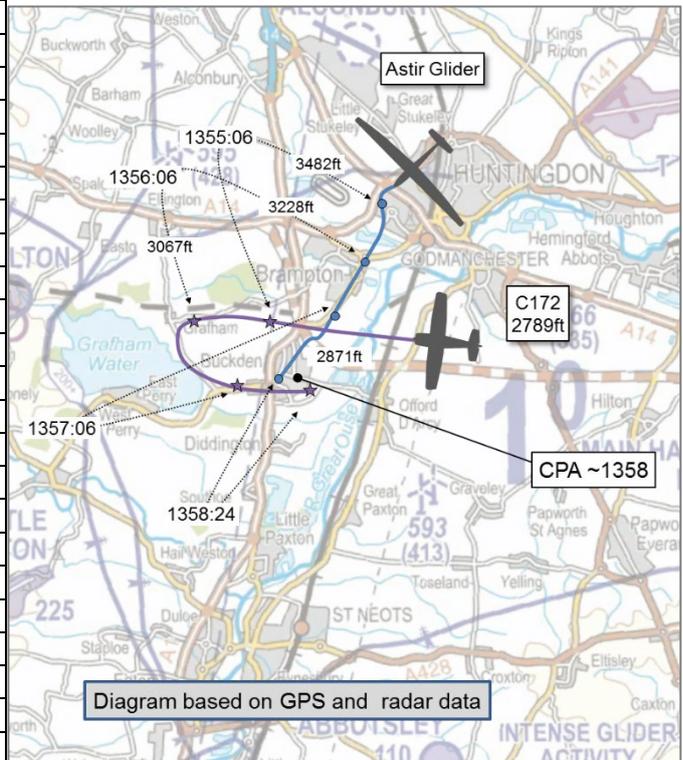


AIRPROX REPORT No 2019138

Date: 09 Jun 2019 Time: 1358Z Position: 5218N 00015W Location: 1nm E Grafham Water

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Astir	Unknown AC
Operator	Civ Gld	
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	
Service	None	
Provider	N/A	
Altitude/FL	~2800ft	
Transponder	Not fitted	
Reported		
Colours	White, Red wing tips	
Lighting	Nil	
Conditions	VMC	
Visibility	30km	
Altitude/FL	1984ft	
Altimeter	QFE (1021hPa)	
Heading	185°	
Speed	59kt	
ACAS/TAS	FLARM	
Alert	None	
Separation		
Reported	50ft V/40m H	
Recorded	~100ft V/0.4nm H	



THE ASTIR PILOT reports it was a good gliding day. He was in a descent and attempting to find lift to take him back up to the cloud base. Flying straight and at a constant speed and descent-rate towards the edge of a cloud to attempt to find a climb, he spotted high-wing single-engine piston-aircraft flying straight-and-level, head-on. With moments before passing, he took immediate avoiding action and turned right. He was uncertain whether the other pilot was aware of the situation. He recalled that there was another glider also in his vicinity, operating about 1000ft above.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as ‘Medium’.

A C172 PILOT who was operating in the area reports that he saw two gliders operating in the area of Grafham Water, neither were communicating on the same frequency as him. He changed his operating area to the east of Grafham Water to let them get on with their operations. No avoiding action was required because they were not at close range.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as ‘None’.

Factual Background

The weather at Luton was recorded as follows:

METAR EGGW 091350Z AUTO 22006KT 160V260 9999 NCD 19/05 Q1019=

UKAB Secretariat

Although the C172 pilot was initially thought to be the other aircraft involved in the Airprox, its routing and height as seen on the radar did not match the description by the glider pilot, nor was there any other aircraft seen on the radar recordings above 2000ft in the vicinity of the glider. Although it is entirely possible that another aircraft was in the area but not painting on radar, the Secretariat could come to no resolution of the event based on the information available and the glider pilot's description of the incident geometry.

The diagram shows the glider track (based on GPS recordings) and the C172 track (based on radar recordings). If it was the subject C172 that the glider pilot saw, then it was sufficiently well separated as it passed from right to left ahead (by about 0.5-1.0nm) that it would be unlikely for the glider pilot to assess the need for an emergency right turn.

The Astir and unknown 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. If the incident geometry is considered as head-on or nearly so then both pilots were required to turn to the right².

Summary

An Airprox was reported when an Astir and an unknown aircraft flew into proximity at 1358hrs on Sunday 9th June 2019. The glider pilot was operating under VFR in VMC, not in receipt of an ATS. The unknown aircraft could not be traced.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from the Astir pilot, radar photographs/video recordings and GPS data.

The Board discussed the description of the Airprox by the Astir pilot, together with the GPS data he provided, and compared this to the radar trace of the C172. The C172 was transiting right to left, not head-on and was much further away than described by the glider pilot (0.5-1.0nm compared to the reported 40m). Knowing that glider pilots frequently fly in close proximity to other gliders, members thought that it was unlikely that the Astir pilot had just misjudged the distance, and they therefore thought that the C172 was unlikely to have been the aircraft in question. They wondered whether there could have been another aircraft in the area; however, there were no other aircraft in the vicinity displaying on the NATS area radar and although the glider displayed as a primary return on the radar, there were no other primary returns. Therefore, members reluctantly agreed that there was not enough information to draw any conclusions as to what had actually happened, nor could they assess the safety barriers or risk of collision.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors: The Board thought that there was insufficient information to assess the Contributory Factors.

Degree of Risk: D.

Safety Barrier Assessment³

The Board concluded that the lack of sufficient information meant that they were unable to assess the barriers.

¹ SERA.3205 Proximity.

² SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c)(1) Approaching head-on.

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