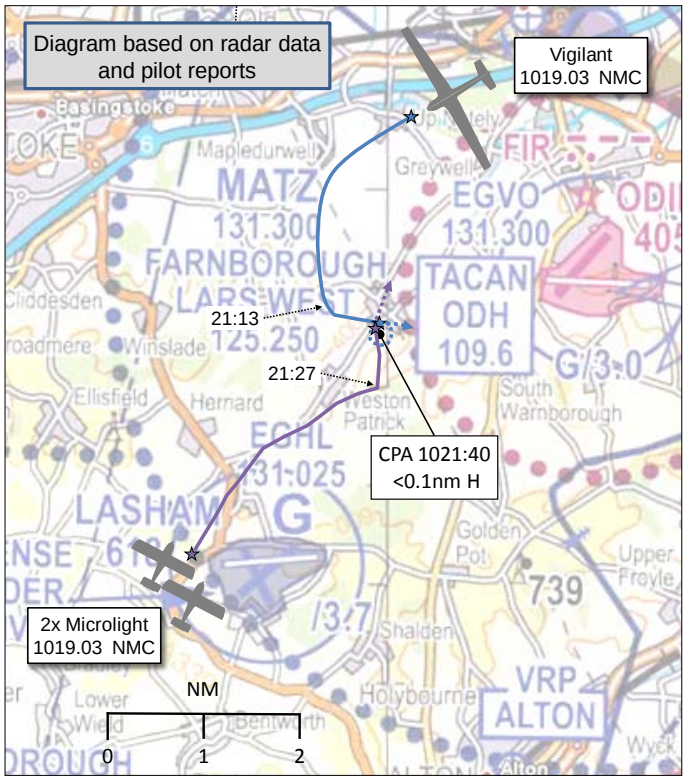
AIRPROX REPORT No 2013110

Date/Time: 11 Aug 2013 1021Z (Sunday)

Position: 5113N 00100W (2.2nm WSW of Odiham)

Airspace: Odiham MATZ (*Class*: G)

	Reporting Ac	*Reported Ac*
Type:	Vigilant	2x Microlight
Operator:	HQ Air (Trg)	Unknown
Alt/FL:	800ft QFE (1002hPa)	NK
Weather:	VMC CLBC	NK
Visibility:	10km	NK
Reported Separation:	NR V/NR H	NK
Recorded Separation:	NK V/<0.1nm H	



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE VIGILANT PILOT reports that on the day of the Airprox he had been briefed about a gliding competition taking place at Lasham, and was warned to keep 'a good lookout for intense gliding activity'. He was flying with a student in a predominantly white aircraft, with a red nose and wing-tips and Day-Glo patches. The pilot had turned on the navigation lights, strobe lights, landing lights and the transponder Mode 3/A; Modes C and S were not fitted. Odiham ATC was not open but RW27 was in use with the fixed wing circuit to the South and winch-launched gliders to the North.

The pilot reports rejoining the Odiham visual circuit from the west, at 60kt, heading 090°, flying at 800ft (QFE 1002hPa), in VMC, in communication with Odiham Radio. During the re-join the pilot saw a pair of '3-axis, high-winged' microlights 'departing Lasham'. He noted that they were white with enclosed canopies and tricycle undercarriages but he did not see their registrations. He recalled that the microlights initially headed east, close to Lasham and then, as he established his Vigilant 'downwind left-hand (just approaching the departing end of the runway at Odiham, he recalled)', he saw them around 400m away, at the same level, on his right. He initially just observed them, not making any turns because he wanted to keep them in sight, whilst formulating a plan to avoid them without scaring the passenger by 'over-banking'. They turned north, 'in front' of him and flew through his 12 o'clock, between him and Odiham airfield. When the microlights were 200-300m away, in front of him, the Vigilant pilot took avoiding action by making a right-hand orbit, away from the visual circuit, and continued to watch the microlights as they flew to the north without any apparent change in direction or height.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE MICROLIGHT PILOTS could not be traced despite being displayed on the radar recording. Lasham Gliding Society manages the airfield's movements during large gliding events and their staff was very helpful in suggesting possible microlight pilots. Unfortunately none of the suggestions led to a positive identification and the records kept for the gliding event did not provide any further leads. Several Gliding Society Members recalled seeing a pair of low-winged 3-axis microlights at Lasham on the day but the pilots did not book out so their departure time cannot be confirmed. These pilots were contacted but they did not recall any occurrences and reported that their logbooks showed that they departed Lasham at 0849 and were on the ground at another airfield at the time of the Airprox.

Factual Background

The Odiham weather at 0950 was:

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METAR EGVO 110950Z 24010KT 9999 SCT022 BKN038 18/13 Q1019 WHT
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Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

Analysis of the radar recording shows the Vigilant 3.2nm west-northwest of Odiham, tracking southwest, whilst the microlights can be seen 1.1nm northeast of Lasham tracking northeast. The Vigilant makes a wide turn on to an easterly heading commensurate with positioning for downwind for Odiham RW27, whilst the microlights continue on a broadly northeasterly track, showing some minor manoeuvring en-route. The CPA occurs at 1021:40 when the radar returns merge 2.2nm west-southwest of Odiham. The Vigilant can be seen to complete a right-hand orbit, which appears to commence at the CPA. The microlights continue in a northwesterly direction; whilst the radar shows that their track takes them either just on, or just inside, the outside edge of Odiham's ATZ, the tolerance of the radar recording means it cannot be determined positively. Notwithstanding, the Airprox event is shown to occur outside the ATZ.

