



AIRPROX *Insight*

DIRECTOR UKAB'S MONTHLY UPDATE

November 2018

AIRPROX OF THE MONTH

Too tight's just not right



Are the few seconds saved by making non-standard circuits really worth the potential risks?

Size really does matter when it comes to circuits — flying very wide or very tight circuits can end up with others not being aware of your location, or not seeing you because they're looking where they expect to see an aircraft on a standard circuit.

Take these two incidents where similar conflicts ended up in a couple of Category A events where providence played a major part in avoiding a collision.

At Eshott, 20 miles north of Newcastle, a Jabiru pilot was joining overhead and, mistakenly thinking that the visual circuit was clear, performed a tight join and subsequent circuit which put him into conflict with an Aeroprakt A-22 Foxbat that he hadn't realised was on short-finals

despite the fact that the Foxbat pilot had reportedly made a series of position calls. (**Airprox 2018141**).

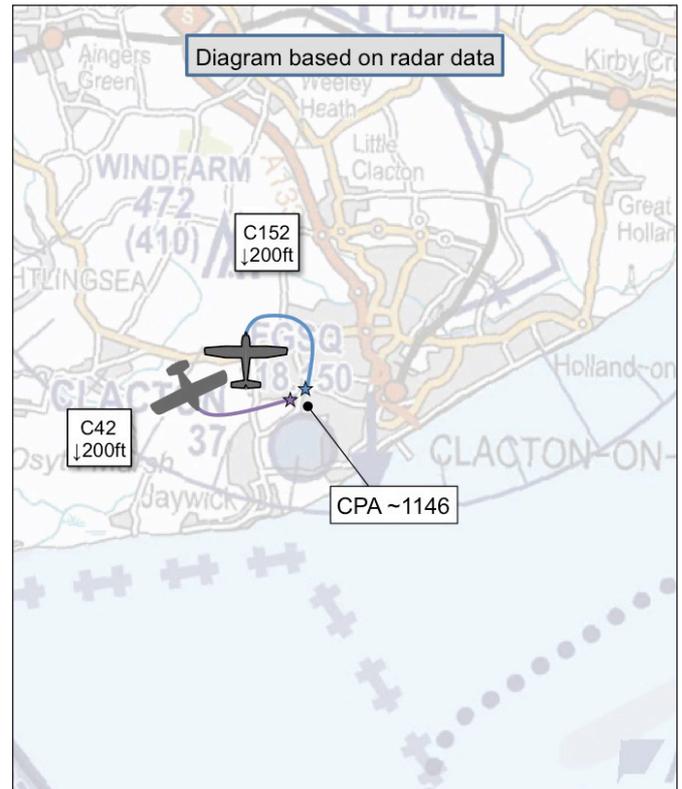
The Jabiru appeared only about 15ft away, flying about 10kt faster above and slightly ahead of the Foxbat. With a collision potentially imminent the Foxbat pilot made a gentle left turn and, when clear of the threat of clipping wingtips, powered back up into the circuit.

A very similar incident occurred at Clacton Airfield when an Ikarus C42 made a very tight right-base join thinking the circuit was clear **Airprox 2018147**. Unfortunately, he didn't see a C152 already on finals and grave consequences were only avoided when, established in the descent on finals and only about 10ft

above the C152, the C42 pilot fortuitously decided to go-around because he hadn't achieved suitable landing parameters.

We've discussed circuit patterns many times in Board meetings and it's worth remembering that on a very tight circuit it's likely you will be focused on aircraft handling considerations, so you might not have the capacity to conduct the vital 'safety check' up the approach path as you turn onto finals.

If you are going to deviate from the normal circuit, make sure you clearly announce your intentions and also leave yourself enough capacity and airspace to properly clear your own flightpath. In the final analysis, are those few seconds saved by doing a tight final turn really worth it?



UKAB MONTHLY ROUND-UP

Thirty Airprox were reviewed by the Board in October, with 12 being drone/sUAS incidents. Of the 18 aircraft-to-aircraft incidents, nine had a definite risk of collision (two were Category A where providence played a major part, and seven were Category B where safety was much reduced as a result of serendipity, misjudgement, inaction, or late sighting).

The number of aircraft-to-aircraft incidents remains just above the expected five-year cumulative average at 155. In contrast, there have now been 120 reported drone/sUAS incidents, and this already exceeds 2017's levels (113) with just over two months still to go in 2018.

This month's clear theme was sub-optimal planning or execution of the plan (11 incidents). They ranged from two restricted airspace (temporary) penetrations; overflight of minor airfields or flying very close to them at visual circuit height; assumptions that the visual circuit was clear when it wasn't; conducting non-standard circuit profiles and sub-optimal ATS selection, all of which could probably have been avoided if pilots had paid more attention to pre-flight planning, asked questions of ATC rather than assuming, or had formulated a 'Plan B' contingency for when things did not go as they expected.

Non- and late-sightings were the next largest theme, and these often

went hand-in-hand with lack of collision warning systems/electronic conspicuity, or situational awareness assimilated from other means (principally ATC or radio transmissions from other pilots).

There were also four instances of sub-optimal controlling when information wasn't given to pilots in a timely, accurate or effective manner, or pilots were not appropriately challenged when they didn't follow procedures.

Pilot inaction on sighting a conflicting aircraft featured a couple of times, and lack of courtesy or thought for other aviators was cited in three incidents where the pilots placed themselves in situations where it was clear that their only concern was for their own flight rather than thinking about others.

The Board made one recommendation during the October meeting.

2018140 *Dunkeswell review their AIP entry regarding pilots notifying a straight-in join.*

This stemmed from an incident where a B206 helicopter and a PA-28 had a close encounter at Dunkeswell in pretty marginal conditions (about 500ft cloudbase).

The PA-28 was conducting a straight-in approach as the B206 pilot was conducting pleasure flights near to the extended approach path. Neither pilot was aware of the other until the B206 pilot returned to

Dunkeswell from the north on a right-base approach having first crossed the centreline from the south 30 seconds to one-minute earlier.

Unfortunately, by this time, the PA-28 was also at short-finals and saw the B206 as it rolled-out ahead, just to the left, from its right-base join. Although something of a non-standard join by the B206 pilot (but broadly complying with helicopter join procedures at Dunkeswell), the Board also noted that straight-in approaches were not routinely permitted at Dunkeswell.

Unfortunately, as an air-ground communications service airfield the Board had no R/T transcripts to determine who called finals first and therefore who had to give way to whom. What was obvious though was that the Dunkeswell AIP join procedures were highly ambiguous, leading to the Board's recommendation.

Full details of both incidents can be found at the links 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. ■

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