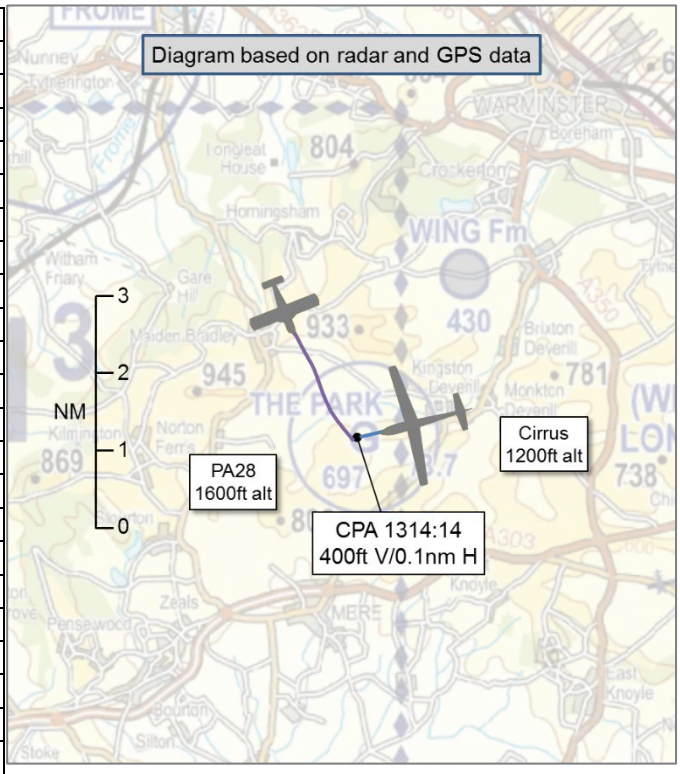
AIRPROX REPORT No 2018060

Date: 22 Apr 2018 Time: 1314Z Position: 5108N 00214W Location: Park Gliding Site

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Cirrus glider	PA28
Operator	Civ Club	Civ Club
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	None	AGCS
Provider	N/A	Compton Abbas
Altitude/FL	1200ft	1600ft
Transponder	Not fitted	A, C, S
Reported		
Colours	White, orange	White, blue
Lighting	Not fitted	Nav, landing
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	5-8km
Altitude/FL	500ft	2000ft
Altimeter	agl	QNH (1010hPa)
Heading	260°	150°
Speed	60kt	95kt
ACAS/TAS	FLARM	Not fitted
Alert	None	N/A
Separation		
Reported	600ft V/500ft H	900ft V/900m H
Recorded	400ft V/~0.1nm H	



THE CIRRUS PILOT reports undertaking a normal winch launch. The 'All Clear Above and Behind' call was made by the gliding Launch Point Controller (LPC). There was then a short delay owing to a communication problem between the LPC and winch driver, after which the launch proceeded. During the steep climb the glider pilot became aware of a powered aircraft approaching from the north on a course which could have resulted in a collision owing to the relative heights and trajectories of the two aircraft. The glider pilot released the cable and made a safe, but challenging, landing back on the airfield and the powered aircraft was seen from the ground to continue on its course southwards apparently without deviation.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE PA28 PILOT reports that he had planned to fly to Sandown but at the time of the Airprox was preparing for a weather diversion to Compton Abbas whilst endeavouring to remain in VFR conditions due to a lowering cloud-base. Whilst doing so, he strayed into the Park Gliding Site area. The glider field was seen late, when 1-2nm north of the western edge, with a glider being launched to the west which had reached a height of a few hundred feet. The PA28 pilot made a right turn (which in hindsight he thought was probably insufficient) but a climb was not possible without entering cloud. He remained visual with the glider until he had cleared its projected path.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

Factual Background

The weather at Bristol and Bournemouth was recorded respectively as follows:

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METAR EGGD 221350Z AUTO 26013KT 9999 OVC029 13/07 Q1010=
METAR EGGD 221320Z AUTO 27013KT 9999 OVC031 13/04 Q1010=
METAR EGGD 221250Z AUTO 27012KT 9999 FEW033 SCT039 15/05 Q1010=

METAR EGHH 221350Z 23011KT CAVOK 17/11 Q1010=
METAR EGHH 221320Z 19007KT CAVOK 18/12 Q1010=
METAR EGHH 221250Z 19009KT CAVOK 17/12 Q1009=
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Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

The Cirrus and PA28 pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard[1]. 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[2].