All of the pilots were equally responsible for collision avoidance[1]; however, the Vigilant pilot had the other aircraft on his right and was therefore required to give way.[2]

The 'Visiting Lasham By Air' notes maintained and issued by 'Lasham Gliding' give the following guidance to visiting powered aircraft:

> 'Prior permission required
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> Arrival by powered aircraft is strictly Prior Permission Required. Prior to takeoff, please call the office at Lasham for further details and briefing (01256 384900). Failure to comply could endanger you and other users of the airfield. Gliders from other clubs can land at Lasham without prior permission, provided that they have received a full briefing on the hazards at the airfield before taking-off.'
>
> 'Booking in and out
>
> Remember that power pilots have a legal requirement to book in and out. The booking-in book can be found in the entrance to the club-house. Visiting glider pilots should also notify the office or the duty instructor of their arrival.'

Whilst powered aircraft, including the pair of 3-axis low-winged microlights, had received Prior Permission to land at Lasham, none had booked out shortly before the Airprox. Whilst this may not have contributed directly to the Airprox, failure to book out means that pilots miss the opportunity to be briefed on local procedures and adjacent airfields. In this case it also made tracing the microlight pilots impossible and so it could not be established if they had been briefed on local activity.

Summary

The Airprox occurred in Class G airspace, 2.2nm to the west-southwest of Odiham between a Vigilant and two untraced microlights which departed from Lasham.

[1] Rules of the Air 2007, Rule 8, Avoiding aerial collisions & Regulatory Article 2307, Avoidance of Collision, Para 7.
[2] Rules of the Air 2007 (as amended), Rule 9 (Converging) & MAA Regulatory Article 2307, Guidance Material 2307(1), Para 12, Aircraft Converging.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included a report from the Vigilant pilot and radar video recordings.

The Board first considered the actions of the Vigilant pilot. Having been briefed about the gliding competition at Lasham, he was clearly alert to potential conflicting traffic in that area, and he reported seeing the microlights departing Lasham. However, the Board opined that, as the aircraft was positioning in a left turn for downwind to RW27, the Vigilant pilot would have had difficulty in maintaining contact with these aircraft on his right hand side. Some members were surprised that, despite having seen the microlights early on, the Vigilant pilot had taken no positive action until the aircraft were close enough to cause him concern.

The Board then considered the actions of the Microlight pilots. Because the aircraft and pilots could not be traced, it was not possible to tell if they had either seen the Vigilant or taken any action to avoid it (although the Vigilant pilot's report makes it clear that he did not see the microlights manoeuvre). The pilots had not booked out from Lasham and, consequently, had missed the opportunity for an up-to-date brief, which might have better equipped them to avoid the Odiham traffic patterns. It could not be positively determined if the microlights entered the Odiham ATZ after the incident, but members speculated that they may have been following the road from Lasham towards Hook, which would have taken them very near to the ATZ boundary; their radar track is commensurate with this. Nonetheless, the Airprox occurred outside the Odiham ATZ, in Class G airspace and, although it was debatable whether they had a duty to conform to the pattern of traffic in the Odiham circuit, the microlight pilots certainly had the same responsibility as the Vigilant pilot for collision avoidance[3].

The Board concluded therefore that, whilst the microlight pilots would have been better served by avoiding Odiham and its visual circuits by a larger margin, the incident occurred outside the ATZ and, having the Microlights on his right, the Vigilant pilot was required to give way[4]. They noted that the Vigilant pilot took no action initially but then made a right hand orbit to avoid the microlights when they turned in front of him; the radar analysis shows that this commenced close to the CPA and continued around behind the Microlights, keeping clear of them as they flew north.

The Board noted that there were three key lessons evident in this Airprox: firstly, pilots must maintain good lookout even when in the visual circuit or in/approaching an ATZ; secondly, pilots need to plan to remain well clear of ATZs whenever possible and remain alert to traffic patterns and joining aircraft outside of the ATZ; and thirdly, there are clear benefits in taking early action to avoid potential collisions either vertically or horizontally rather than simply allowing the situation to develop.

The Board was disappointed that the seeming lack of robust booking in and out procedures at Lasham had hampered the investigation and members agreed that all airfields should endeavour to ensure that sound procedures are in place. Gliding Board members informed the rest of the Board that, although Lasham's current procedures were deemed fit for purpose, Lasham Gliding was taking action to give them greater publicity and prominence to visiting pilots so that they were used consistently.

There was considerable debate and opposing views amongst the Board when discussing the risk of this event; some members opined that, because the Vigilant pilot had seen the microlights early on and that effective and timely action had eventually been taken to avert a collision, the risk was C. Others noted that the CPA was less than 0.1nm and that the Vigilant pilot had taken such late action that safety margins had been much reduced, therefore warranting a risk of B. In the end the Chairman asked the members to vote on the degree of risk; by a majority the Board decided that the risk was C.

[3] Rules of the Air 2007, Rule 8, Avoiding aerial collisions & Regulatory Article 2307, Avoidance of Collision, Para 7.
[4] Rules of the Air 2007 (as amended), Rule 9 (Converging) & MAA Regulatory Article 2307, Guidance Material 2307(1), Para 12, Aircraft Converging.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: Having previously sighted the microlights, the Vigilant pilot flew into conflict with them.

Degree of Risk: C

ERC Score[5]: 20

[5] Although the Event Risk Classification (ERC) trial had been formally terminated for future development at the time of the Board, for data continuity and consistency purposes, Director UKAB and the UKAB Secretariat provided a shadow assessment of ERC.