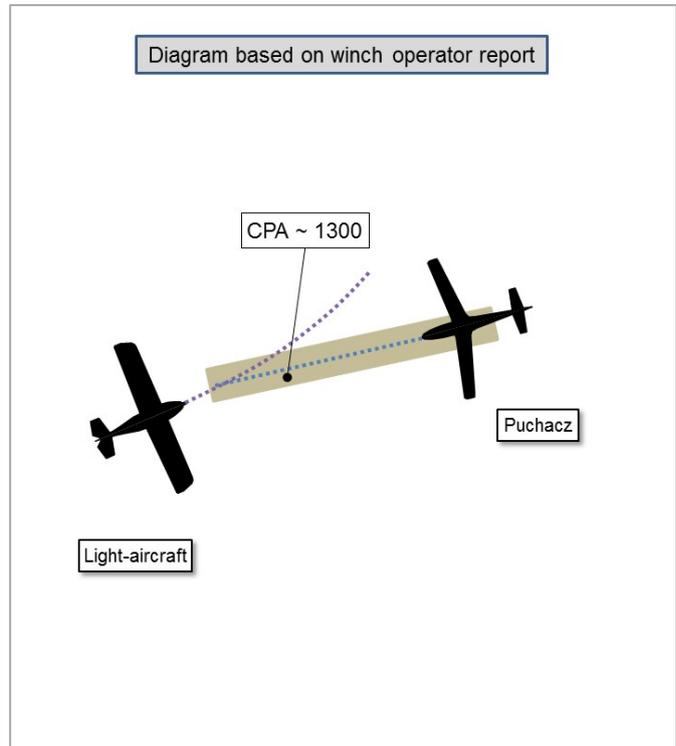


AIRPROX REPORT No 2018013

Date: 25 Jan 2018 Time: 1300Z Position: 5249N 00042W Location: Saltby Glider Site

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Puchacz	Light Aircraft
Operator	Civ Club	Unknown
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	
Service	None	
Provider	N/A	
Altitude/FL	NK	
Transponder	Not Fitted	
Reported		Not Reported
Colours	White	
Lighting	None	
Conditions	VMC	
Visibility	>10km	
Altitude/FL	1500ft	
Altimeter	NK	
Heading	250°	
Speed	60kt	
ACAS/TAS	Not fitted	
Separation		
Reported	200ft V/200m H	NK
Recorded	NK	



THE WINCH OPERATOR reports being located at the western end of RW25. The Puchacz being launched had just released at the top of the tow (at about 1700ft QFE). Almost immediately after the winch cable had been released, an aircraft crossed the airfield below the level of the glider and the winch cable. The aircraft was about 200m from the glider and winch cable. The aircraft had approached from the WSW and was heading ENE. Therefore, the aircraft came from behind the right side of the winch and flew almost overhead before flying away and to his left. He was not in a position where he could see any registration but it was a small high-wing aircraft similar in appearance to a C42. The incident was also seen by the Duty Instructor who was standing at the launch point.

He perceived the severity of the incident as 'High'.

THE LIGHT AIRCRAFT PILOT could not be traced. The radar replay did not show either aircraft throughout the time period reported by the Puchacz pilot, therefore it was not possible to identify the light-aircraft, its track or the separation.

Factual Background

The weather at Cranwell was recorded as follows:

METAR EGYD 251250Z 20018KT 9999 FEW026 09/02 Q1004 BLU NOSIG

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

The Puchacz and light-aircraft pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard¹. 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 operation².

Comments

BGA

It is very unfortunate that overflights of active winch launch sites continue to occur.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a Puchacz and a light-aircraft flew into proximity at about 1300 on Thursday 25th January 2018 overhead Saltby Glider Site. The Puchacz pilot was operating under VFR in VMC and not under a service. The light-aircraft pilot could not be traced.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of a report from the winch operator.

The Board began by discussing the actions of the Duty Instructor (DI) and the winch operator and whether it would have been possible for the DI (who had presumably seen the light-aircraft approaching) to have communicated with the winch operator to warn him to abort the launch. The BGA member said that normally the DI and winch operator were in radio contact, but he went on to explain that although the winch operator could potentially have stopped the launch if he had been alerted, in many circumstances this can have a greater detrimental effect upon safety due to glider launch parameters and so timing of such a decision was critical.

The Board then looked at the actions of the pilots. The Puchacz pilot had been at a steep angle of climb whilst being winch launched, and it was understandable that he was highly unlikely to see the light-aircraft as a result. As for the light-aircraft pilot, the Board agreed that by flying through an active and promulgated glider site below the winch-launch altitude, the pilot had endangered his aircraft and the Puchacz pilot, and that it was clear that he had not conformed with the pattern of traffic formed by the aircraft at the glider site. Indeed, by flying below the glider, members opined that the light-aircraft pilot had been lucky that he had not flown into the winch cable.