Comments

BGA

It's unfortunate that the combination of a very brief delay to the glider launch and the PA28 pilot's momentary distraction combined to bring these two aircraft into proximity. A salutary reminder, again, of the dangers of getting too close to winch-launch sites.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a Cirrus and a PA28 flew into proximity at Park glider site at 1314hrs on Sunday 22nd April 2018. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, the Cirrus pilot operating on the CAA allocated glider frequency and the PA28 pilot in receipt of an AGCS from Compton Abbas.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots and radar photographs/video recordings.

Members agreed that although the situation was far from ideal, the converging PA28 had been seen by the glider pilot, who was able to release from the winch and land safely back at the airfield. Members acknowledged that an Airprox such as this carried a number of 'what-if' considerations, not least of all a potential non-sighting by a glider pilot in the high work-load environment of a winch launch. As such, the Board felt that it was for the pilots of other aircraft to ensure they did not endanger glider pilots or themselves by flying over a promulgated and active gliding site below the maximum winch launch altitude, which the PA28 pilot had done.

Members acknowledged that the PA28 pilot was under some stress due to the deteriorating weather and commended him for his open and honest report. He was undoubtedly concerned by the deteriorating weather and was probably distracted by his weather diversion planning, which the Board considered to be contributory. However, GA members commented that it appeared that he had not helped himself by flying directly over Park gliding site, presumably in the process of following a GPS generated track to Compton Abbas, rather than taking a deviating course to the west in the lower ground near Wincanton, further from both the lowering cloudbase and the gliding site. Although the PA28 pilot had seen the glider and taken some action, the Board agreed with his own assessment that

[1] SERA.3205 Proximity.
[2] SERA.3225 Operation on and in the Vicinity of an Aerodrome.

much more positive action was warranted in the circumstances given that the glider pilot might not have been able to see him, or may not have been in a position to safely release from the winch cable. Notwithstanding the other safety issues associated with releasing early from a winch-launch, the Board felt that the glider pilot's actions had been timely and effective in avoiding a collision.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The PA28 pilot flew over a promulgated and active glider site and into conflict with the Cirrus.

Contributory Factors: The PA28 pilot was distracted by his weather diversion planning.

Degree of Risk: C.

Safety Barrier Assessment[3]

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

Flight Crew:

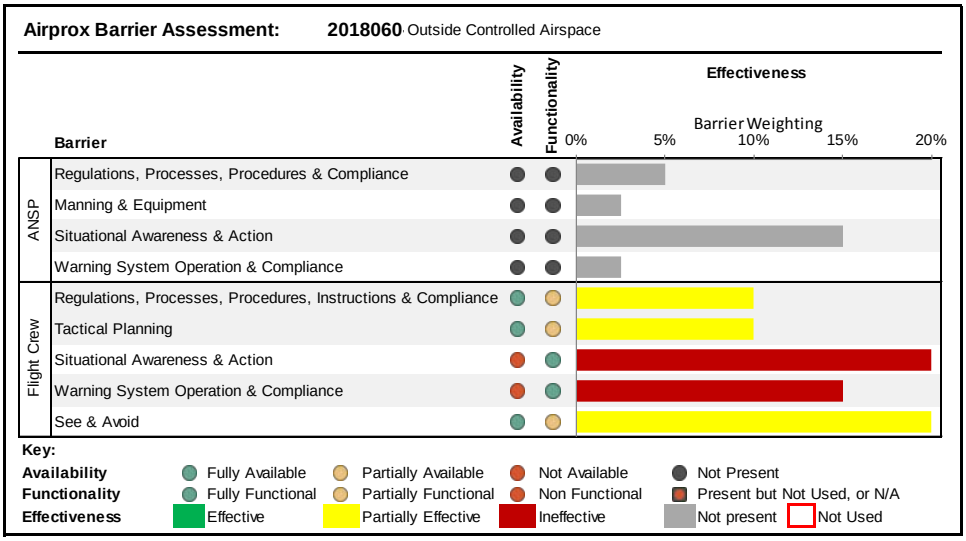
Regulations, Processes, Procedures, Instructions and Compliance were assessed as **partially effective** because the PA28 pilot flew through an active and promulgated gliding site below the maximum winch launch altitude.

Tactical Planning was assessed as **partially effective** because the PA28 pilot did not assimilate that he would track through the gliding site whilst assessing the deteriorating weather and planning his diversion to Compton Abbas.

Situational Awareness and Action were assessed as **ineffective** because neither pilot was aware of their converging tracks or the proximity of the other aircraft prior to visual detection.

Warning System Operation and Compliance were assessed as **ineffective** because the PA28 was not equipped with a compatible TAS and the glider FLARM was not compatible with the PA28 SSR transponder emissions.

See and Avoid were assessed as **partially effective** because, by the nature of a winch launch, the glider pilot saw the PA28 at a fairly late stage.



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