

AIRPROX REPORT No 2013042

Date/Time: 25 May 2013 0937Z (Saturday)

Position: 5111N 00104W
(1nm NW Lasham G/S
- elevation 618ft)

Airspace: Lon FIR (Class: G)

Reporting Ac **Reported Ac**

Type: DR400 PA32

Operator: Civ Club Civ Pte

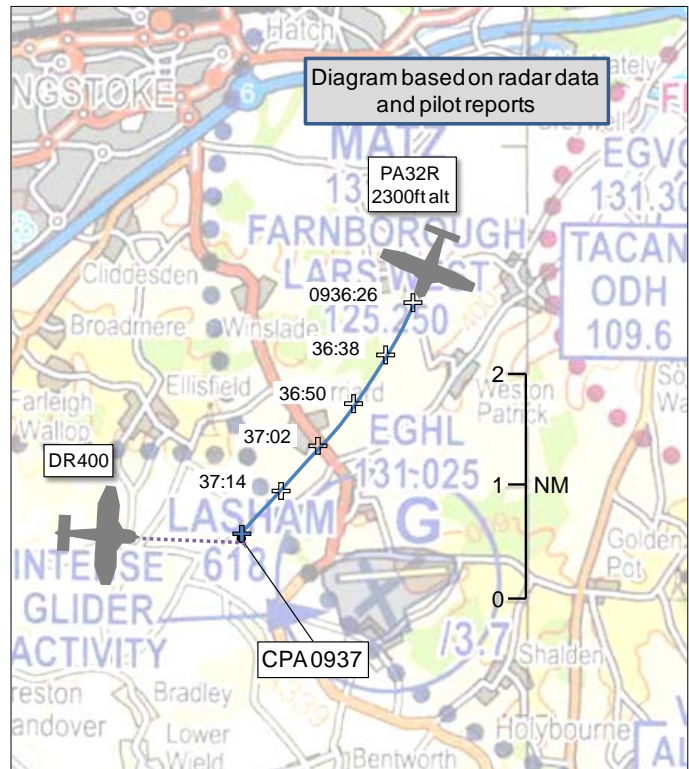
Alt/FL: 1500ft 2400ft
QFE (NK) QNH (1022hPa)

Weather: VMC CLBC VMC NK

Visibility: >20km >10km

Reported Separation:
0ft V/50ft H 0ft V/100m H

Recorded Separation:
NK



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE DR400 PILOT reports conducting glider tug operations to the W of Lasham A/D in support of the first day of the week-long 2013 Club-Class Nationals & Lasham Regionals gliding competition. He was operating under VFR, in VMC, without an ATS, in contact with Lasham Radio [131.025MHz]. The yellow and black ac had navigation, strobe and landing lights selected on; the ac was not fitted with an SSR transponder but was fitted with FLARM. He had just released a glider and was returning to the A/D for a downwind join for RW27. Descending through approximately 1500ft QFE, about 0.5nm NW of Lasham A/D, and heading 090° at 110kt, he saw a low-wing, single-engine, retractable-undercarriage ac 'at the last minute' on a reciprocal hdg, displaced slightly to the L at a range of about 100yds. The other ac was at the same height and passed down his LH side 'a wing span away'. He banked R to increase separation and heard the other ac's engine as it passed.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE PA32 PILOT reports transiting from Elstree to Bembridge with 2 passengers. He was operating under VFR, in VMC, with a BS from Farnborough RAD [125.250MHz]. The white, blue and yellow ac had the beacon light selected on, as was the SSR transponder with Modes A, C and S. The ac was fitted with TCAS, which was on and with which he could 'pick up usual traffic'. He believed he had the Farnborough RAD frequency selected when the incident occurred. Lasham A/D was at his 10 o'clock position, and he reports flying S at 150kt and about 2400ft QNH. He suddenly saw the other ac in his 2 o'clock position at a range of 250m, crossing R to L across his intended flight-path before disappearing at a similar level. He immediately disengaged the auto pilot and turned sharply L in order to avoid a possible collision. He stated that the weather was fine and that there was no workload on his part. He also noted that one of his passengers saw a cable trailing behind the other ac, which was not visible to the pilot.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

Factual Background

The Farnborough METARs for 0920 and 0950 were recorded as follows:

EGLF 250920Z 34009KT 290V020 9999 SCT026 10/05 Q1022=
EGLF 250950Z 33008KT 300V010 9999 SCT028 09/04 Q1022=

The gliding competition NOTAM was recorded as follows:

H1488/13 NOTAMN
Q) EGTG/QWGLW/IV/M /W /000/100/5111N00102W010
A) EGTG B) 1305250401 C) 1306022012
D) SR-SS
E)
MAJOR GLIDING COMP INCLUDING X-COUNTRY ROUTES. MAIN ACTIVITY WI 10NM RADIUS OF PSN 511107N 0010157W (LASHAM AD, HAMPSHIRE). UP TO 100 GLIDERS AND 10 TUG ACFT MAY PARTICIPATE. GLIDERS WILL OPR BLW THE INVERSION LVL OR BTN THE TOPS OF ANY CU AND 500FT AGL. AFTER LAUNCH MOST ACFT MAY BE CONCENTRATED DOWNWIND THE SITE OR ON THE FIRST LEG OF THE X-COUNTRY RTE. FOR INFO ON RTES FOR THE DAY CTC GLIDER CONTEST CTL TEL 07802 708 670 OR VIEW WWW.BGALADDER.CO.UK/SHOWTASK.ASP FOR LASHAM SITE.
RTF CONTACT 131.025MHZ. 13-05-0117/AS 2.
F) SFC G) FL100)

The DR400 pilot was operating under VFR on a local flight from Lasham and was not in receipt of an ATS but was in contact with Lasham G/S on 'Glider Ops' [131.025MHz].

