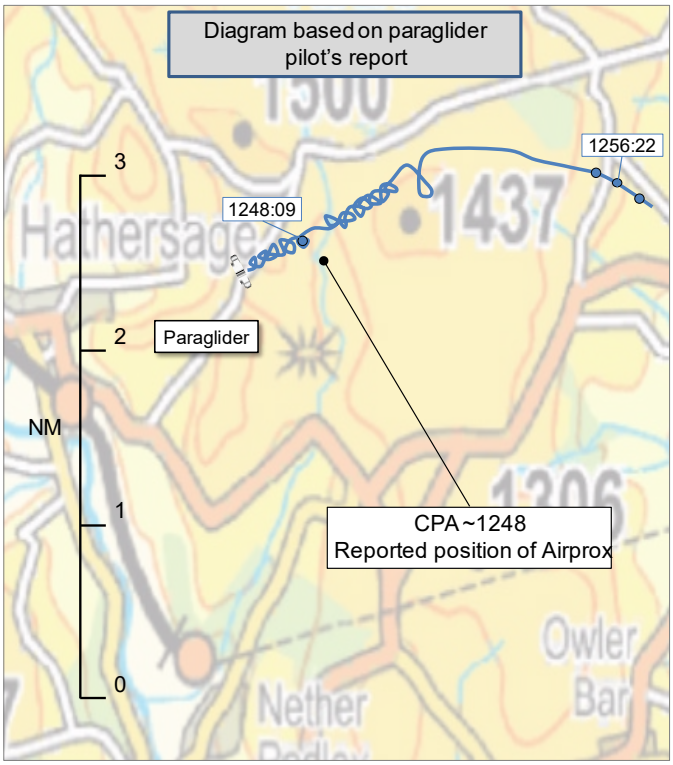
AIRPROX REPORT No 2024141

Date: 23 Jun 2024 Time: ~1248Z Position: 5320N 00135W Location: ivo Higger Tor

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Paraglider	Untraced light-aircraft
Operator	Civ Hang	Unknown
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	NK
Service	None	NK
Provider	N/A	NK
Altitude/FL	2536ft	NK
Transponder	Not fitted	None
Reported		**Untraced**
Colours	White/Blue/Purple	
Lighting	None	
Conditions	VMC	
Visibility	>10km	
Altitude/FL	3450ft	
Altimeter	NK	
Heading	090°	
Speed	15kt	
ACAS/TAS	FLARM	
Alert	N/A	
Separation at CPA		
Reported	0ft V/0.1NM H	NR
Recorded	NK V/NK H	



THE PARAGLIDER PILOT reports that they were on a cross-country paragliding flight from Bradwell Edge, flying east with about 5 or 6 other paragliders. There were a number of other paragliders flying at various altitudes spread across the valley. They were thermalling up over Higger Tor at about 1050m at the time, with 3 other gliders, all above them. A light-aircraft came past them from the south at high speed, probably less than 200m vertically at the same height as them. They heard the engine sound, and saw it when it was about 500m away. They had no opportunity to make any evasive manoeuvres. It did not seem that the aircraft made any course correction to provide a greater gap. It was quite scary!

They were using [an] electronic conspicuity device and made their track log available.

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

THE LIGHT-AIRCRAFT PILOT could not be traced.

Factual Background

The weather at Manchester was recorded as follows:

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METAR COR EGCC 231250Z AUTO 29009KT 9999 FEW027 22/14 Q1020 NOSIG
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Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

An analysis of the NATS radar replay was undertaken and the paraglider could not be identified on radar.

A further conversation with the paraglider pilot was had to help determine the accuracy of the times and the flight log provided, and they had been uncertain whether the time on the log reflected local or UTC, the descriptor of 'Europe/London' had implied local time. On reflection, the pilot thought that they had taken off at approximately 1330 local time, which matched the log and, for the purpose of the diagram above, local time was assumed and converted to UTC.

This was followed up by further analysis of ADS-B data where multiple gliders were seen operating in the vicinity throughout the paraglider's flight time. Also visible were a pair of Tiger Moths operating in the area which the paraglider pilot had seen and reported to their fellow paraglider pilots, but there were no other aircraft seen in the vicinity at the time of their flight and there was no positive identification of their paraglider.

Using the data available, the closest aircraft was assessed to have been a C177 which was no closer than approximately 1.8NM to the paraglider at around 1256:22. The NATS radar replay showed no other aircraft in the reported area within an hour either side of the paraglider pilot's flight profile.

