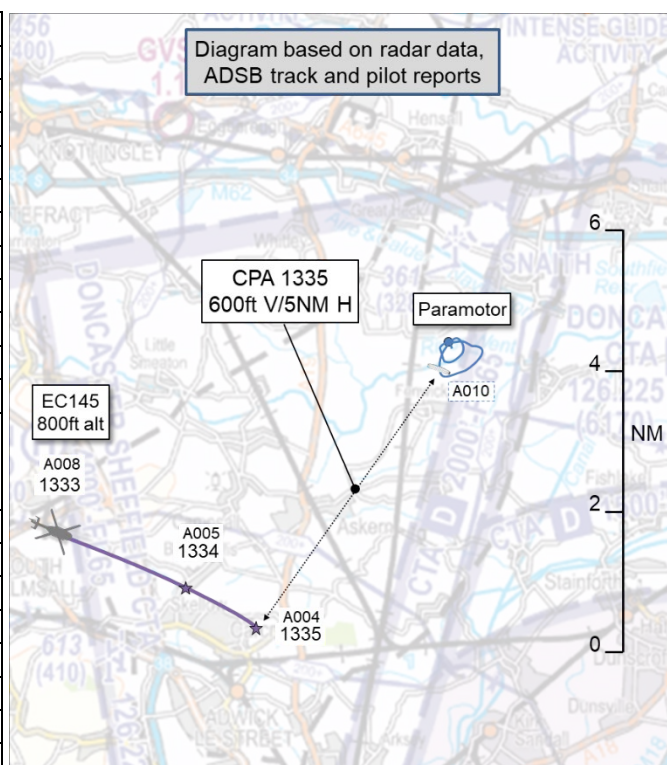


AIRPROX REPORT No 2023237

Date: 08 Oct 2023 Time: 1335Z Position: 5337N 00108W Location: 4NM SW Snaith

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Paramotor	EC145
Operator	Civ Hang	HEMS
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	None	Basic
Provider	None	Leeds Radar
Altitude/FL	NK	400ft
Transponder	Not fitted	A, C, S
Reported		
Colours	Blue/Red	Yellow
Lighting	None	Landing light, navigation, strobe and anti-collision
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	1000ft	1300ft
Altimeter	NK	QNH (1012hPa)
Heading	010°	120°
Speed	20kt	135kt
ACAS/TAS	Other	TCAS I
Alert	Unknown	None
Separation at CPA		
Reported	0ft V/300m H	NK V/NK H
Recorded	600ft V/5NM H	



THE PARAMOTOR PILOT FLIGHT SCHOOL CFI reports that one of their pilots had taken off and was climbing into the circuit when a yellow helicopter, believed to be an air ambulance, had passed overhead their field heading approximately east, suspected to have been heading towards the M62 and described as landing 4-5km away. The paramotor pilot had turned away and landed immediately.

They had reported the Airprox on behalf of the pilot, who had not been available to complete it themselves within the required timeframe. The paramotor pilot did, however, provide their ADS-B trace, but no further information, approximately one month after the initial report was filed.

The CFI also noted that they had initiated a conversation with the CAA about a permanent NOTAM while they registered the site as a sporting site in the AIP.

The CFI assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

THE EC145 PILOT reports they were outbound from [their] Air Support Unit (ASU) to a job [destination]. The radar returns confirmed [their routing] at the given time. It appeared they were in a descent for [their destination to the southwest of the paramotor site]. This flight was relatively unremarkable for them and they were unaware of the Airprox. They had spoken to the technical crew member that day and their comments were similar. They believed that they would have spoken to Leeds Radar, with ACAS displayed at that stage of flight. They did not believe any nearby traffic was displayed, and they did not remember getting a Traffic Advisory.

The pilot was unable to assess the risk of collision, as they did not see the paraglider.

THE LEEDS APPROACH CONTROLLER reports that an MOR had been submitted after notification from the Airprox Board. They were the duty Approach Surveillance (APS) controller at the time. [The EC145 pilot] called on [the] Leeds Radar frequency at 1330 for a Basic Service transiting outside controlled airspace to a site [in] West Yorkshire. The pilot left Leeds Radar frequency at 1337. No Airprox was reported by the pilot whilst on frequency.

Factual Background

The weather at Leeds Bradford was recorded as follows:

METAR EGNM 081320Z 18005KT CAVOK 18/15 Q1022

Analysis and Investigation

Leeds ATC Watch Manager

Notification was received by the Airprox Board that a paramotor pilot had reported an Airprox with [an air ambulance helicopter] whilst the helicopter was en-route to an incident. No report was made on the Leeds Radar frequency at the time of the incident. The Approach Radar controller was unaware that any incident had taken place.

