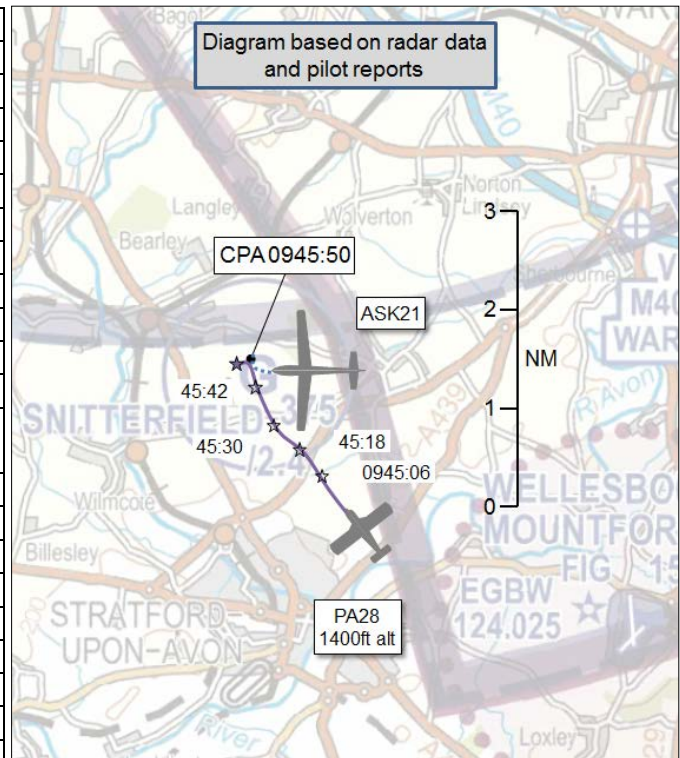


AIRPROX REPORT No 2017220

Date: 10 Sep 2017 Time: 0946Z Position: 5214N 00143W Location: Snitterfield gliding site

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	ASK21	PA28
Operator	Civ Club	Civ Club
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	Listening Out	Basic ¹
Provider	Gliding frequency	London Info
Altitude/FL	NK	1400ft
Transponder	Not fitted	A, C
Reported		
Colours	White	White/orange
Lighting	None	Nav, landing, strobe
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	20km	10km
Altitude/FL	1200ft	1500ft
Altimeter	QFE (NK hPa)	NK (NK hPa)
Heading	270°	310°
Speed	65kt	105kt
ACAS/TAS	Not fitted	Not fitted
Separation		
Reported	0ft V/100m H	0ft V/60m H
Recorded	NK	



THE ASK21 INSTRUCTOR reports that following a normal winch-launch flown by the pupil, and an early release to stay clear of cloud, he noticed a PA28 aircraft very close to cloud base on a closing heading. He took control immediately and took avoiding action by executing a highly-banked right-hand turn. As he turned, he noticed the PA28 pilot also took avoiding action in a highly-banked turn to his left. The instructor commented that the purpose of the training flight was largely circuit practice due to the low cloud base of 1200-1400ft, and noted that the winch-operator confirmed that the PA28 would also have been at very high risk from the cable had the glider released later.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE PA28 PILOT reports that on departing Wellesbourne Mountford he requested confirmation of whether the Snitterfield glider site was active, to which he was advised that it wasn't. Because it was notified as not active he chose to take a more direct route. Once in close proximity to the Snitterfield overhead, he saw a glider in his 2 o'clock. On sighting it he took immediate evasive action and banked left to avoid collision. On banking left, he then saw the glider on his left side, continuing in the opposite direction. He completed a full 360° orbit and continued en-route.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

THE WELLESBOURNE AFISO reports that the PA28 departed at 0932. A phone call was received from Snitterfield at approximately 0950 in which the caller stated that an aircraft had flown through their overhead and had an Airprox with a glider. The recently departed PA28 was believed to be the subject aircraft because all other Wellesbourne traffic was in the circuit.

¹ The PA28 squawk changed from 7000 to 1177 in the left orbit after CPA. It is therefore considered likely that the PA28 pilot was at least in the process of establishing a Basic service at CPA.

Factual Background

The weather at Birmingham was recorded as follows:

METAR EGBB 100950Z 19008KT 160V230 9999 VCSH SCT010 BKN026 13/12 Q0998=

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

The ASK21 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 hazard². If the incident geometry is considered as converging then the PA28 pilot was required to give way to the ASK21³. 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 operation⁴.

