

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

The Board discussed 16 aircraft-to-aircraft incidents and 15 aircraft-to-drone incidents during the June 2017 meeting. Of the aircraft-to-aircraft incidents, 5 were assessed as having a definite risk of collision (3 x Category A and 2 x Category B), and the main theme this month was the number incidents brought about by ongoing military ATC controller manning problems at their busy units. Although not all of these incidents involved GA aircraft, there is much that the GA community can do to assist military ATC units by calling at an early stage and being clear in intentions; even an extra couple of minutes can help the controllers assimilate what you want and find time respond in the increasingly busy military environment, especially in Lincolnshire and East Anglia.

There was a mixed bag of other Airprox themes including 5 late- or non-sightings, 4 conflicts in Class G Airspace, and 7 various airmanship issues varying from flying too close, poor selection of ATS for the conditions, inaction, and sub-optimal avoidance or integration with other aircraft already in the visual circuit. Just to clarify, the difference between non-/late-sighting and a conflict in Class G is that for the non-/late-sighting incidents the pilots had the opportunity to see the other aircraft earlier but did not, whereas for the conflict in Class G incidents the pilots saw the other aircraft as early as could reasonably be expected given the conditions at the time.

My **Airprox of the month** this month turns again to integration problems in the visual circuit, but this time focuses on the problems that can be caused by flying non-standard patterns and joins.

Airprox 2017046 occurred when a PA28 and a C152 came into conflict at North Wield: the C152 was downwind, but very far out compared to the normal circuit width; whilst the PA28 initially wanted to join left-base but, on hearing the C152 was downwind, converted to a downwind join of sorts that saw him route the opposite direction for a while before turning to try to intercept a base leg. Although there is no specific circuit width specified in UK, North Wield has a notional track as shown in the diagram. Not expecting the C152 to be that far out and therefore not seeing it as the pilot looked into the circuit, the PA28 turned and came into conflict as it rolled out on base leg. A combination of the wide C152 circuit and the PA28 non-standard join, the Airprox demonstrated the need to fly procedures accurately and state your intentions clearly in the circuit, especially when there is only an AGCS or AFISO to assist. Full details of the incident are at www.airproxboard.org.uk in the 'Airprox Reports and Analysis' section within the appropriate year and then in the 'Individual Airprox reports' tab.