Timeline of events:

1329 A Helimed squawk of 0020 was noted at low-level at the Helimed base (approximately 15NM southeast of Leeds Bradford Airport) in Class G Airspace.

1330 [The EC145 pilot] called on the Leeds Radar frequency of 134.580MHz, requesting a Basic Service climbing to 1600ft to an incident site in the vicinity of Doncaster. The Leeds Radar controller issued [the EC145 pilot] with a Basic Service which was acknowledged.

1335 [The EC145] was noted on the playback starting a descent around 25NM southeast of Leeds Bradford Airport.

1336 The Leeds Radar controller asked the [EC145 pilot] to confirm that the flight was letting down.

1336 [The EC145 pilot] confirmed “we are letting down at the site now”

1336 The Leeds Radar controller advised [the EC145 pilot] of the surface wind at Leeds Bradford Airport.

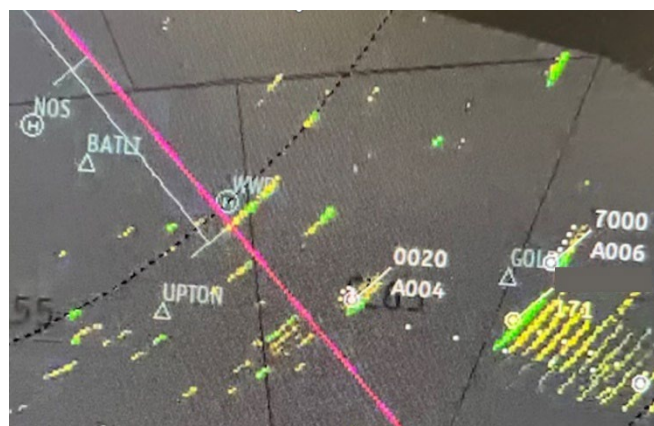


Figure 1. Helimed [EC145] (0020) at low level descending into the incident site.

1337 The primary and SSR returns faded from radar.

No further communications were made between [the EC145 pilot] and the Leeds Radar controller.

Staff Comments:

The Leeds Radar ATCO confirmed that there was no indication that an Airprox had occurred during the timeframe of the [EC145] departing [its base] until arriving on site. No contacts were observed on the flight track. The ATCO was unaware that an Airprox had occurred until they received notification from the Airprox Board.

Conclusion:

[The EC145] was operating in Class G airspace under a Basic Service. The area of operation in the Doncaster area took the flight into an area of known radar clutter. At 25NM southeast of Leeds Bradford Airport there was little chance of observing a primary return from a paramotor at such a low level, especially taking into account the clutter in that area.

No obvious contacts were observed from the radar replay, therefore there was no requirement for Traffic Information to be passed to the [EC145] crew. No aerial activity was promulgated to the ATC unit in the Doncaster area at the time of the reported occurrence.

The Leeds Radar ATCO carried out the functions of a Basic Service correctly, and no further recommendations were made at that time.

UKAB Secretariat

The paramotor flight had remained close to the take-off and landing site. The paramotor pilot's log displayed a time of 1438, considered to be the local end time of their flight, and a maximum height of 1265ft. Radar analysis was taken into consideration for both the log time and the UTC equivalent of 1338 which matched the initial reported time of the Airprox. Nothing of relevance could be seen for the former period.

An air ambulance helicopter that matched the reported description was visible on radar travelling approximately southeast with a CPA of 5NM on a bearing of 218° from the paramotor site at 1335. At the same time, another helicopter was travelling approximately south, and was 2.3NM to the west of the paramotor sports site. This second helicopter was excluded from the investigation as it had not matched the description given (Figure 2).

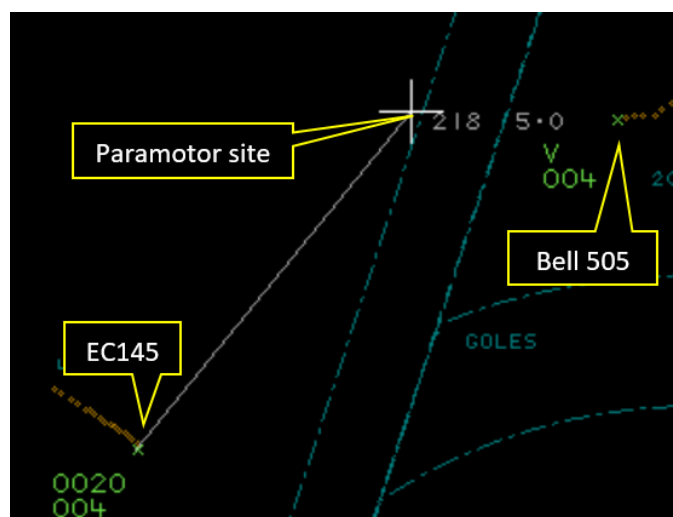


Figure 2 – 1335, distance from site 5NM

The EC145 final radar trace shows it circling to land at the incident site (Figure 3).

