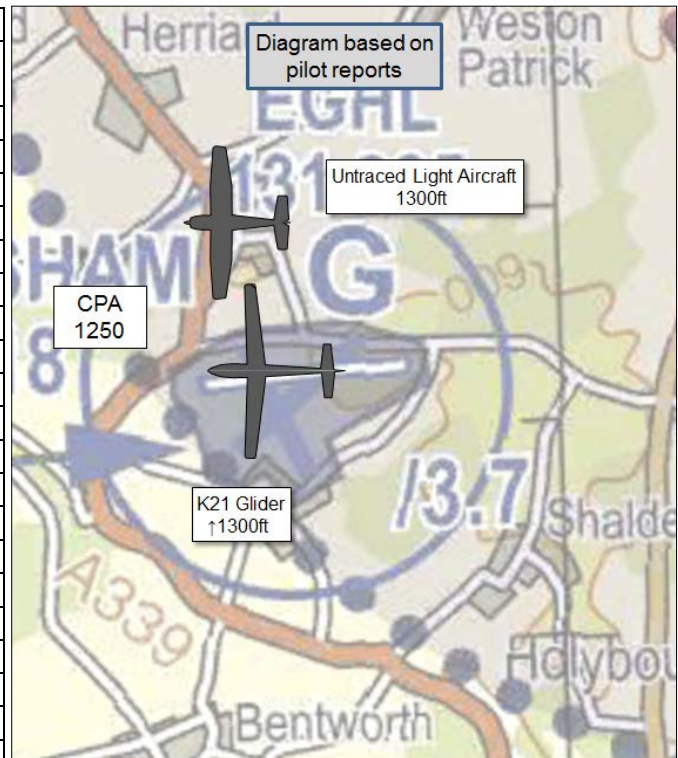


AIRPROX REPORT No 2016036

Date: 07 Mar 2016 Time: 1250Z Position: 5111N 00102W Location: Lasham

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	K21	Unknown Light Aircraft
Operator	Civ Pte	
Airspace	London FIR	
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	
Service	AGCS	
Provider	Lasham	
Altitude/FL	NK	
Transponder	N/A	
Reported		
Colours	White	Yellow
Lighting	Nil	
Conditions	VMC	
Visibility	>10km	
Altitude/FL	1300ft	
Altimeter	NK	
Heading	270°	
Speed	55kt	
ACAS/TAS	FLARM	
Alert	None	
Separation		
Reported	20ft V/50ft H	NK
Recorded	NK	



THE K21 PILOT reports that he was on a winch launch from Lasham. He climbed to about 1300ft, lowered the nose and released the cable. He was then confronted by another aircraft, a high-wing, single engine Cessna type with a yellow paint scheme. It was flying parallel, about 20ft below his altitude and 50ft from his wing-tip and at a similar speed to the glider. The other aircraft 'ruddered' away to the north-west; the whole encounter probably lasted about 5 seconds.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE LIGHT AIRCRAFT PILOT could not be traced.

Factual Background

The weather at Odiham was recorded as follows:

METAR EGVO 071250Z 34011KT 9999 FEW045 06/M02 Q1009 BLU NOSIG=

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

The K21 and the 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 hazard¹. An aircraft operated on or in the vicinity of an aerodrome shall conform with or avoid the pattern of traffic

¹ SERA.3205 Proximity.

formed by other aircraft in operation². When converging, power-driven heavier-than-air aircraft shall give way to sailplanes.³

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a K21 and a light aircraft flew into proximity at 1250 on Monday 7th March 2016. The K21 pilot was operating under VFR in VMC, and in receipt of a A/G Service from Lasham. The light aircraft could not be traced.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of a report from the K21 pilot.

The Board first examined the actions of the K21 pilot. Having launched and released the cable, he would not have expected to see another aircraft at the same altitude as himself in such close proximity in the traffic pattern. The Board noted that cable-launch gliding operational procedures require that the launch crew conducts a clearing search for other aircraft before the winch is commenced, and members wondered whether the light aircraft would have been visible to them, and whether a thorough look-out had been carried out. At approximately 1300ft, winch-launch analysis indicated that the light aircraft should have been clearly visible from the ground at a range of about 1.5-2nm as the launch controller's 'take up slack' call was made. In mitigation, members discussed whether the light aircraft could have been mistaken for a tug aircraft returning to the airfield, but there was no mention of this in the K21 pilot's reports. All that could be said was that this incident served as a reminder to all those involved in winch-launch operations to conduct a thorough look-out prior to commencing the launch.

The incident did not show on the NATS radars, which meant that the light aircraft pilot could not be traced; unfortunately, without his report the Board were therefore unable to determine whether he saw the glider and turned away, or was simply turning overhead Lasham anyway. Nevertheless, the Board noted that Lasham was a promulgated and active glider site; although there was no ATZ, pilots were required to conform with or avoid the pattern of traffic formed by other aircraft in operation, and this included winch-launching gliders for which the VFR chart showed clear annotation that winch launching operations were conducted up to 3700ft. Members considered that the light aircraft pilot had been most unwise to plan to route overhead such an active gliding site at 1300ft.

In determining the cause, the Board quickly agreed that the light aircraft pilot had flown overhead a promulgated and active gliding site and into conflict with the K21. Turning to the risk, the Board noted the K21 pilot's assessment of the proximity of the two aircraft and, whilst recognising that sometimes pilot estimation is not an accurate record of separation due to the 'startle' reaction, nevertheless thought this event was a close-call indeed. Being at relatively low energy at the top of the launch, the K21 pilot was not able to take any avoiding action, and it was not known whether the light aircraft pilot was visual with the glider or not. Given that the glider pilot had reported that the light aircraft only 'ruddered' away (implying a non-emergency turn), the Board were inclined to think that he had not seen the glider as it quickly rose up from underneath his aircraft's nose and that chance had therefore played a major part in the events. Being purely fortuitous that a collision had not occurred, the Board therefore assessed the risk as Category A.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The light aircraft pilot flew overhead a promulgated and active gliding site and into conflict with the K21.

Degree of Risk: A.

² SERA.3225 Operation on and in the Vicinity of an Aerodrome.

³ SERA 3210 (Right of way)