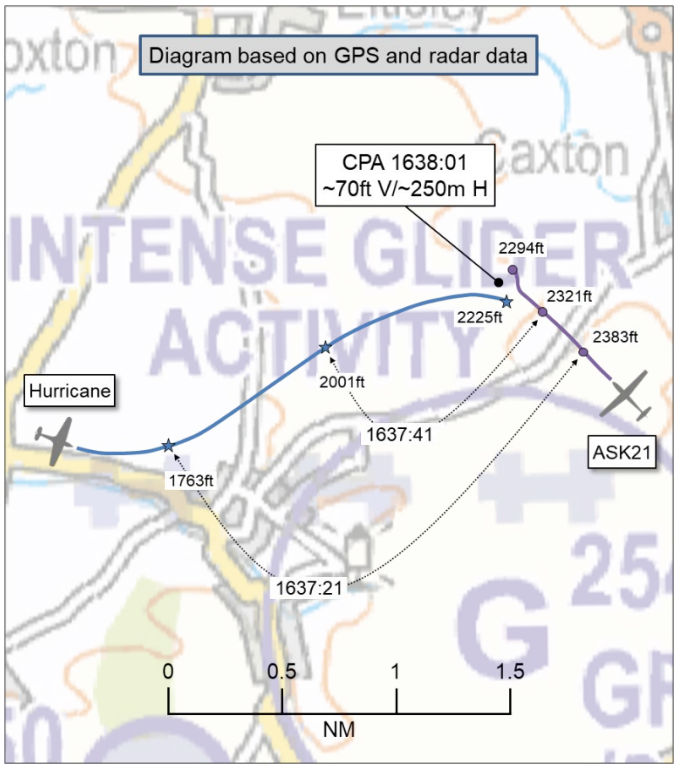
AIRPROX REPORT No 2026034

Date: 26 Mar 2026 Time: 1638Z Position: 5212N 00007W Location: 1NM N Gransden Lodge

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Hurricane	ASK21
Operator	Civ FW	Civ Gld
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	Listening Out	None
Provider	Duxford Traffic	N/A
Altitude/FL	2225ft	2294ft
Transponder	A, C, S+	Not fitted
Reported		
Colours	"*Camouflage*"	White
Lighting	None	None
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	1700ft	2000ft
Altimeter	QNH (1022hPa)	QFE
Heading	135°	270°
Speed	145kt	55kt
ACAS/TAS	PilotAware	FLARM
Alert	None	None
	Separation at CPA	
Reported	0ft V/400m H	0ft V/100m H
Recorded	~70ft V/~250m H	



THE HURRICANE PILOT reports that they had been conducting a post-annual maintenance flight and were returning to [base], ironically, having been flying near Grafham Water at 3000-4000ft to avoid the gliders. A certain amount of oil had collected on the windscreen, and they were flying a descending return at fairly low speed, intending to route round Gransden Lodge and Little Gransden, but also avoiding Cambridge, and [on to their destination]. They were diminishing the energy state of the aircraft slowly. They drifted closer to Gransden than they had intended and made a relatively late spot of a glider which was initially tracking right-to-left at a similar level (initially sighted at 1000m). They turned right to avoid and waggled their wings. The glider tracked past their line of flight and then turned left, towards them, passing behind. Realising that they were closer to Gransden than was sensible, they climbed and routed further away.

They subsequently made contact with the Gliding Club CFI, but it took a day or two to contact them. Meanwhile, [social media] chat comments about better avoidance of gliding sites emerged, including the suggestion that a CHIRP report might be worthwhile. [The Hurricane pilot opined that] it would have been wiser for them to have given the gliding site a wider berth and, agreeing that a CHIRP comment would be useful, they duly submitted a CHIRP report along with this Airprox report.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'Low'.

THE ASK21 PILOT reports that they were performing a straight-line performance test of a 200ft drop at a constant 55kt, heading approximately 270°. Timing of the test was being performed by their P2 (a university student). While doing the straight-line test, they (the pilot) noticed a fast moving object 60° left of view, heading on a converging path [at a reported range of 1-2km]. To highlight the position [of their glider], they performed a right turn to show their underside while positioning away from the converging path, and while keeping the [other] aircraft in sight. Having noticed the other aircraft move away from the convergent path, they then performed a left-hand turn to coincide with the aircraft passing

them [in order] to keep it in full sight (for both pilots). They passed each other at 2000ft and they were certain that the [other] pilot was aware of the glider.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'Low'.

