

AIRPROX REPORT No 2011159

Date/Time: 18 Nov 2011 1504Z

Position: 5152N 00035W (1nm W
Dunstable Gliding Site -
elev 500ft)

Airspace: Luton CTR (Class: D)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: ASK21 Glider T67M

Operator: Civ Club Civ Pte

Alt/FL: 950ft 1100ft
QFE QNH (NR)

Weather: VMC CAVOK VMC NK

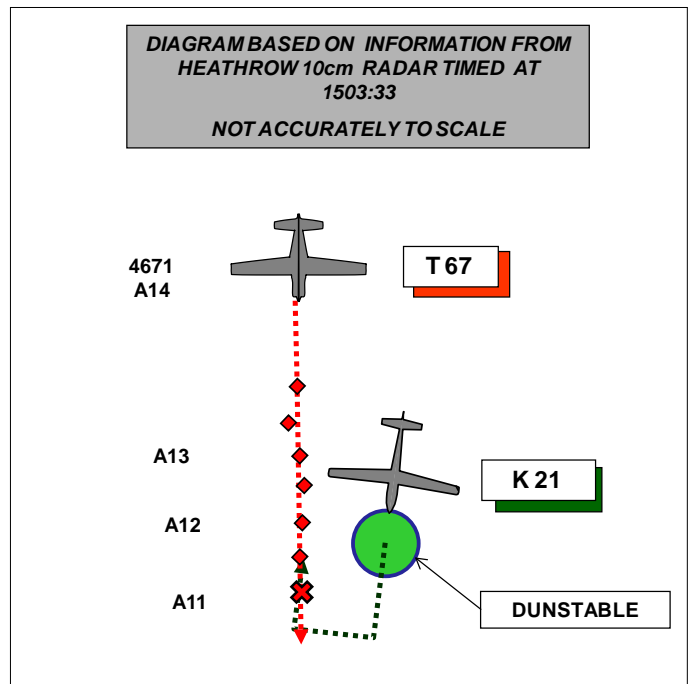
Visibility: >10km >10km

Reported Separation:

150ft V/0m H 200ft V/100ft H

Recorded Separation:

NR



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE ASK21 GLIDER PILOT reports flying a white glider with no SSR fitted but listening out on Dunstable Radio located in a mobile tower. He had just completed a winch to 1100ft and about 30sec after cable release turned R then R again to position for a normal cct. After the second turn at 950ft agl then heading 010° at 55kt he saw a white low-wing single-engine light ac with a large bubble type single piece canopy 1-200ft away and head-on to him; the ac passed 100-150ft below him. An observer on the ground stated the ac was initially at same height as his glider and dived underneath it.

The pilot considered the risk to be Medium as the incident was well within the '3nm radius' of the gliding site.

After landing he consulted his CFI who advised him to call LATCC; they advised him that the ac had been identified, had submitted a flight plan from Bagby to Denham and was directed not to exceed 2,000ft. They also advised him to file an Airprox.

He was concerned that they are having an increasing number of ac of all types flying closer and closer to their busy gliding site; he has had three similar incidents this year, though not as close as this one, and had previously expressed his concern to his CFI.

London Gliding Club is the second largest gliding club in the UK and operates seven days a week, all year round. It has about 300 members and there are 131 gliders on the site.

The pilot considers a major factor in this incident was that the published air charts do not clearly define this gliding site, and that most pilots would not expect a highly active and major gliding site within Luton class D airspace.

THE T67M PILOT reports flying a white ac with strobes switched on, on a private flight and, at the time, squawking with Mode C, in receipt of a TS from Luton APP [See ATSI report] while heading 180° at 110kt and at 1100ft QHN, en-route from Cranfield to BNN [VOR]. He was cleared by Luton

APR to cross the CTR VFR not above 2000ft W of Dunstable Gliding Site and he was looking for gliders. He saw a glider in his 10 o'clock, at the same level, 1 to 2nm away, initially flying in the same direction; the glider then turned R to cross his track, so he descended to remain sighted with it. He passed well below the glider and there was never any risk of collision.

ATSI reports that the Airprox occurred at 1503:33, 0.9nm W of the Dunstable Downs Gliding site, which lies within the Luton CTR, Class D CAS, extending from the surface to an altitude of 3500ft. Dunstable Down does not have an aerodrome traffic zone (ATZ).

