

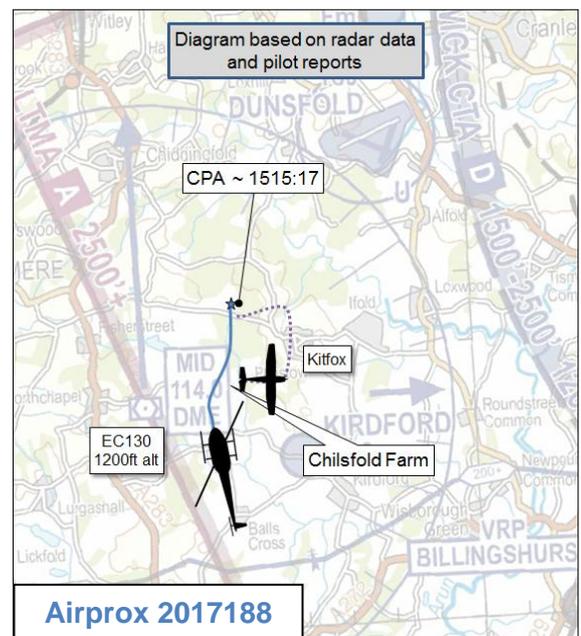
**Avoiding collisions** – a monthly update from Director UK Airprox Board giving some learning themes for recreational pilots.

The Airprox Board assessed 16 incidents during the December 2017 meeting. Of these, 11 were aircraft-to-aircraft incidents, with 6 assessed as having a definite risk of collision (2 x Category A (providence played a major role) and 4 x Category B (safety was much reduced due to serendipity, misjudgement, inaction, or late sighting).

Flawed situational awareness (SA) and associated inappropriate actions (or inaction) were this month's predominant themes; 7 incidents could have been prevented if information had been assimilated and acted upon in a timely manner. Within these, 4 involved lack of, or poor communication of, Traffic Information or intentions. As a fundamentally human endeavour, aviation relies on pilots and controllers forming a correct mental model of their environment, and if this becomes compromised then inappropriate or misjudged decisions can quickly lead to situations of close proximity where see-and-avoid becomes the sole remaining barrier to collision.

Similarly, 5 incidents saw sub-optimal planning or poor execution of procedures. More thorough pre-flight planning would have averted these Airprox by increasing SA; procedures were in place to assist, but the pilots were either not aware of them or did not fully apply them to best advantage. Selection of a more appropriate ATS would probably have improved matters in another 3 incidents, and lack of SSR from one or both aircraft also influenced 3 events where the other aircraft or ATC could have reacted had they known that the non-transponding aircraft was there. Although all of these Airprox took place beforehand, the Board welcomed the fact that, as of 12 October, SERA now mandates that if a transponder is fitted to an aircraft then it is to be switched on, with all available modes selected, irrespective of whether the pilot is in communication with ATC or not.<sup>1</sup>

My **Airprox of the month** involved an **EC130** that came into proximity with a **Kitfox** departing downwind from a small strip near Dunsfold as the helicopter flew past (**Airprox 2017188: Category A**). Neither pilot saw each other beforehand, and the incident highlighted the busy nature of airspace in that area; the advisability of flying above 1500ft if possible during transits in that area to allow for the many strips and landing sites; and the fact that the Kitfox pilot had not selected his transponder on, which may otherwise have alerted Farnborough (and any TAS-equipped aircraft) to his presence as he got airborne. Full details of the incident can be found at [www.airproxboard.org.uk](http://www.airproxboard.org.uk) in the 'Airprox Reports and Analysis' section within the appropriate year and then in the 'Individual Airprox reports' tab.



<sup>1</sup> Specifically: SERA 13001/13005/13010/13015.