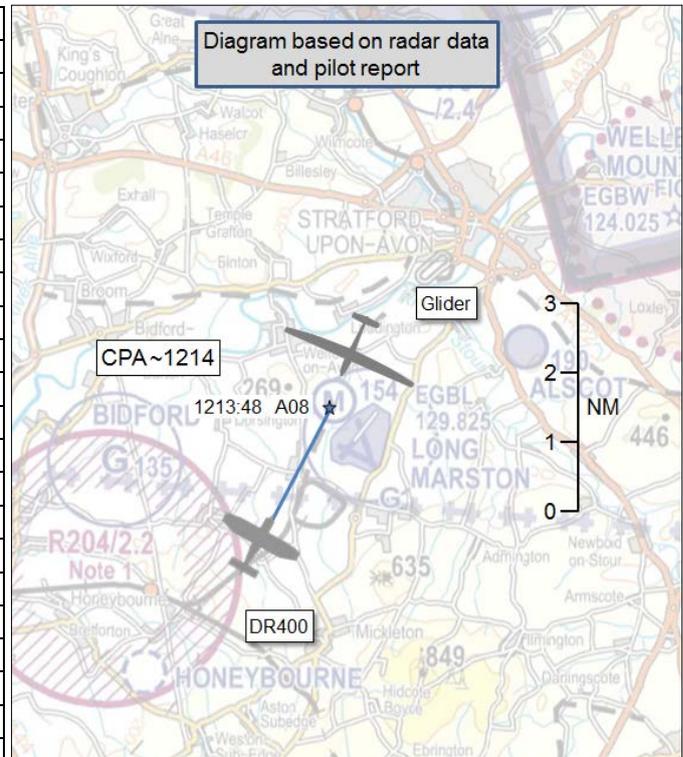


## AIRPROX REPORT No 2017186

Date: 06 Aug 2017 Time: 1214Z Position: 5209N 00146W Location: Long Marston

### PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Robin DR400	Unknown glider
Operator	Civ Club	Unknown
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	
Service	None	
Provider	(Long Marston)	
Altitude/FL	800ft	
Transponder	A, C	
<b>Reported</b>		Not reported
Colours	Yellow, white	
Lighting	Strobe, landing	
Conditions	VMC	
Visibility	>20km	
Altitude/FL	900ft	
Altimeter	QFE (1015hPa)	
Heading	030°	
Speed	85kt	
ACAS/TAS	FLARM	
Alert	None	
<b>Separation</b>		
Reported	75ft V/35m H	NK
Recorded		NK



**THE DR400 PILOT** reports that he was carrying out circuits at Long Marston for currency, listening out on the Long Marston operating frequency. The aircraft operating company's CFI had arranged a NOTAM to be issued to highlight the busy training environment at Long Marston as it was known that Bidford gliding club was holding a 9-day cross-country competition and that most of the competition pilots would be visitors to the area. The DR400 pilot commented that he was a member of Bidford gliding club and that he was aware that there would be up to 30 Bidford competition gliders in the general area in 'pre-start' mode once the 'grid' was launched. He was also aware that the competition morning briefing would have highlighted the NOTAM at Long Marston. On his second circuit, at the beginning of the downwind leg for RW22 right-hand, he saw no other traffic and used the checklist to do the pre-landing checks. On looking up, he saw a white glider at a range of about 100m, directly ahead and slightly above, on a reciprocal course. The DR400 pilot noted that there was no FLARM alert from the glider, although there were FLARM indications from other aircraft in the area, and that, as it passed, he saw the distinctive bubble canopy of a Libelle. He did not take avoiding action due to the very late sighting and because they were not on a collision course. The DR400 pilot commented that although he was a 1000-hour glider pilot, used to flying in close proximity to other gliders, in thermal and ridge flying, this incident unsettled him. He flew one more circuit but decided that the close encounter had affected his concentration and so 'called it a day'.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

**THE GLIDER PILOT:** The UKAB were not able to trace the glider pilot despite glider members conducting an extensive investigation into the likely identity of the glider. They reviewed the competition GPS tracks and came to the conclusion that the glider was probably not part of the Bidford competition given the lack of any of their tracks in that area and the fact that the single Libelle entered in the competition was not in the area at the time.

## Factual Background

The weather at Birmingham was recorded as follows:

METAR EGBB 061220Z 21008KT 180V260 9999 BKN036 19/10 Q1020=

## Analysis and Investigation

### UKAB Secretariat

The DR400 and glider pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard<sup>1</sup>. An aircraft operated on or in the vicinity of an aerodrome shall conform with or avoid the pattern of traffic formed by other aircraft in operation<sup>2</sup>.

## Summary

An Airprox was reported when a DR400 and a glider flew into proximity at about 1214 on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2017. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, neither in receipt of a Service.

## **PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS**

Information available consisted of a report from the DR400 pilot.

