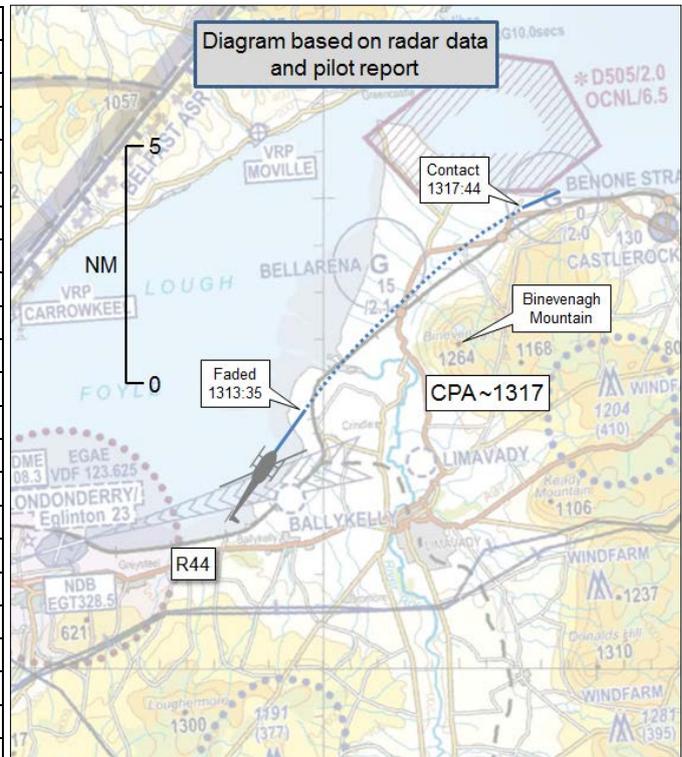


AIRPROX REPORT No 2016225

Date: 23 Oct 2016 Time: 1317Z Position: 5509N 00653W Location: ivo Binevenagh Mountain

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	R44	Drone
Operator	Civ Comm	
Airspace	Scottish FIR	Scottish FIR
Class	G	
Rules	VFR	
Service	Basic	
Provider	Eglinton	
Altitude/FL	NK	
Transponder	NK	
Reported		Not reported
Colours	NK	
Lighting	NK	
Conditions	VMC	
Visibility	NK	
Altitude/FL	1000ft	
Altimeter	QNH (NK hPa)	
Heading	NK	
Speed	NK	
ACAS/TAS	Unknown	
Alert	Unknown	
	Separation	
Reported	300ft V/50ft H	
Recorded	NK	



THE R44 PILOT reports conducting a sightseeing trip to the North Antrim coast. While flying past Binevenagh mountain he observed a drone in the area. Warnings were passed to other aircraft in the vicinity and the pilot was requested to phone the tower on landing. The pilot reported that he did not have to take avoiding action but was nevertheless concerned as to the proximity of the drone to his aircraft.

He did not make an assessment of the risk.

THE DRONE OPERATOR: The drone operator could not be traced.

THE EGLINTON CONTROLLER reports the R44 pilot departed the airport for a sightseeing trip to the North Antrim Coast. At 1317, while flying past Binevenagh mountain, the pilot reported observing a drone in the area. Warnings were passed to other aircraft in the vicinity and the pilot was requested to phone the tower on landing.

Factual Background

The weather at Eglinton was recorded as follows:

METAR EGAE 231320Z 07012KT 9999 FEW034 12/06 Q1016=

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

There are no specific ANO regulations limiting the maximum height for the operation of drones that weigh 7kg or less other than if flown using FPV (with a maximum weight of 3.5kg) when 1000ft is the maximum height. Drones weighing between 7kg and 20kg are limited to 400ft unless in accordance with airspace requirements. Notwithstanding, there remains a requirement to maintain direct, unaided visual contact with the aircraft sufficient to monitor its flight path in relation to other aircraft, persons, vehicles, vessels and structures for the purpose of avoiding collisions. CAP 722 gives guidance that, within the UK, visual line of sight (VLOS) operations are normally accepted to mean a maximum distance of 500m [1640ft] horizontally and 400ft [122m] vertically from the Remote Pilot.

All drone operators are also required to observe ANO 2016 Article 94(2) which requires that the person in charge of a small unmanned aircraft may only fly the aircraft if reasonably satisfied that the flight can safely be made, and the ANO 2016 Article 241 requirement not to recklessly or negligently cause or permit an aircraft to endanger any person or property. Allowing that the term 'endanger' might be open to interpretation, drones of any size that are operated in close proximity to airfield approach, pattern of traffic or departure lanes, or above 1000ft agl (i.e. beyond VLOS (visual line of sight) and FPV (first-person-view) heights), can be considered to have endangered any aircraft that come into proximity. In such circumstances, or if other specific regulations have not been complied with as appropriate above, the drone operator will be judged to have caused the Airprox by having flown their drone into conflict with the aircraft.

A CAA web site¹ provides information and guidance associated with the operation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UASs) and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and CAP722 (UAS Operations in UK Airspace) provides comprehensive guidance.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when an R44 and a drone flew into proximity at about 1317 on Sunday 23rd October 2016. The R44 pilot was operating under VFR in VMC in receipt of a Basic Service from Eglinton. The drone operator could not be traced.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of a report from the R44 pilot, radar photographs/video recordings and a report from the air traffic controller involved.

The Board quickly agreed that both aircraft were adequately separated, the R44 pilot was not concerned by the proximity of the drone and he did not need to take avoiding action. Given the height of the ground in the area of Binevenagh mountain, the drone operator was almost certainly operating at less than 400ft. The Board therefore agreed that both aircraft were entitled to operate as they were, and that this was a sighting report, with a risk category of E; normal safety standards had pertained.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A sighting report.

Degree of Risk: E.

¹ dronesafe.uk