

Submission: 130

## Peter Drum

Collision avoidance is always a serious issue, both in the air and particularly around uncontrolled airports. However, that this new system should apply to all low powered small aircraft including vintage types seems unnecessary. These aircraft are generally not in everyday use and flown mainly in good weather, and then by very alert see and be seen pilots.



# Beware of Aircraft in the Sun

The recent mid-air collision at Tocumwal, the second in the same area in the last few years, tempted me to write regarding "See or be seen".

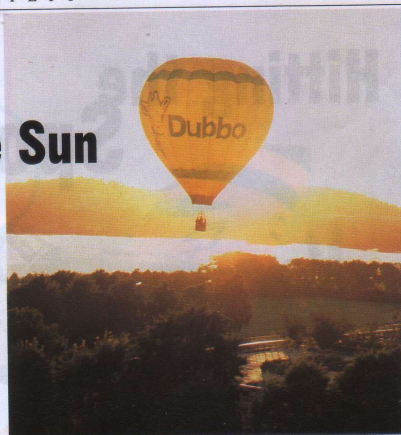
By STAN HEPPER, AOPA 8637

**D**uring WW II, we lost 16 Beauforts, eight Beaufighters, two Wirraways, three Ansons (the famous piggy-back at Brocklesby) due to mid-air collisions. This makes a total of 29, and are the only ones that I know about, there were possibly many more.

In 1943 the RAAF came out with the sticker seen here, a left over from 1943, they were meant to be placed in all aircraft, however, not all the aircraft I flew in had them. What I do remember is that the ones that did have the sticker always gave you a simple reminder of your responsibilities – to keep your eyeballs moving!

I would like to see these stickers positioned once again on the instrument panels of all today's aircraft, maybe instead of the ridiculous requirement to have the brand name on your safety harness – for if you do have a mid-air collision, the safety belts only serve to hold you snugly in your seat on the way down!

I am unaware if the sun being low in the sky played any part in the mid-air collision at Tocumwal, but I can tell you that I have had a very close encounter with an aircraft coming out of the sun and from an area that I had scanned only a split second before. On this occasion the club CFI, sitting in the right hand seat, had also scanned the area into the sun, yet neither of us spotted the other aircraft coming at us. It was



camouflaged by the sun which was very low at that time. This is just one example of how difficult it can be to see and be seen, no doubt there are other conditions in which it is actually impossible to see another aircraft, no matter how hard you look.

On many occasions, whilst having a coffee or a beer at a flying club, I have heard a pilot saying, "The sun was very low, and I had a terrible job positioning the aircraft in the circuit, or lining up the runway, etc, etc."

However, I have never heard a pilot saying "The sun was at my back, and I really had to have my eyeballs on the move, as it would have been impossible for someone else to see me, and if there had been another aircraft in front of me, it was up to ME to avoid the risk of a collision."

These are the facts of flying that sometimes get overlooked.

I feel that just maybe, if only at the next 100-hourly, all aircraft had to have one of these stickers prominently displayed in the cockpit, then all pilots would be reminded of their obligation to **Look Out!** ➔

## AVOID COLLISIONS

### Look Out For Other Aircraft

To be placed in a prominent position in each cockpit