

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

The Airprox Board reviewed 18 aircraft-to-aircraft incidents and 16 aircraft-to-drone incidents in October 2017. Of the aircraft-to-aircraft incidents, 7 were assessed as having a definite risk of collision: all these were Category B (safety much reduced either due to serendipity, misjudgement, inaction, or where emergency avoiding action was taken at the last minute).

Because we work about 4 months in arrears, it's usual at this time of the year when assessing the summer's crop of incidents that late- and non-sightings account for many Airprox as folk got airborne in large numbers over the summer with sometimes rusty lookout - 7 of this month's 18 incidents were attributed to this cause. That is not to criticise individuals, the limitations of the human eye in the aviation environment are well documented, as is the need to ensure a robust lookout and scan technique as a result. It is simply that when other priorities, pressures or tasks start to distract us, discipline is required to overcome any lack of currency and maintain lookout as a key part of the 'Aviate-Navigate-Communicate' and 'Lookout-Attitude-Instruments' mantras. Something to think about when we all dust off our flying gloves again next year.

My **Airprox of the month** this month involved a **Tucano** formation and a **Gyrocopter** near RAF Linton-on-Ouse (**Airprox 2017120**). This incident primarily demonstrated how misunderstanding between pilots and ATC can suddenly snowball into a real issue, but the added uncertainty as to the intentions of the Gyrocopter pilot as he flew near to the approach path of RAF Linton at 1000ft certainly exacerbated the problem for them. ATC were trying to be helpful by passing information to the Tucanos about a primary-only radar track (i.e. ATC had no height information) as they made a radar-to-visual recovery to RAF Linton. Unfortunately, the Tucano leader misinterpreted their call and ended up unintentionally turning towards the gyrocopter he was trying to avoid. If the gyrocopter pilot had called up Linton ATC then that would have removed all doubt as to his track, height and intentions, and therefore enabled ATC to provide the Tucanos, and perhaps him, with a better service. There's no requirement to make such a call of course, but if you can do so as you pass close to an airfield's MATZ/ATZ then why not? Sometimes pilots worry that ATC will then try to control them, but they won't: they might ask if you can help by altering course or height slightly, but simply offering them information is not an invitation for them to take over! Full details of the incident are at [www.airproxboard.org.uk](http://www.airproxboard.org.uk) in the 'Airprox Reports and Analysis' section within the appropriate year and then in the 'Individual Airprox reports' tab.

