seen all sorts of ad hoc profiles and much 'pressing-on' when situational awareness had not been achieved.

There is a recurring problem with the conduct of overhead joins, with many pilots either appearing not to understand them or being unable to perform them correctly.

Particular problems have been: poor situational awareness when joining, operating within, or departing the visual circuit; failing to follow standard joining procedures; joining the circuit downwind, crosswind or base leg rather than from an overhead join when the circuit was busy; failing to clearly pass intentions; poor integration, sequencing or separation



with other aircraft already in the circuit; a general lack of consideration/awareness of those already within the visual and instrument patterns; becoming task-focused to the detriment of lookout; assumption of 'protection' when within an ATZ; and lack of awareness of the nuances/limitations of the various levels of control at airfields (ATC vs AFISO vs AGCS).

You can read more in 'The Blue Book' on our website at: <http://www.airproxboard.org.uk/Reports-and-analysis/Annual-Airprox-summary-reports/> as Blue Book 32 (a right riveting read even if I say so myself...).

#### UKAB MONTHLY ROUND-UP

Overall during its February 2018 meeting, the Board assessed 21 incidents of which 19 were aircraft-to-aircraft, with eight assessed as having a definite risk of collision (all Category B (safety was much reduced due to serendipity, misjudgement, inaction, or late sighting)).

There was a mixed-bag of themes, but many incidents came about because pilots or controllers did not think ahead or sufficiently anticipate. Five were caused by poor communications or misheard

transmissions which led to a conflict developing through inadequate integration with other aircraft.

Five others involved either poor appreciation of controlled airspace (two were unauthorised penetrations of controlled airspace) or poor selection of air traffic services which denied appropriate assistance from ATC.

Pressing-on in poor weather, inaction on receipt of Traffic Information, or simply flying too close to another aircraft accounted for five other incidents. Finally, there were four involving late sightings with other aircraft, most of which were not squawking and therefore not detectable by either ATC or the other aircraft's TAS (when fitted).

Hopefully, pilots are now aware of the introduction of SERA 13001 last October which says that transponders if fitted must be switched on whether the aircraft is in, or outside, controlled airspace to help alert ATC and other aircraft to their presence. ■

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