Factual Background

The weather at Cambridge Airport was recorded as follows:

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METAR EGSC 261650Z 33007KT 290V020 CAVOK 09/M06 Q1022
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Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

An analysis of the NATS radar replay was undertaken and the Hurricane could be positively identified from Mode S data (Figure 1). Sporadic primary-only returns were observed in the vicinity of Gransden Lodge, but none could be positively identified.

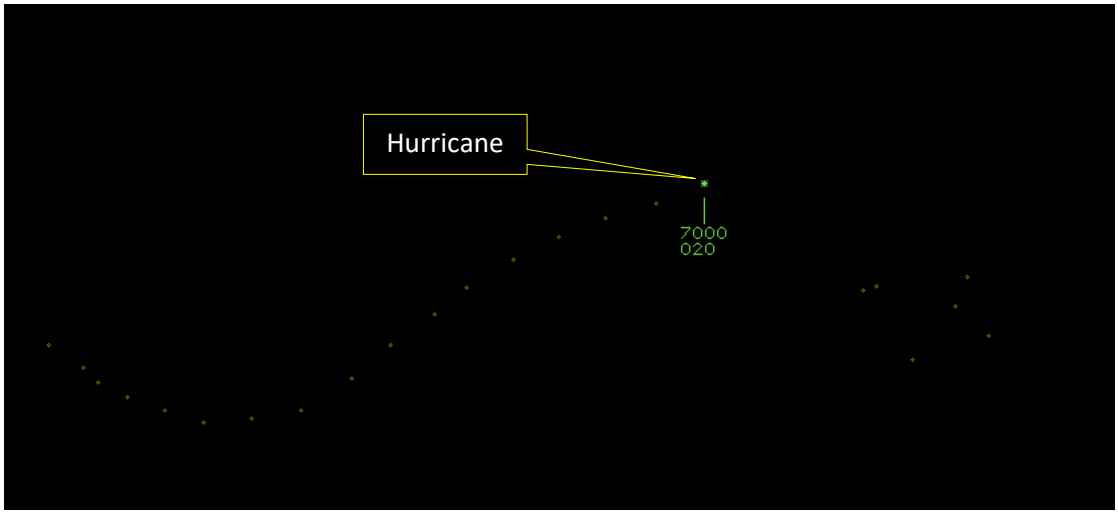

Figure 1 – CPA at 1638:01

Both pilots kindly supplied GPS track data for their respective flights. It was by combining the data sources that the diagram was constructed and the separation at CPA determined.

The Hurricane and ASK21 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] If the incident geometry is considered as converging then the Hurricane pilot was required to give way to the ASK21.[2]

Comments

AOPA

Both pilots are to be commended for wanting to submit a CHIRP report. It is also wondered if it is beneficial for the airspace users in this area to meet to discuss each other's requirements when flying, enabling a greater understanding of everyone's airspace use. It is recommended in Safety Sense leaflets, and the Skyway Code, for pilots to communicate with gliding sites (or, if flying within 10NM of an instrument approach, to contact the ATSU). There is also documentation suggesting

[1] (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity.
[2] (UK) SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c)(2) Converging.

that pilots consider briefing ATC by telephone prior to departure as well as obtaining Traffic Information for their route.[3]

BGA

The crew of the ASK21 is to be commended on sighting an aircraft painted precisely to prevent observation. The crew of the ASK21 was engaged in an instructional exercise on aircraft performance, and responsibilities were divided between the handling pilot and the student (making flight observations).

The pilot of the Hurricane is to be commended for an honest and thoughtful report, and for following up proactively with the relevant parties. It might have offered more protection to contact Cambridge than monitor Duxford, and better still to take a service given the high performance of the aircraft. A call to Gransden Lodge on their published airfield frequency would have been helpful but, had the Hurricane pilot recognised the proximity, they would likely have already turned away and avoided the encounter.

Though the pilot of the Hurricane helpfully agrees they were closer to Gransden Lodge than was desirable, their EC equipment would, with a paid licence, have detected the SRD860[4] transmissions from the ASK21, as relayed via ground stations, of which there are several in the area. Additionally, updating the SRD860-based EC equipment in the ASK21 to include ADS-B-in capability would have added an additional safety barrier in alerting to the presence of transponder, or ADS-B-out, equipped aircraft, such as the Hurricane.

