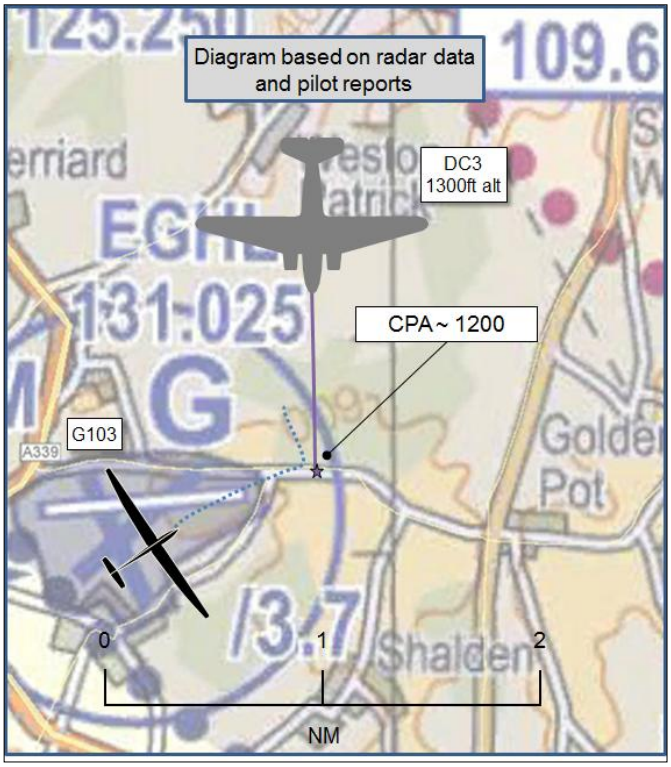
AIRPROX REPORT No 2016096

Date: 02 Jun 2016 Time: 1200Z Position: 5111N 00101W Location: Lasham Airfield

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	G103	DC3
Operator	Civ Trg	Civ Comm
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	None	Basic
Provider	N/A	Farnborough
Altitude/FL	NK	1300ft
Transponder	Not Fitted	C, S
Reported		
Colours	White/Orange	Camouflage
Lighting	None	Anti Col
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	1500ft	1200ft
Altimeter	QFE (997hPa)	QNH
Heading	Circling	180°
Speed	45kt	125kt
ACAS/TAS	Not fitted	Not fitted
Alert	N/A	N/A
Separation		
Reported	200ft V/200m H	0ft V/1nm H
Recorded	NK	



THE G103 GLIDER PILOT reports that he was P1 in the rear seat of a G103 on an instructional flight with a pre-solo student pilot. They launched by winch on bearing 050^0 with a 15 – 17kt wind from the north, the P2 was handling. There was significant correction to the left on the launch such that release took place on a line directly above the winch or slightly to the NW of it. A height of 1300ft AGL was achieved from the launch and, at that time, the cloud base was about 1400 - 1500ft AGL. After release from the cable, they continued briefly on a NE heading, descending gradually to about 1200ft and the student appeared to prepare for a turn to the right which, in his view would not have positioned them well for making a judgement about where to start a properly planned circuit. As he prompted the student to consider a turn to the left (into wind) he looked back over the nose of the glider and immediately said "There's an aircraft ahead" at which point a DC3 Dakota came into his sight from a position under the nose of the glider. The DC3 was on a southerly heading, about 200ft below, and approx 200 yards distant to the right. The student began a gentle turn to the left which brought them parallel reciprocal to the DC3 and increased their rate of separation from it. Due to the difference in altitude, there was no immediate risk of collision but, had they turned right as the student intended, loss of height in the turn and rapid reduction of the separation between the aircraft would have presented a serious risk of very unsafe proximity between the two aircraft. The DC3 made no alteration of course, and continued straight-and-level to the south. He estimated that the DC3 flew over the Avenue Nurseries premises, which are situated about 400 yards east of the threshold to runway 27 at Lasham.

THE DC3 PILOT reports that as he was approaching Odiham MATZ clearance was requested and given by Farnborough to transit the MATZ but to stay clear of the Odiham ATZ to the West due to IFR traffic inbound to Farnborough. He duly avoided Odiham ATZ to the West. Farnborough did point out the location of Lasham airfield, but no Traffic Information was given apart from the possibility of their being gliding traffic. Lasham airfield was avoided to the east and, when passing east-abeam, traffic was sighted to their west in the vicinity or overhead of Lasham. This traffic was judged to be no

factor because it was about a mile away (same altitude) and their courses did not intersect. As a result, he did not alter course. Shortly afterwards a cruise climb was started.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'None'.

THE LASHAM GROUND INSTRUCTOR reports that the G103 was manoeuvring over the NE boundary of the airfield; the other aircraft passed below and appeared to be within the traffic circuit of the gliding operation heading south. At the time of the Airprox, the glider had just released and the winch cable was still being wound in by the winch with the drogue chute still airborne.

Factual Background

The weather at Odiham was recorded as follows:

SPECI EGVO 021230Z 01013KT 9999 BKN017 13/08 Q1020 WHT BECMG SCT025 BLU=

Analysis and Investigation

CAA ATSI

A review of both the Farnborough radar and Swanwick MRT recording did not show any contact consistent with the reported movements of the glider *("launched by winch on runway 05 whilst manoeuvring over the north east boundary of airfield…").* A primary contact was observed south-east of Lasham, tracking north, but this was discounted by ATSI.