The Board then looked at the cause of the Airprox and quickly agreed that the light-aircraft pilot had flown overhead a promulgated and active glider site, below the maximum winch launch height, and into conflict with the Puchacz. Turning to the risk, they noted that the reported separation had been observed from the ground and might be prone to errors of perspective. Notwithstanding, the BGA member said that winch operator and Duty Instructor would be experienced glider pilots and that their estimate of separation was likely to be reasonably accurate. Although the separation was estimated by them as 200m and 200ft, the Board were very concerned that the light-aircraft pilot had flown below the Puchacz and possibly very close to the winch cable. As a result, the Board agreed that safety had been much reduced below the norm, and they therefore determined the risk as Category B.

¹ SERA.3205 Proximity.

² SERA.3225 Operation on and in the Vicinity of an Aerodrome.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The light-aircraft pilot flew overhead a promulgated and active glider site, below the maximum winch launch height, and into conflict with the Puchacz.

Degree of Risk: B.

Safety Barrier Assessment³

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

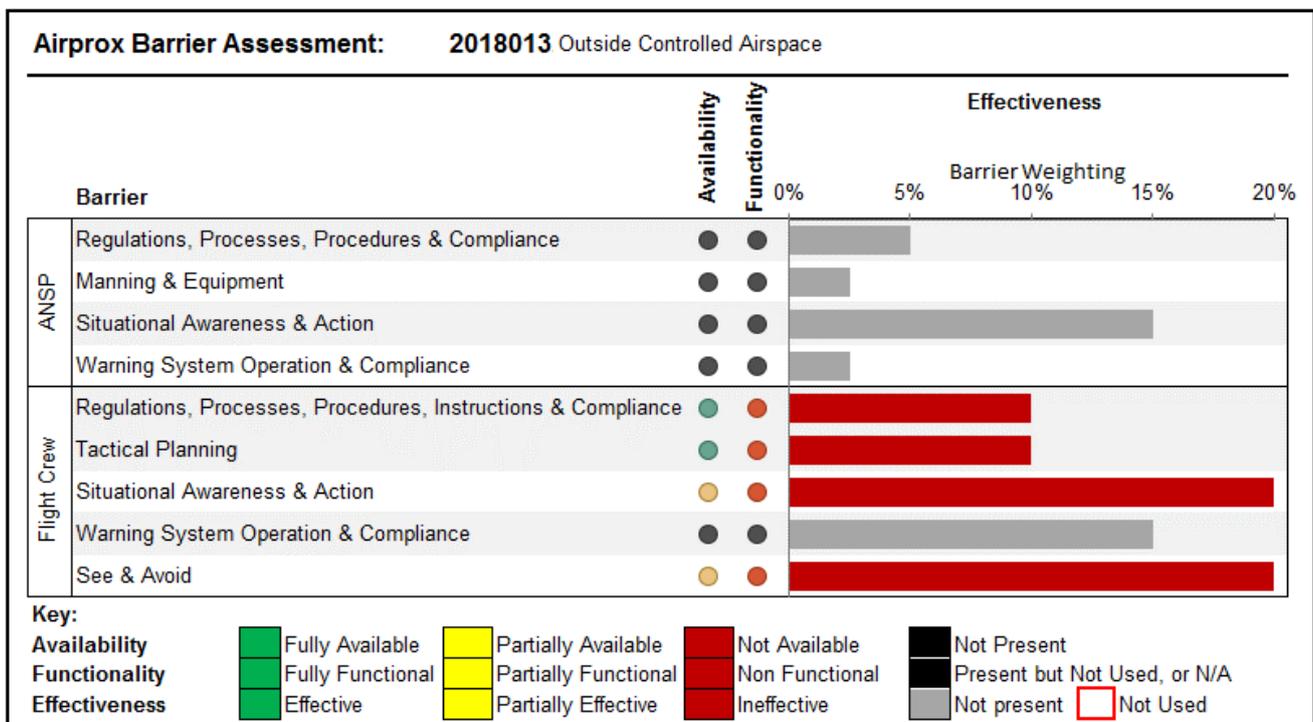
Flight Crew:

Regulations, Processes, Procedures, Instructions and Compliance were assessed as **ineffective** because the light-aircraft pilot did not avoid the pattern of traffic at a promulgated and active glider site.

Tactical Planning was assessed as **ineffective** because the glider site was marked on the maps yet the light-aircraft pilot did not plan his route to avoid the site by a sufficient margin.

Situational Awareness and Action were assessed as **ineffective** because the light-aircraft pilot would have had generic SA regarding the glider site from his chart but did not appear to have acted on that information.

See and Avoid were assessed as **ineffective** because the Puchacz pilot did not see the light-aircraft due to the angle of climb of his aircraft during the winch-launch, and the light-aircraft pilot probably did not see the Puchacz.



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