

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

Six of the 19 Airprox reviewed in June 2016 were assessed as risk bearing (Category A or Category B) by the Board. Of these risk bearing events, 5 involved drones, and the remaining occurrence was yet another incident of an aircraft, this time an R44, flying through an active glider site and into conflict with a winch-launching Discus. At the risk of being disappointingly repetitive, the message from this Category A incident is the same as last month, don't fly overhead glider sites below the promulgated maximum winch-launch height as shown on the VFR chart. I raise this again because the gliding season is about to reach full swing and so the risk of hitting gliders or their launch cables is very real if GA pilots chose to fly too close to the sites. Glider launch teams also need to ensure that they are vigilant during the pre-launch checks, especially since some of the higher-speed light aircraft can approach very quickly and may not be visible at the start of the launch run due to obscuration if they are low.

Other themes evident this month included: 6 incidents in or around the visual circuit; 7 late sightings or simple conflicts in Class G that were resolved by one or other of the pilots; and 5 events displaying either questionable airmanship decisions by pilots or circumstances where a controller either made an error or could have done more to provide better Traffic Information

My **Airprox of the month** this month was a Category E event at Gloucester Airport. Although Category E events represent situations where normal safety standards pertained, there are often valuable lessons to be learnt nonetheless. What happened in Airprox 2016059 was that a PA34 conducting a go-around from an IFR approach caught up with a PA28 that had just got airborne ahead and was departing on the same track to the same altitude. The PA34 was of course required to give way under the 'overtaking' rule but, having initially seen the PA28 and informed ATC of this, the PA34 pilot then lost sight. Two actions would have been appropriate, first to have changed track to introduce some lateral separation, but also to have told ATC (and thus also the PA28 pilot) that he had lost visual; ATC would undoubtedly have tried to assist if they had known of the problem. For his part, the PA28 pilot knew that the PA34 was catching him up and climbing to the same altitude, so defensive flying might suggest that he too spoke up on the radio to provide information on his intentions. In the end, the PA34 pilot regained visual contact as he overtook on the left on a parallel track separated by 0.3nm; hence the assessment as Category E. The full report can be found on the UKAB website at (www.airproxboard.org.uk) in the 'Airprox Reports and Analysis' section.