Members agreed that this incident highlighted the need to expect the unexpected; remain vigilant at all times even when within the protection of an ATZ or NOTAM; and that gliders were difficult to acquire visually, especially when viewed from directly ahead with little aspect change. After some further discussion, members agreed that it was reasonable to expect the glider pilot to have known of the location of the airfield at Long Marston given that it was marked on the VFR chart and subject to a NOTAM which he/she would have been expected to check before getting airborne. As such, he/she was required to conform with the traffic pattern formed by the DR400 (in as much as a glider would be so able), or to avoid the pattern entirely. With this in mind, the Board agreed that the cause of the Airprox was that the glider pilot had flown through the visual circuit of a promulgated and active microlight site and into conflict with the DR400. Members discussed the risk and agreed that, with the DR400 pilot coincidentally looking up from his checklist as the glider approached head-on, providence had played a major part in avoiding collision.

## **PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE, RISK AND SAFETY BARRIERS**

Cause: The glider pilot flew through the visual circuit at a promulgated and active microlight site and into conflict with the DR400.

Degree of Risk: A.

<sup>1</sup> SERA.3205 Proximity.

<sup>2</sup> SERA.3225 Operation on and in the Vicinity of an Aerodrome.

### Safety Barrier Assessment<sup>3</sup>

In assessing the effectiveness of the safety barriers associated with this incident, the Board concluded that the key factors had been that:

#### Flight Crew:

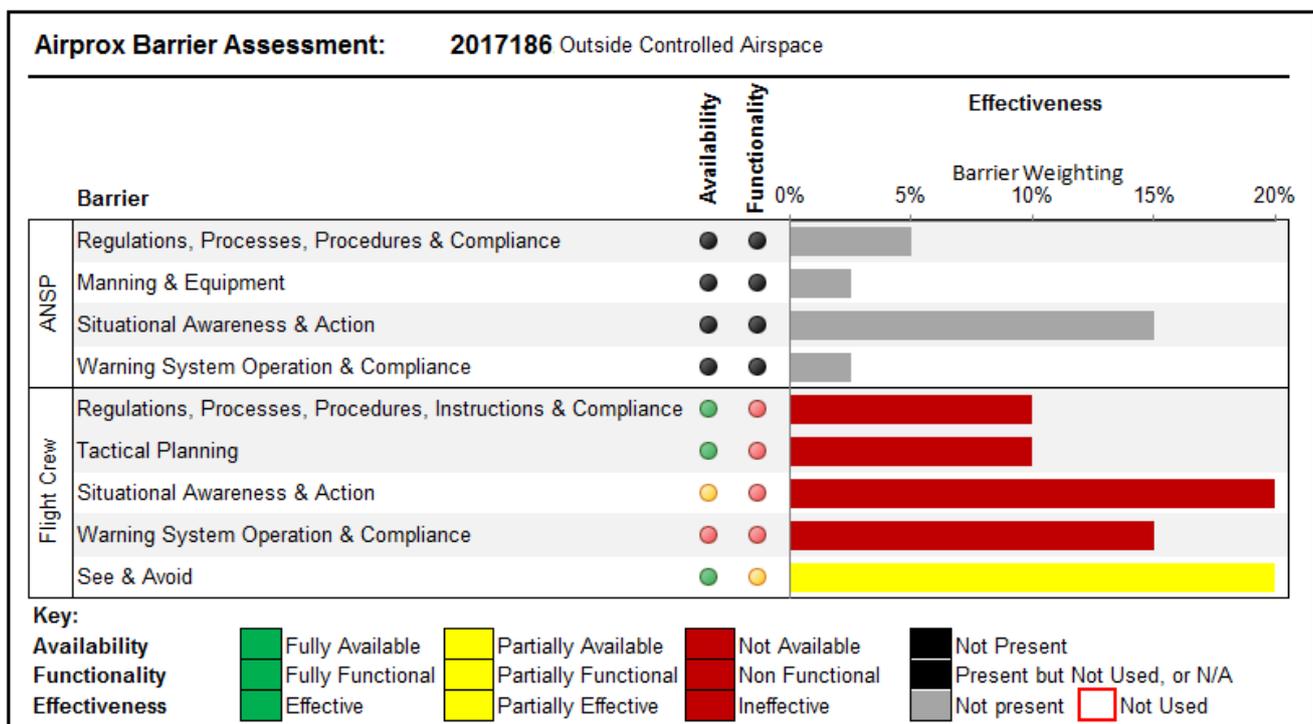
**Regulations, Processes, Procedures, Instructions and Compliance** were assessed as **ineffective** because the glider pilot did not conform with or avoid the pattern of traffic formed by other aircraft in operation at Long Marston.

**Tactical Planning** was assessed as **ineffective** because the glider pilot flew through the visual circuit at Long Marston despite the fact that it was marked on the VFR chart and that a NOTAM had been promulgated.

**Situational Awareness and Action** were assessed as **ineffective** because the glider pilot was presumably not aware of the DR400 in the visual circuit and the DR400 pilot was not aware of the glider in the visual circuit pattern.

**Warning System Operation and Compliance** were assessed as **ineffective** because the DR400 FLARM did not alert.

**See and Avoid** were assessed as **partially effective** because the DR400 pilot did not see the glider until at a late stage, albeit there was sufficient time to assess that they were not on a collision course.



<sup>3</sup> The UK Airprox Board scheme for assessing the Availability, Functionality and Effectiveness of safety barriers can be found on the [UKAB Website](#).