

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

The Airprox Board discussed 15 aircraft-to-aircraft incidents and 22 aircraft-to-drone incidents during our May meeting. The unusually high number of drone incidents was purely as a result of a streamlined assessment process rather than a surge in drone incidents *per se*. Of the aircraft-to-aircraft incidents, 3 were assessed as having a definite risk of collision (2 x Category A and 1 x Category B), and 9 overall had some element of sub-optimal airmanship aspects. Many of these airmanship aspects involved poor integration with other aircraft (especially when joining or in the visual circuit where 6 incidents were generated). There were also 6 incidents of late- or non-sightings, and 4 encounters where ATC could have done better or there were poor controllership decisions.

As part of an initiative to adopt a systematic approach to Airprox assessment, we have been using safety barriers to assist in our causal analysis for the latter part of 2016. Some interesting trends show that: See-and-avoid was only fully effective in about 35% of incidents; Pilot situational awareness was only fully effective in 18% of incidents, but was partially effective in 45%; and electronic collision avoidance systems only contributed partially or fully in 36% of Airprox. Food for thought, now might be the time to think about whether buying some form of electronic conspicuity system might be useful in enhancing that lookout and situational awareness.

My **Airprox of the month** this month involved an integration problem at Sleaford. **Airprox 2017049** saw 2 x PA28s come into conflict as both were joining from the overhead. One pilot conducted the overhead join in a textbook fashion, whilst the second pilot lost sight of the airfield and then did not properly conduct an overhead join. As a result, the second aircraft ended up turning inside the first, and descending from the overhead on top of the then downwind first PA28. This second pilot saw the first as he initially turned, thought he was clear, but then lost sight. Fortunately, the first pilot then saw the descending PA28 as it flew ahead, and was able to avoid it by turning early onto base-leg. This was a timely lesson about the need both to fly procedures as published so that others will know where you are, and to ensure that you integrate properly with other aircraft already established in the circuit. Full details of the incident can be found at www.airproxboard.org.uk in the 'Airprox Reports and Analysis' section within the appropriate year and then in the 'Individual Airprox reports' tab.