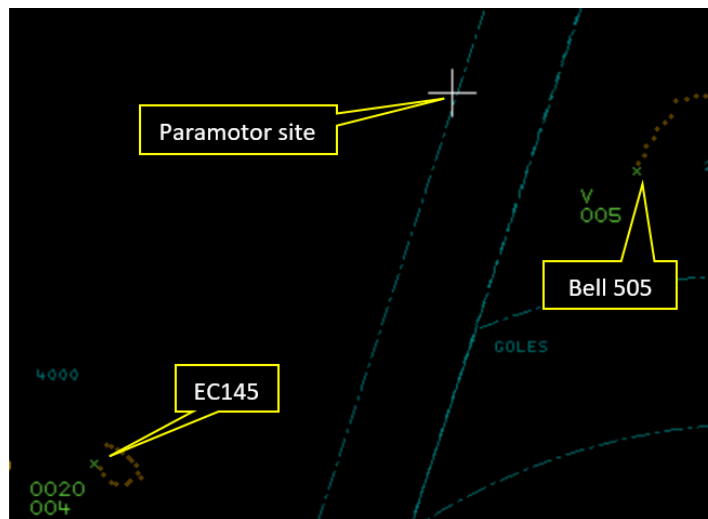


Figure 3. At 1335:30 the EC145 circled over its landing site

No other air ambulance helicopter squawks (0020) were seen in the vicinity, although there were indications of contacts in that area that took on the appearance of clutter.

The sport site NOTAM, as mentioned by the paramotor school CFI, had been put in place approximately one month after this Airprox had been reported.

The Paramotor and EC145 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

Comments

BHPA

The BHPA did not disagree with the paramotor school CFI's report that they saw a yellow helicopter flying near their training site nor did they disagree with the radar traces, timelines and investigation by Leeds Bradford ATC which had shown a Helimed EC145 flying and landing 5NM distant to the southwest of the paramotor site at around the same time as the paramotorist was airborne. The BHPA can only surmise that perhaps an unknown yellow helicopter did fly close to the paramotor site at some time or other but it was not the Helimed EC145 for which they have the radar returns. Therefore, they commend the responsible action of the CFI in their situational awareness of other traffic whilst giving tuition and then getting their student to land.

Most paragliders and paramotors are slow-moving, fairly cumbersome aircraft and do not show up on radar or (most) EC/traffic alert systems. They continue to remind all pilots that a vigilant look-out is the only effective tool to ensure that adequate separation is maintained in uncontrolled airspace with these types of aircraft.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a Paramotor and a EC145 were reported to have flown into proximity near Snaith at 1335Z on Sunday 8th October 2023. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, the Paramotor pilot not in receipt of an Air Traffic Service and the EC145 pilot in receipt of a Basic Service from Leeds Radar.

¹ (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD’S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, radar photographs/video recordings, a report from the air traffic controller involved and a report from the appropriate operating authority.

Due to the mismatch of reports between the Paramotor School CFI and the EC145 crew and a lack of significant radar or ADS-B evidence to place any other similarly described helicopters in the vicinity of the Paramotor pilot around the time of the reported Airprox, the Board was unable to make any reasonable conclusions regarding the performance of the safety barriers, contributory factors or risk of collision.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

Not Assessable.

Degree of Risk: D.

		Airprox Barrier Assessment: 2023237		Outside Controlled Airspace					
				Effectiveness					
				Barrier Weighting					
				0%	5%	10%	15%	20%	
		Barrier	Provision	Application					
Ground Element	Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance	●	●						
	Manning & Equipment	●	●						
	Situational Awareness of the Confliction & Action	●	●						
	Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance	●	●						
Flight Element	Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance	●	●						
	Tactical Planning and Execution	●	●						
	Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft & Action	●	●						
	Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance	●	●						
	See & Avoid	●	●						
Key:		Full	Partial	None	Not Present/Not Assessable	Not Used			
Provision	●	●	●	●	○				
Application	●	●	●	●	○				
Effectiveness	■	■	■	■	□				