The club at the origin of the flight has a Memorandum of Agreement with Cambridge Airport and this incident occurred outside the area where glider pilots are expected to call Cambridge as a matter of routine. The PIC (the handling pilot) in this incident does not have a FRTOL so could not legally make such a call, but could have monitored the Cambridge frequency (even if on “dual watch”). Of course, the Hurricane pilot was not in fact on the Cambridge frequency but might have been expected to have been so.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a Hurricane and an ASK21 flew into proximity 1NM north of Gransden Lodge at 1638Z on Thursday 26th March 2026. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, neither in receipt of a FIS.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD’S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, GPS track data from the flights of both aircraft, and radar photographs/video recordings. Relevant contributory factors mentioned during the Board’s discussions are highlighted within the text in bold, with the numbers referring to the Contributory Factors table displayed in Part C.

The Board first considered the actions of the pilot of the Hurricane, and members commended their open and honest report. It was also appreciated that they had made contact with the CFI of the gliding club concerned and had taken further steps to bring an awareness of the encounter to a wider audience.

It was noted that the Hurricane pilot had tuned their radio to the Duxford Traffic frequency. Members agreed that to have maintained a listening watch on that frequency would not have provided the best picture of the traffic situation. Noting that they had been (or would shortly have been) within 10NM from Cambridge, to have requested a surveillance-based service from the Cambridge controller may have been prudent. Notwithstanding, it was appreciated that the selection of such a service may not have assisted the Hurricane pilot with respect to an awareness of the ASK21 (given that gliders are rarely

[3] CAA CAP1038 Check Flight Handbook, paragraph 6.19.
[4] ‘SRD860’ refers to a frequency band designated for low-power radio communication and is used by proprietary EC devices.

observed on radar, the ASK21 had not been fitted with a transponder and the pilot of the ASK21 had not possessed a FRTOL which would have permitted contact with the Cambridge controller). Members agreed that the non-selection of a service had not been a contributory factor in this case.

Members next pondered the Hurricane pilot's route selection, noting that their track had passed to within 1NM of Gransden Lodge. It was appreciated that the Hurricane pilot had realised during their flight that they had been "*closer to Gransden than was sensible*", and members agreed that they had not made a sufficiently detailed plan for their navigation through the area of 'Intense Glider Activity' (**CF1**). It was also agreed that the EC device fitted to the Hurricane would not have been expected to have detected the presence of the ASK21 (**CF3**). Consequently, it was agreed that the pilot of the Hurricane had not had situational awareness of the presence of the ASK21 until it had been visually acquired (**CF2**). Members noted that the Hurricane pilot had reported that they had sighted the ASK21 at a range of 1km and that they had taken prompt action to increase the separation.

Members next turned their attention to the actions of the pilot of the ASK21. A member with particular knowledge of gliding operations explained that the pilot had been conducting a straight-line performance test. Whilst it had been their passenger that had been recording certain measurements during the flight, it was explained that, potentially, the pilot's full attention may have been diverted from maintaining a thorough lookout. However, it was agreed that that had not been the case, and it was noted that they had sighted the Hurricane at a reported range of 1-2km and had had sufficient time to have taken appropriate action to have increased the separation. It was agreed that the EC device fitted to the ASK21 would not have been expected to have detected the emissions from the Hurricane (**CF3**) and, that the pilot had not had situational awareness of the Hurricane until it had been sighted (**CF2**).

Concluding their discussion, members considered the risk of collision. It was agreed that the narrative reports provided by both pilots suggested that urgent avoiding action had not been required. Whilst safety margins had been reduced, members were satisfied that there had not been a risk of collision. The Board assigned Risk Category C to this event.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

	2026034			
CF	**Factor**	**Description**	**ECCAIRS Amplification**	**UKAB Amplification**
	Flight Elements			
	• Tactical Planning and Execution			
1	Human Factors	• Insufficient Decision/Plan	Events involving flight crew not making a sufficiently detailed decision or plan to meet the needs of the situation	Inadequate plan adaption
	• Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action			
2	Contextual	• Situational Awareness and Sensory Events	Events involving a flight crew's awareness and perception of situations	Pilot had no, late, inaccurate or only generic, Situational Awareness
	• Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance			
3	Technical	• ACAS/TCAS System Failure	An event involving the system which provides information to determine aircraft position and is primarily independent of ground installations	Incompatible CWS equipment

Degree of Risk: C.

Safety Barrier Assessment[5]

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

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

Flight Elements:

Tactical Planning and Execution was assessed as **partially effective** because the pilot of the Hurricane had not made a sufficiently detailed plan for their navigation through the area of intense gliding activity near Gransden Lodge.

Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action were assessed as **ineffective** because neither pilot had situational awareness of the presence of the other aircraft until visually acquired.

Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance were assessed as **ineffective** because the EC devices fitted to each aircraft would not have been expected to have detected the emissions from the other aircraft.