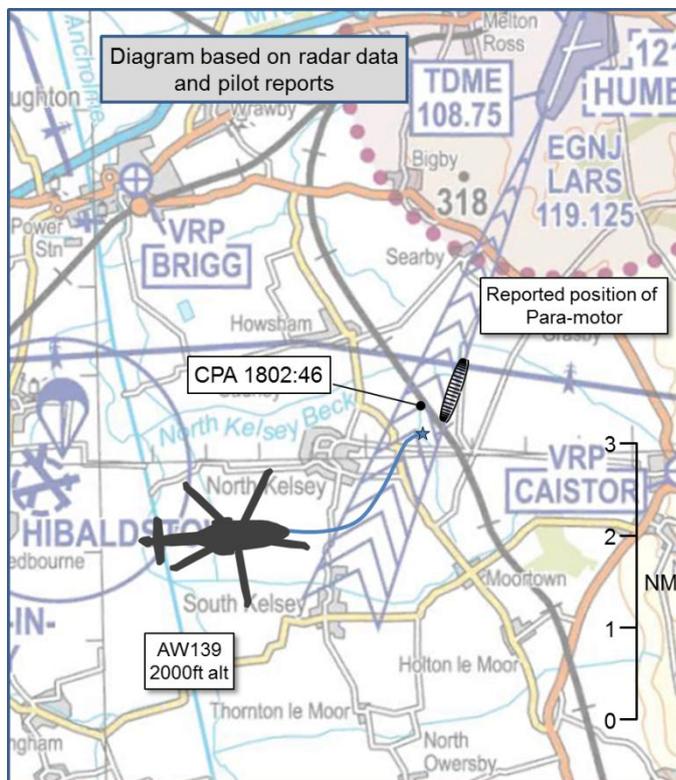


AIRPROX REPORT No 2015057

Date: 1 May 2015 Time: 18.02Z Position: 5329N 00024W Location: North Kelsey, Lincs

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	AW139	Para-Motor
Operator	Civ Comm	Unknown
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	IFR	NK
Service	Traffic	NK
Provider	Humberside	NK
Altitude/FL	2000ft	NK
Transponder	A,C	NK
Reported		
Colours	White/Blue/Red	Red
Lighting	Nav, Anti-Colls	Nil
Conditions	VMC	NK
Visibility	>10km	NK
Altitude/FL	2000ft	NK
Altimeter	QNH (1012hPa)	NK
Heading	023°	NK
Speed	120kt	NK
ACAS/TAS	TCAS I	NK
Alert	Nil	Unknown
Separation		
Reported	200ft V/100m H	NK
Recorded	NK	



THE AW139 PILOT reports that he had just reached the descent point for the NDB approach to RW02 when the non-handling pilot called “contact!” as he became aware of a paramotor, with a red canopy and one engine, slowly moving right-to-left across the nose of the aircraft at the range of 600m and 100ft below. The aircraft was immediately decoupled [from autopilot] and an emergency turn carried out to avoid the paramotor; they passed it 100m right and 200ft below in order to maintain visual contact at all times and in the hope that it would make him aware of their presence and his location. ATC were informed and a visual approach was carried out.

He assessed the risk of collision as ‘High’.

THE PARA-MOTOR PILOT could not be traced.

THE HUMBERSIDE CONTROLLER reports that the AW139 was returning from offshore to Humberside and had been cleared for the NDB/DME procedure for RW02. Once the pilot called established on the approach track, he was cleared to descend in accordance with the procedure. Shortly afterwards the pilot reported taking avoiding action against a para-glider ahead of him, at approximately 4nm finals for RW02. The controller acknowledged and attempted to locate a radar return for the para-glider. The AW139 pilot reported clear of the conflicting traffic and switched to the Tower frequency to continue the approach visually. The controller then managed to locate a faint, intermittent primary contact in the vicinity which tracked slowly north-westerly, before turning southeast. The Tower controller gained visual contact and confirmed it was a para-glider.

