

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

The Airprox Board assessed 23 incidents during the January 2017 meeting, 7 of these were drone/UAV reports and 16 were aircraft-to-aircraft incidents. Of the aircraft-to-aircraft incidents, a definite risk of collision was assessed to exist for 5 events (1 x Category A and 4 x Category B). Two of these risk-bearing incidents involved aircraft joining the visual circuit (see comments below and the Airprox of the Month) which reinforces the need to fully understand the various join types, adhere to procedures, and watch out for others joining the circuit who you may not have heard on the radio. The other main themes discussed this month were: poor airmanship decisions in 9 incidents; late-sightings/non-sightings in 5 events; and 3 miscellaneous incidents involving simple conflicts where neither pilot was fully aware of the other.

As for the 2 incidents involving aircraft joining the visual circuit, both of these involved a combination of pilots pressing on when uncertain of the position of the other aircraft; assuming another pilot would do something he did not in the end do; pilots not following join procedures (thereby denying others situational awareness of where they might be); and confusion over radio calls that were either missed, or not representative of what the pilot was actually doing. As we have seen before, and especially at airfields with air-ground only, the visual circuit relies heavily on people being predictable (or clearly stating their intentions if they cannot be); robust lookout at all times; thinking about potential conflict points (and especially with respect to non-radio or radio-fail aircraft); and clear communication of intentions.

My **Airprox of the month** was one of these joining incidents. **Airprox 2016210** was a Category A incident involving a PA30 and an RV9 that were both joining runway 27LH at Shobden. The RV9 pilot was joining from the south and conducted an overhead join as he stated on the radio. The PA30 initially wanted to join effectively crosswind from the north but agreed also to conduct an overhead join when requested by the AFISO. Unfortunately, the PA30 pilot then subsequently reverted to a crosswind join rather than flying through the overhead, and the 2 aircraft came into proximity near the upwind threshold. The PA30 pilot was of course perfectly entitled to join crosswind, but should have made his revised intention to do so clear to all, and should have avoided the RV9. The full report can be found on the UKAB website at (www.airproxboard.org.uk) in the 'Airprox Reports and Analysis' section within the appropriate year in the 'Individual Airprox reports' tab.

