



AIRPROX *Insight*

DIRECTOR UKAB'S MONTHLY UPDATE

April 2020



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AIRPROX OF THE MONTH

Just say no...

If you're unsure of a change in the plan, it might be best to politely decline

There were a number of really interesting factors to this incident when a Tecnam Sierra was taking part in a fly-in to Middle-Wallop.

The key elements stemmed from the inexperienced pilot being invited by ATC to deviate from the pre-briefed fly-in arrival procedure to expedite the aircraft's arrival.

The Tecnam pilot unfortunately became confused about runway directions and circuit patterns such that the Tecnam ended up routing to, and making an approach to, the wrong cross-runway. Not only did it approach the wrong runway, but the crew mistakenly told ATC they were approaching the intended runway. As a result, ATC had flawed situational awareness as to the Tecnam's routing and position, and were desperately trying to visually identify it while looking in the wrong direction.

There are those who've become at least temporarily confused by runway directions, and those that will. The key lesson here is (for inexperienced pilots especially) to politely decline invitations to change the plan unless

you're certain of what you're doing and/or ATC can confirm that they have you in sight (or identified on radar) and are providing positive assistance.

In the end, the controller saw the Tecnam approaching the wrong runway on their ATM and warned a Chipmunk pilot who was making an approach to the correct cross-runway. Both aircraft then went around, albeit with the Tecnam pilot turning unsighted towards the Chipmunk, and the Chipmunk pilot was able to ensure that any risk of collision was removed by manoeuvring to avoid the Tecnam.

Full details of this Category C incident (**Airprox 2019284**) can be found at the link within this note 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

Due to the exceptional circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic, the Board's March meeting was held via video-

and tele-conference in which 21 Airprox were reviewed. The meeting was a combination of written contributions and members dialling-in for portions of the meeting to discuss incidents appropriate to their specialisation.

Because not everyone was present for the entire meeting the usual wide-ranging discussions involving all members were more limited, but there was sufficient engagement for formal assessments and associated comments to be agreed.

Of the 21 Airprox, four were SUAS incidents and the other 17 were manned aircraft-to-aircraft. Four were risk-bearing with two being 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 two 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).

As we move into Spring it's been a relatively quiet start, with Airprox well below

historic reporting norms. This is probably due to reduced flying because of the awful winter weather and high winds. Looking ahead, no doubt the Coronavirus restrictions will mean that this reduced level of flying (and therefore Airprox incidents) will probably extend well into, and beyond, the summer so we'll wait and see how that plays out.

In a fairly mixed bag of incidents this month a number of themes stood out. Top of the list were ten instances of sub-optimal planning (or execution of the plan) by pilots: for example, not following instructions; an airspace infringement caused by not thinking ahead after radio problems; turning the wrong way during an overhead join; flying through the feathers of an approach path without talking to ATC; and misplotting a Notam leading to the overflight of a helicopter's load-lifting operation.

