

AIRPROX REPORT No 2010048

Date/Time: 15 May 2010 (Saturday) 1528Z

Position: 5249N 00043W (Saltby Airfield - elev 480ft)

Airspace: Lon FIR (Class: G)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: Slingsby Cadet Rockwell 114

Operator: Civ Club Civ Pte

Alt/FL: 1000ft 1500ft
(QFE) (NK)

Weather: VMC CAVOK VMC CLBC

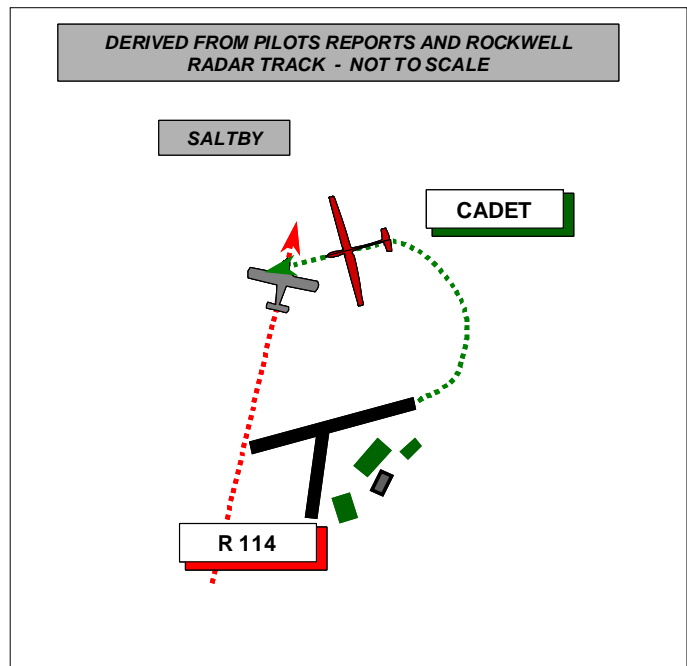
Visibility: 20km >10km

Reported Separation:

150ft V/500m H 500ft V/400m H

Recorded Separation:

NR



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE SLINGSBY CADET PILOT reports that he had completed a normal glider winch launch to a height of 1200ft AAL at Saltby airfield in a silver ac with no SSR, radio or lights. Turning crosswind into the cct (RWY08 LH cct) he noticed a white low wing, single-engined, ac with a green stripe on a heading of about 300° about 3-4nm away, approaching the airfield, very slightly above the horizon. Initially, he believed the ac to be the glider tug returning to the airfield. On turning downwind, however, heading 260° at 30kt, he remained visual with the ac and assessed that there was a risk of collision so he commenced a shallow descent to increase the vertical separation and completed a normal landing. The ac passed about 500m in front of him, from left to right and about 150ft above, while he was descending through 1000ft AAL. The ac flightpath did not deviate and it flew directly through the airfield overhead.

He reported the incident to the Duty Instructor on landing and assessed that although, in the event, the risk of collision was low, he believed that had the ac flown that track one minute earlier it would have flown into the winch cable or his ac on the launch.

THE ROCKWELL 114 PILOT reports flying a white ac with a green stripe on a VFR private flight squawking with Mode S. He had attempted to contact Cottesmore for a service but there was no response. While heading 005° at 140kt, 5nm NNW of Cottesmore, his passenger in the right-hand seat saw a glider 500m away in their 2 o'clock and estimated it to be 500ft below them. It passed below them and to the starboard and the pilot eventually saw the white glider when it was behind and below them. He thought that he did not see it initially as it would have been outside his field of vision as they approached, being below the sight line over the engine cowl.

Since he did not see the glider until after it passed he was unable to take any avoiding action but nevertheless assessed the risk of collision as being none.

He was avoiding Cottesmore ATZ as he had not been able to establish radio contact with ATC. He assumed they were closed but the ATZ was active, otherwise his track would have been through the ATZ. His course would have taken him close to the Glider Site where the Airprox was reported.

UKAB Note (1): The recording of the Claxby radar shows the Rockwell 114 tracking 005°, squawking 7000 with Mode C (no Mode S) throughout but the glider does not show at any time. The Rockwell passes over Saltby Airfield at 1528:03 at FL015 (1560ft amsl or about 1080ft agl). (There are also two other contacts squawking 7000 with Mode C, one 1½ nm W at FL028 and another 1½ nm E at FL026.)

UKAB Note (2): Saltby is promulgated in the UKAIP as a glider launch site (winch/ground tow and tug aircraft/motor glider) 2000ft agl (Mon-Fri) and 4000ft agl Sat, Sun.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac and radar recordings.

The Board noted that the Rockwell pilot had taken the correct action by avoiding the Cottesmore ATZ when de got no response from their ATC; a Military Member observed that the hours of operation of Military airfields are widely published but, although MATZ are often closed at weekends, the majority of Military ATZs are H24. Having re-routed to avoid the Cottesmore ATZ, it seemed to Members that the Rockwell pilot had most likely overlooked that his new routeing put him closer to the Saltby glider launch site than he had planned on the ground and that he might not have noticed its presence on his map in the cockpit. Nevertheless, the BGA Member pointed out that it is wise to avoid glider launch sites by a wide lateral margin as winch launch cables, if collided with, can have a 'chain saw' effect on the ac wing as well as a catastrophic result for the launching glider.

In this case, however, the glider pilot saw the approaching Rockwell and monitored its position throughout the incident, judging that only a measured and small descent was required, thus removing any risk of collision.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The Rockwell 114 flew through the circuit of a promulgated and active glider launch site, below winch launch height, and into conflict with the Slingsby Cadet.

Degree of Risk: C.