The PA32 pilot was operating under VFR on a flight from Elstree A/D to Bembridge A/D and was in receipt of a BS from Farnborough LARS(W) [125.250MHz]. His altitude was recorded as 2300ft [QNH 1022hPa] from the Heathrow 10cm radar picture, equivalent to a height of 1700ft from Lasham.

ATSI Analysis

CAA ATSI had access to written reports from the DR400 and PA32 pilots and area radar recordings together with RTF recordings and transcript of the Farnborough LARS(W) frequency. On enquiring with Farnborough, the unit reported that the LARS(W) frequency was busy at the time of the reported Airprox and that the controller had no recollection of the incident.

At 0928:14, the PA32 pilot contacted Farnborough LARS(W) at 2200ft and requested a BS and transit over Odiham. The Farnborough LARS approved the Odiham MATZ crossing, agreed a BS, and issued a squawk of 0436.

At 0937:10, as the PA32 was 1.1nm to the NW of Lasham, the Farnborough LARS controller advised the pilot "...*just caution Lasham very busy at the minute winch launch gliding up to three thousand seven hundred feet there's a couple of gliders just southwest of you by a mile but they're all around*" (See Figure 1). The PA32 pilot acknowledged the call.

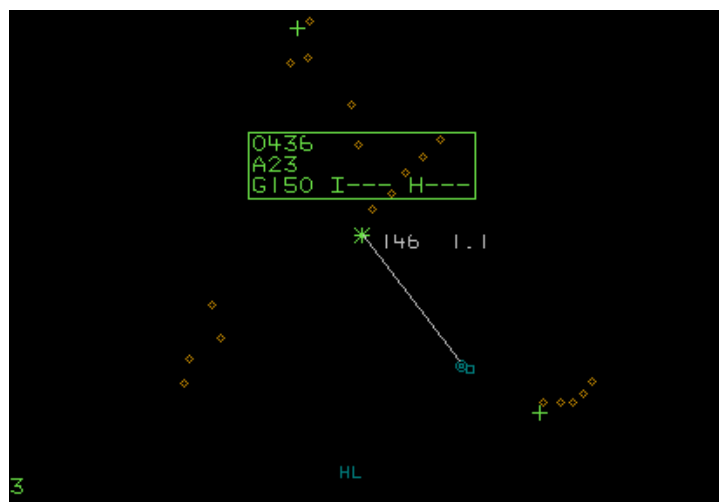


Figure 1: 0937:10

Figures 2 and 3 show radar recording screenshots indicating the PA32 about 1nm NW of Lasham with a primary contact crossing R to L. Figure 3 shows the PA32 pilot appears to have conducted a sharp L turn, whilst the primary contact appears to have conducted a sharp R turn. It is possible that the screenshots show the reported Airprox but, as the DR400 cannot be positively identified, this cannot be positively asserted.