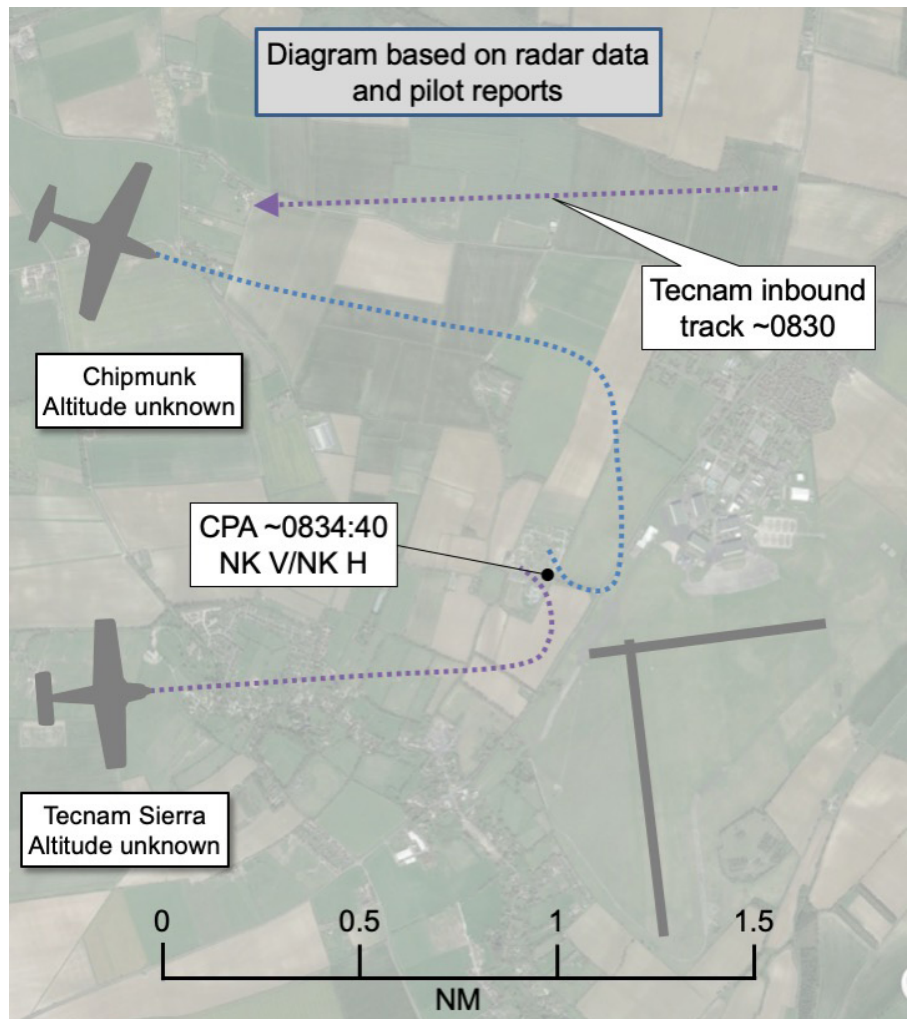
Late- and non-sightings also featured ten times, although these are somewhat inherent in many Airprox, especially during the summer when GA pilots are more active and might focus more on aircraft handling rather than prioritising lookout. Six incidents involved poor communications with ATC, either not making intentions clear, misunderstood transmissions, poor position reporting, sub-optimal selection of ATS, or inadequate liaison prior to flight.

The final theme involved four cases of inaction on receipt of situational awareness from radio/ATC messages, electronic means, or visual sighting. Three of these resulted in pilots flying into conflict or too close to the traffic pattern formed by other aircraft in the circuit at minor airfields.

Many incidents reflected the need to pay attention to the six overriding Airprox themes, namely: *lookout, listen-out, electronic conspicuity, professional knowledge, task prioritisation, and defensive flying*. In the latter case, *caution, courtesy, and consideration for others* are the watchwords for giving other pilots a wide berth, expecting the unexpected, and acting in concert with others to achieve a safe environment for all.

This is my last newsletter before pursuing a new challenge as Director Aviation at CHIRP (Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme). With just over six-and-a-half years in post, I can honestly say I've learned something new at every Board meeting I've chaired.

I am indebted to the members who give so freely and altruistically of their time, and also to the UKAB inspector and administrative teams who offer a source of



knowledge and enthusiasm in the pursuit of preventing mid-air-collisions that it would be hard to surpass. If we have saved just one life through someone doing things differently because of our combined efforts, then it will all have been worthwhile.

My successor is, unfortunately, yet to be confirmed so I leave the UKAB in the capable hands of the Inspectors and support staff that keep the wheel turning on a monthly basis; their professionalism will no doubt mean that disruption should be kept to a minimum until a new Director is in post.

The Board made three recommendations (detailed right) during the March meeting. The first involved an incident where one of the Lydd IFR patterns was geographically very close to Challock Gliding Site and it appeared that neither was aware of the other's operations; the Nottingham/Tollerton recommendation was specific to vintage fast-jet aircraft and the way that they visually join airfields with mixed traffic; the last recommendation reflected the Board's desire to reiterate the value

of transponders being fitted to glider tug aircraft to highlight their position to both ATC and other aircraft that might have collision warning systems.

Airprox Recommendations 2019282

Kent Gliding Club and Lydd Airport establish a Letter of Agreement to address the risk of concurrent activities in the same volume of airspace.

2019287

Nottingham/Tollerton airfield to consider publishing procedures for the integration of faster jet aircraft with other circuit traffic.

2019294

The BGA reiterates guidance to gliding clubs regarding the significant mitigation to mid-air collision afforded by fitment of SSR transponders to tug aircraft.

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