Factual Background

The weather at Humberside was reported as:

EGNJ 1750z 070/09 9999 SCT030 08/02 Q1012

Analysis and Investigation

CAA ATSI

The AW139 Helicopter was returning from offshore and had been cleared for a NDB/DME approach to RW02 at Humberside. The A139 was in receipt of a Traffic Service from Humberside Radar. As the AW139 approached a 4-mile final, the pilot reported to ATC that he was taking avoiding action on a “para-glider” which was approximately 100ft below and 600 metres ahead. The Radar controller was able to locate a faint contact in the vicinity after the AW139 had passed. It is not clear whether this was visible on radar before but, because of the nature of such an aircraft, the return would be weak and would be based upon primary radar only. It is also likely that there would have been no discernible track information (history) due to the slow movement. Humberside does not have any controlled airspace and the range at which the AW139 encountered the paramotor was outside of the ATZ. The provision of a Traffic Service does not require a controller to achieve a deconfliction minima and the avoidance of other traffic is the pilots' responsibility.¹ There was no evidence of the para-motor on the MRT Radar recording available to ATSI.

UKAB Secretariat

Both pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard². When two aircraft are converging at approximately the same level, the aircraft that has the other on its right shall give way.

Comments

BHPA

As the paramotor pilot has not been traced, the BHPA cannot comment upon the training that the pilot may, or may not, have received about the ‘feathers’ depiction on the chart. It could have been an off-duty ATPL or military pilot at one extreme or a completely self-taught Ebay'er at the other. The BHPA has long recognised that paramotor pilot training is almost infinitely variable and as part of the current ANO review has resubmitted the proposal³ that it first made to the CAA some 10 years ago. Contact from the CAA is awaited so that it can then hopefully be pursued and the minimum quality of training be raised to an acceptable standard.

With respect to the poor radar display of the paramotor the BHPA is awaiting a response from the CAA's Conspicuity Working Group, which amongst others includes NATS, on the different capabilities and configurations of radars in the UK, particularly with respect to slow moving targets. The lack of a prompt response plus previous comments from various ATC units leads us to wonder as to the consistency of current practices and standards and whether there is the possibility for national-level improvements.

¹ CAP493 Section 1 Chapter 12

² SERA.3205 Proximity.

³ A proposal that the CAA mandate that the pilots of all manned civil aircraft in the UK are required to hold a qualification that demonstrates an acceptable level of knowledge of UK Air Law and airspace. The BHPA already has a proven certification system in place that could be used as a minimum legal requirement.

Summary

An Airprox was reported on 1st May at 1802 between an AW139 and a paramotor. The AW139 was on the NDB approach to Humberside when the pilot saw the paramotor approximately 600m in front of his aircraft. He took avoiding action and then converted to a visual approach.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from the AW139 pilot, transcripts of the relevant RT frequencies, radar photographs/video recordings, reports from the air traffic controllers involved and reports from the appropriate ATC and operating authorities.

The Board first looked at the actions of the paramotor pilot. They acknowledged that he was perfectly entitled to be where he was, in Class G airspace, but commented that although he was crossing the approach "feathers" at right angles for the quickest crossing, it was unfortunate that his height was exactly that of someone descending on the glide-path. They opined that he would have been better served in arranging his flight to be either higher, or lower, at that particular point. The Board were disappointed that the pilot could not be traced, and it was noted that the local clubs that were mentioned in Humberside ATC report had confirmed that he was not operating from them that day. As commented by the BHPA, members highlighted the fact that this illustrated that it was quite feasible for a paramotor pilot to operate autonomously and therefore miss out on vital lessons and experience brought about by being a member of a club. Without being able to gain the paramotor pilot's perspective, the Board were unable to determine whether he had seen or heard the AW139 which, being initially above the paramotor was likely to have been obscured by the paramotor canopy.

It looking at the actions of the AW139 pilot, the Board noted that the incident had happened at a point of high workload when it was likely that the pilots were looking into the cockpit to check their instruments and could well have become task-focused. Furthermore, they opined that it can be difficult to see small aircraft when viewed from above, because it would merge into the landscape below. Despite the inopportune positioning of the paramotor, in accordance with SERA the AW139 pilot was required to give-way, which he did by executing an emergency avoiding action turn, albeit at a relatively late stage.

In discussing the cause of the Airprox, the Board agreed that it was a late sighting by the AW139 pilot; the associated risk was assessed as Category C, timely and effective action had been taken. Recognising that the paramotor pilot may not be part of the BHPA or club communities, the Board felt that it would be helpful nonetheless to highlight the issue of airfield approach lanes to the wider community perhaps through magazine articles etc. As a result, the Board felt that the Airprox warranted a recommendation that the BHPA consider measures to educate paramotor pilots on best practice for crossing airfield approach lanes.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

<u>Cause:</u>	A late sighting by the AW139 pilot.
<u>Degree of Risk:</u>	C.
<u>Recommendation:</u>	The BHPA consider measures to educate paramotor pilots on best practise for crossing airfield approach lanes.