Snitterfield Glider Site is promulgated in the UK AIP⁵ as follows:

SNITTERFIELD GLIDER SITE, WARWICKS (AD) (W) 521406N 0014310W	Upper limit: 2000 ft	Phone: Stratford on Avon Gliding Club 01789-731095.	Site elevation: 375 ft amsl. Hours: HJ
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Comments

Stratford on Avon Gliding Club CFI

Stratford on Avon Gliding club has been based at Snitterfield for 30 years, and GA aircraft flying across the airfield whilst the club is operating winch launches has been a constant problem. This incident was the closest yet to a mid-air collision.

Wellesbourne AFISO

A Wellesbourne FISO stated that Wellesbourne and Snitterfield safety management teams had met a week after the Airprox to discuss the incident and other safety matters. It was agreed that the 2 organisations should work more closely together on safety matters to help prevent a re-occurrence and to raise awareness of the risks associated with winch-launched gliders. It was agreed that Snitterfield should endeavour to notify Wellesbourne when they are active, and that Wellesbourne will promulgate information, including a reminder on the Wellesbourne website.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when an ASK21 and a PA28 flew into proximity at 0946 on Sunday 10th September 2017 as the PA28 flew overhead Snitterfield G/S. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, the ASK21 pilot not in receipt of a Service and the PA28 pilot establishing a Basic Service from London Information.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, radar photographs/video recordings, a report from the AFISO involved and a report from the appropriate ATC authority.

Members first considered the pilots' actions and agreed that the ASK21 instructor had probably seen the PA28 as soon as was practicable and had taken effective emergency avoiding action. For his

² SERA.3205 Proximity.

³ SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c)(2) Converging.

⁴ SERA.3225 Operation on and in the Vicinity of an Aerodrome.

⁵ ENR 5.5-9

part, the PA28 pilot appeared to have been operating under the mistaken belief that Snitterfield gliding site was not active and had re-routed in order to reduce his track distance. Members discussed the PA28 pilot's comments that he had been informed that the gliding site was not active, with some of the opinion that a FISO would not pass this information (in a subsequent telephone conversation with the FISO he said that he did not recall having passed this information and stated that he would not do so in any case). Some members wondered if perhaps the PA28 pilot had misinterpreted the FISO saying that he was 'not aware that it was active'. Whatever the reason, it was clear that the PA28 pilot had changed his route and had flown over an active and promulgated gliding site in the mistaken belief it was inactive, and into conflict with the ASK21.

Members pointed out that the low cloudbase had probably prevented greater risk to the PA28 pilot due to the glider pilot having to release at a lower than normal height and thereby causing the winch cable to descend from a lower height than would otherwise be the case. Glider members also commented that it was always sensible to observe ground activity at a promulgated gliding site before overflying, not least because activity could commence at any time during the day and in weather conditions which many power pilots would assume precluded gliding flight. Additionally, the risk from an airborne winch cable could be completely mitigated by avoiding direct overflight of the glider site, a sensible precaution in any case, and one which would not materially affect a planned flight. In the event, both pilots provided similar estimates of reduced separation and descriptions of sightings being later than desirable; the Board therefore agreed that safety had been much reduced below the norm.

Finally, the Board were heartened to hear of the coordination activity between Wellesbourne and Snitterfield safety management teams, and hoped that other airfields in similar proximity to each other would follow their example of improving safety of flight through mutual communication and understanding.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE, RISK AND SAFETY BARRIERS

Cause: The PA28 pilot flew over an active and promulgated gliding site in the mistaken belief it was inactive and into conflict with the ASK21.

Degree of Risk: B.

Safety Barrier Assessment⁶

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

ANSP:

Situational Awareness and Action were assessed as **not used** because London Information could not be aware of the converging tracks of the glider and PA28.

Flight Crew:

Regulations, Processes, Procedures, Instructions and Compliance were assessed as **ineffective** because the PA28 pilot inadvertently flew through a promulgated and active glider site.

Tactical Planning was assessed as **ineffective** because the PA28 pilot based his planned route on incorrect information regarding the status of Snitterfield glider site.

⁶ The UK Airprox Board scheme for assessing the Availability, Functionality and Effectiveness of safety barriers can be found on the [UKAB Website](#).

Situational Awareness and Action were assessed as **ineffective** because neither pilot had situational awareness on the other aircraft prior to CPA.

See and Avoid were assessed as **partially effective** because each pilot only saw the other aircraft at a late stage and had to take emergency avoiding action.