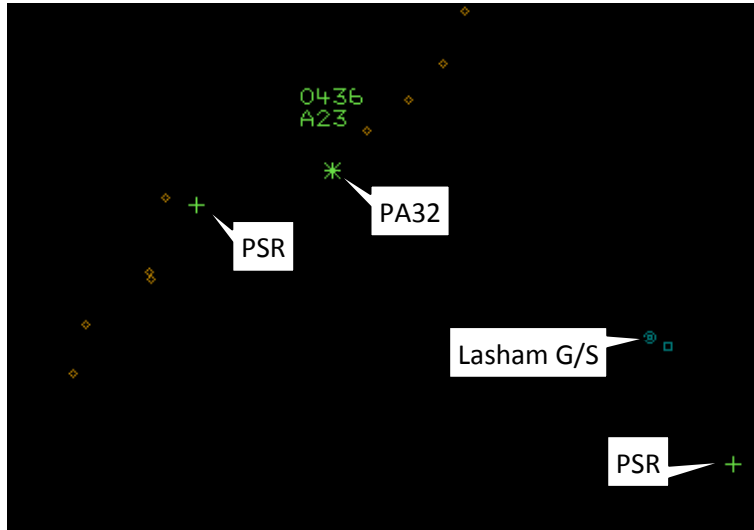


Figure 2: 0937:22

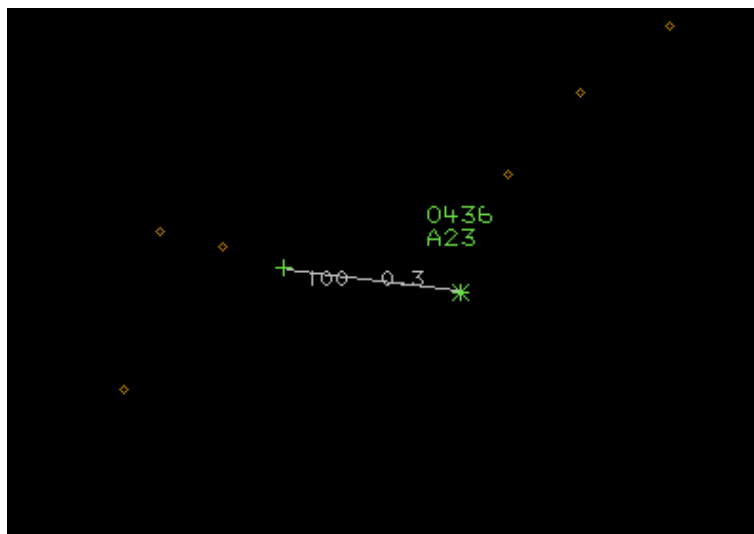


Figure 3: 0937:28

Summary

An Airprox was reported in Class G airspace in the vicinity of Lasham G/S when a DR400 and a PA32 flew into proximity with each other as the DR400 glider tug was returning to the G/S following the release of a towed glider to the W. Radar recordings could not definitively determine the exact geometry of the encounter. The DR400 pilot was not in receipt of an ATS. The PA32 pilot was in receipt of a BS from Farnborough LARS(W). Under the terms of a BS there is no requirement for a controller to monitor the flight; however, as the PA32 pilot flew close to Lasham, the controller passed general TI on activity in the vicinity of Lasham, and a warning on contacts to the SW of the PA32. Both ac were operating in Class G airspace where, ultimately, both pilots had equal responsibility for collision avoidance; the DR400 pilot had right of way.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, a transcript of the relevant RT frequency, radar video recordings and a report from the appropriate ATC investigation authority.

The Board first considered the pilots' actions. Both were entitled airspace users operating under VFR, in Class G airspace, with an equal responsibility to see and avoid; the DR400 pilot had right of way. Pilot members opined that the incident stemmed from the PA32 pilot's apparent lack of appreciation of the NOTAM'd Lasham activity, the amount of traffic that would be associated with it, and his choice of routeing in the immediate vicinity. Whilst it was recognised that he was not required to avoid the area detailed in the NOTAM, members were of the unanimous opinion that he would have been better served by routeing around it, either vertically or laterally or both. Members noted that the airspace structure in the area was such that he had had the opportunity to climb above the majority of glider activity shortly before he reached Odiham, and that he could have continued his routeing to Bembridge at an altitude of 5000ft, which would have placed him above glider-tow activities. He also could have contacted the NOTAM'd Lasham telephone number before T/O, or called them on the NOTAM'd frequency, to check activity levels. Members opined that the PA32 pilot's report indicated an unwise level of reliance on TCAS in Class G, and probably a lack of appreciation of the type of ATC service he was receiving with regard to TI under BS.

Members then considered the actions of the LARS controller. He had applied a BS, as requested, and had also given the PA32 pilot relevant and timely TI; actions for which he was commended by the Board. The Board noted that the terms of a BS include:

'... , on initial contact the controller/FISO may provide traffic information in general terms to assist with the pilot's situational awareness. This will not normally be updated by the controller/FISO unless the situation has changed markedly, or the pilot requests an update. ... , if a controller/FISO considers that a definite risk of collision exists, a warning may be issued to the pilot.'¹

When considering the cause and risk, the Board opined that both pilots had seen each other late, the PA32 pilot marginally before the DR400 pilot, it appeared. The PA32 pilot reported making a 'sharp' avoiding action turn and the DR400 pilot 'banked right', but whether these actions had materially altered the dynamics of the situation was not clear to the Board. However, it was clear that the DR400 pilot had heard the PA32 as it passed by, had seen it at very close range, and that the range was sufficiently close that a passenger in the PA32 had seen the glider tug tow rope. The Board therefore concluded that, although the situation had stopped short of an actual collision, separation had been reduced to the minimum.

The Board agreed that the safety barriers pertinent to this Airprox were 'ATC/FISO rules and procedures', 'controller action', 'aircrew rules and procedures', 'visual sighting', 'aircrew action' and 'SA gained from RT'. The Board concluded that 'ATC/FISO rules and procedures' and 'controller action' had been of limited effectiveness, and that 'aircrew rules and procedures', 'visual sighting' and 'aircrew action' were either of limited, minimal or no effectiveness. Hence the Airprox was allocated a score of 20 on the Event Risk Classification Matrix.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A late sighting by both ac.

Contributory Factor(s): The PA32 pilot flew through the NOTAM'd competition area.

Degree of Risk: A.

ERC Score: 20.

¹ CAP774 (UK Flight Information Services), Chapter 2 (Basic Service), paragraph 5 (Traffic Information), dated 19 Nov 09