The paraglider and untraced light-aircraft 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

Once again, the BHPA is relieved that this Airprox did not have a more serious outcome. And once again, it is the non-interoperability of the various forms of EC being used by different groups of pilots that isn't helping the situation. The cross-country paraglider pilots seemed to have the latest GPS/vario devices which now incorporate an [EC system favoured by glider pilots] and some even have FANET+ and OGN operability but this is of no use to an aircraft only transmitting a Mode S transponder. We don't know whether the other aircraft was carrying any other form of EC and we can only assume that their lookout was slightly lacking as there appeared to be no evasive action taken by the pilot.

The BHPA is surprised that paraglider pilots embarking on a cross country flight are selecting QFE as their altimeter setting and we will be making an educational note in our monthly magazine to all our members that an up-to-date or local QNH altimeter setting would be the preferred choice in being able to accurately avoid controlled airspace infringements, terrain, obstacles, etc. Nevertheless, a more suitable altimeter setting would not have made any difference to the outcome in this situation. Until we have a common standard of EC for all pilots flying in the UK airspace and pilots are more diligent with their lookout, we fear that these close-call incidents will continue to happen and it must only be a matter of time until a tragedy occurs.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a Paraglider and an untraced light-aircraft flew into proximity in the vicinity of Higger Tor at around 1248Z on Sunday 23rd June 2024. The paraglider pilot was operating under VFR in VMC and not in receipt of a FIS; the light-aircraft pilot could not be traced.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of a report from the paraglider pilot, radar photographs/video recordings and ADS-B data. 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.

[1] (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity.

The Board looked at the actions of the paraglider pilot and was heartened that they had made sufficient use of their own lookout to enable them to have warned their fellow pilots of the two biplanes operating in the vicinity. Members noted that the pilot was carrying standard glider EC equipment which had not notified them of the light-aircraft approaching and, with no other form of alert, they had had no situational awareness of that aircraft.

Members discussed why the other aircraft could not be traced and agreed that, given the limited information available, they were unable to make a sound assessment of risk and so assigned a Risk Category D to this event. The Board also agreed that the following factor had been contributory to the Airprox:

CF1. The paraglider pilot had no situational awareness on the unknown aircraft.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

	2024141			
CF	**Factor**	**Description**	**ECCAIRS Amplification**	**UKAB Amplification**
	Flight Elements			
	• Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action			
1	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

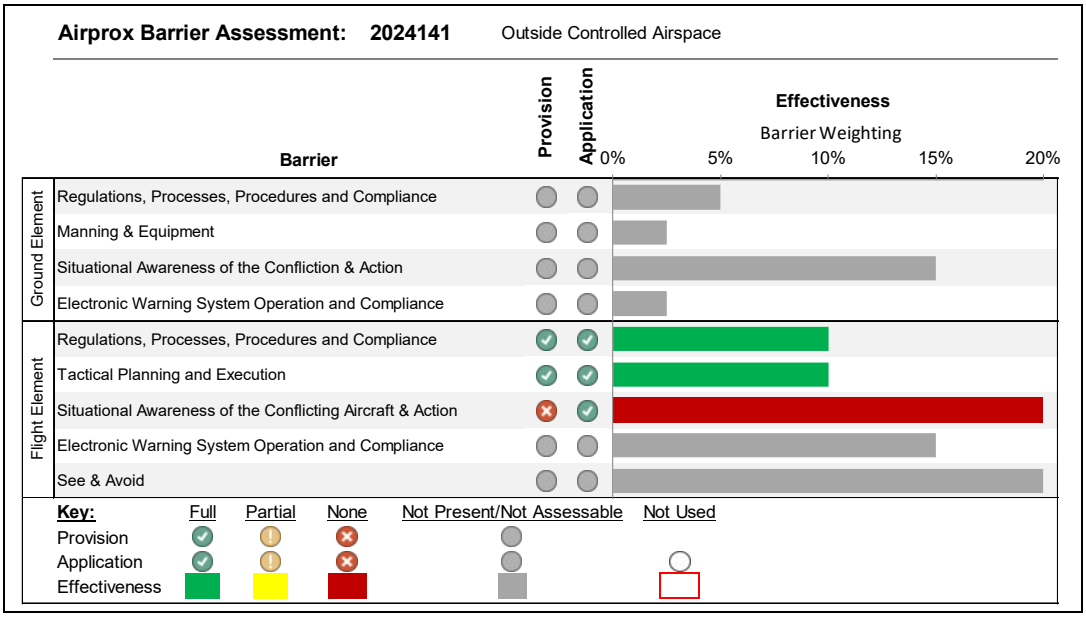
Degree of Risk: D.

Safety Barrier Assessment[2]

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

Flight Elements:

Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action were assessed as **ineffective** because the paraglider pilot had no situational awareness of the unknown aircraft in the vicinity.



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