The DC3 had been advised by the Farnborough LARS controller that Lasham was active with a gliding competition. Farnborough reported not seeing anything in the Lasham area, and suggested that this was possibly as a result of the cloud base; however, although commenting that activity was unlikely, they still warned the DC3 to keep a good lookout. (The Farnborough 1120 met report gave BKN015 and 1150 - BKN019).

The DC3 passed within 0.7nm to the east of Lasham at 1600ft. Lasham is notified as a gliding site with tow and winch launches up to an upper limit of 3000ft agl.

UKAB Secretariat

The G103 and DC3 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 DC3 pilot was required to give way to the G103[2]. 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 operation[3].

Comments

BGA

This is yet another case that illustrates the risks of transiting close to the overhead of a notified and active winch launch site. As can be seen from the report, gliders normally reach the top of a winch launch near the upwind end of the run, which is often also close to the upwind boundary of the airfield, then transition into a circuit pattern and/or search for lift. It would be wise to allow a decent separation from this area when transiting close to a gliding site, especially if below the promulgated maximum winch launch height.

[1] SERA.3205 Proximity.
[2] SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c)(2) Converging.
[3] SERA.3225 Operation on and in the Vicinity of an Aerodrome.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a G103 and a DC3 flew into proximity at 1200 on Thursday 2nd June 2016. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, the G103 pilot was not in receipt of a Service and the DC3 pilot in receipt of a Basic Service from Farnborough.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from the pilots of both aircraft and radar photographs/video recordings of the DC3.

The Board first looked at the actions of the G103 pilot, and members discussed whether the DC3 would have been visible prior to, or during, the launch. Although some members believed the DC3 would have been visible, other members thought that it may not have been due to the height it was flying at. Calculations showed that, for its reported airspeed and height, the DC3 would have been at a range of approximately 2.5 to 3nm from the glider launch team at the start of the glider launch sequence, which would likely have placed it very low on the horizon, if visible at all. Notwithstanding, members agreed that this incident again highlighted the value of robust lookout by the launch team prior to launch in order to ensure a safe environment for all airspace users, even though the Airprox had occurred once the glider had released from the cable.

The Board then turned to the actions of the DC3 pilot. Some members opined that, in avoiding Odiham's ATZ, the pilot may have inadvertently strayed closer to Lasham than he might otherwise have intended. Given that airfields in the area would be using easterly runways due to the wind, they opined that, nevertheless, it was incumbent on the DC3 pilot to plan ahead and anticipate that flying so close to the upwind end of an airfield was not to his best advantage. The Board then discussed why the DC3 was at 1500ft so close to the glider site, and they agreed that this was probably due to the height of the cloud base to enable the pilot to maintain VMC. Having been told by Farnborough that there was no traffic visible at Lasham, some members wondered whether the DC3 pilot had fallen into the trap of assuming that the relatively poor conditions meant that there was no gliding taking place. The gliding member reminded the Board that gliders can fly in conditions that many other aircraft might not, particularly if they were simply conducting airfield launch operations. Members noted that the DC3 pilot had seen a glider further west, but opined that this was probably not the glider involved in the Airprox (or may have been the Airprox glider but after the Airprox had occurred). The gliding member informed the Board that Lasham has the capability to launch two gliders using a 2-drum winch, and therefore it was feasible that there was more than one glider in the circuit at the time. All-in-all, members agreed that although the DC3 pilot had not directly overflown the gliding site, he would have been better served by routing further away, especially in an easterly wind, in order to ensure a sufficient safety margin against glider activity.

Turning to the ATC aspects, ATC members opined that although the Farnborough controller had reported to the DC3 pilot that Lasham was active with a Gliding competition, he may have given the DC3 pilot a false sense of security by reporting that nothing was seen in the area and suggesting it was due to the cloud base (which could be interpreted as inferring that gliding activities were therefore unlikely). The Board opined that the controller was not in a position to make such a comment unless he had spoken directly to Lasham itself. Members were heartened to learn from the NATS representative that, although not as a direct consequence of this Airprox, NATS had recently issued a reminder to their controllers to ensure that any supplementary information passed is relevant and accurate.

The Board then turned to the cause of the Airprox. Members noted the potentially misleading information from Farnborough but they still believed that, even so, the DC3 pilot had flown too close to the gliding site. Some members thought therefore that this was the cause of the Airprox and that the DC3 pilot had flown into conflict with the G103 glider. However, recognising that the aircraft were both in Class G airspace at the time and not in an ATZ, the majority agreed that the issue was more one of lookout rather than glider site avoidance *per se,* given that the glider could equally have been encountered further away from the site as it turned and searched for thermals, and that, now off-

winch and in free flight, the glider pilots also had a responsibility to avoid a collision with the DC3. With this in mind, the Board concluded that the cause of the Airprox was a late sighting by the G103 pilot and a probable non-sighting by the DC3 pilot. The Board then turned to the risk and, mindful of the G103 instructor's statement that he had instructed the student to turn left to increase separation, and which the student did with only a gentle turn, the Board determined that the risk of collision had been averted by timely and effective action; therefore, the risk was assessed as Category C.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A late sighting by the G103 pilot and a probable non sighting by the DC3 pilot.

Degree of Risk: C.