The ASK21 glider was operating VFR from Dunstable Gliding site, talking to Dunstable Radio, but not in receipt of an Air Traffic Control Service. Meanwhile the Slingsby T67M Firefly (T67) was operating on a VFR flight from Bagby to Denham, in receipt of an RCS [see below] from Luton Radar.

A letter of agreement exists between TC Luton and the London Gliding Club. Within the Luton CTR, airspace has been delegated to Dunstable Downs and is shown in the UK AIP, Page AD 2-EGGW-4-1 (10 Mar 11). The Airprox occurred within the delegated airspace Area 1, which extends from the surface to an altitude of 3500ft.

The UK AIP Page AD 2-EGGW (7 Apr 11) defines the latitude/longitude coordinates for Glider, Hang-gliding, Paragliding and Microlight activity and states:

'Pilots are advised that by arrangement with Luton ATC:

Pilots of IFR flights inbound to Luton airport will be vertically or laterally separated from all gliding or microlight activity within these areas through the application of normal ATC procedures;

Pilots of aircraft operating under VFR, or on a Special VFR clearance are advised to avoid these areas if at all possible. In addition, pilots operating on a Special VFR clearance are advised that due to the nature of these activities they cannot be given separation from gliders, aircraft towing gliders, hang-gliders, paragliders or microlights within these designated areas. Traffic information will NOT be passed by ATC.'

The LTC Manual of Air Traffic Services (MATS), Part 2, Section 11, Paragraph 11.5.9, states:

'If a VFR/SVFR Luton arrival or departure is likely to route through any delegated airspace, TC Luton shall notify the pilot of the intense gliding activity and if necessary, shall advise the pilot to avoid the immediate vicinity of Dunstable Downs. TC Luton shall pass generic traffic information based on reported or observed activity.'

CAA ATSI had access to the RTF and radar recordings, together with the written reports from both pilots and the ATSU investigation. The controller was not aware of the Airprox and did not file a report.

METAR 181450Z 18006KT 150V210 9999 SCT020 SCT024 13/10/Q1016=

The T67 pilot contacted Luton Radar at 1455:58, reporting overhead Cranfield at 3000ft, requesting a crossing clearance W of Dunstable Downs; he was instructed to squawk 4671, passed the QNH 1016, a TS was agreed and the T67 reported descending to 2000ft.

At 1457:00 Luton Radar cleared the T67 to cross CAS, "(T67 C/S) you are cleared to transit the Luton Control Zone V F R not above altitude two thousand feet routeing to the west of Dunstable which are active" and the pilot replied, "Luton clears (T67 C/S) to cross west of Dunstable Downs which is active not above two thousand feet VFR".

During the period from 1500:35 until 1506:57 a radar handover took place.

At 1502:46, radar recordings show the T67 had crossed the Luton CTR boundary into controlled airspace indicating an altitude of 1400ft (Luton Radar did not advise the pilot of the change to a RCS but this was not a factor in the Airprox).

The ATSU report indicates that no other traffic, either primary or secondary, was observed in the vicinity of Dunstable Downs. This was confirmed with the radar recordings, using the NODE Multi Radar Tracking (MRT), provided to TC positions through the use of the SYSTEM picture.

The Airprox was considered to have occurred at 1503:33, 0.9nm W of Dunstable Downs. Radar recordings available to ATSI, utilising the Debden and Stansted 10cm as single source radars, showed an intermittent contact overhead Dunstable Downs at 1502:10, 1503:17 and then again at 1503:36, 0.3nm N of the T67 tracking S and indicating an alt of 1100ft. This intermittent primary contact was believed to have been the ASK21 glider downwind in the circuit at 950ft agl on a N'y track.

At 1506:55, as the T67 crossed the Southern boundary of the Luton CTR, the Luton controller downgraded the service to a BS and the T67 pilot reported changing to Denham.

The LTC MATS Part 2 requires the Luton Controller to notify VFR aircraft likely to route through the delegated airspace, of any intense gliding activity, if necessary advising the pilot to avoid the immediate vicinity with generic TI based on reported or observed activity.

Although Dunstable Downs was notified as active, the [Luton] radar system did not show any gliding activity. However, the controller advised the T67 pilot that Dunstable Downs gliding site was active and instructed the pilot to route W of the site.

The glider had launched from Dunstable Downs for a circuit. The T67 ac passed 0.9nm W of the ARP, passing in close proximity to the glider which had turned downwind into the visual circuit at 950ft agl.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, transcripts of the relevant RT frequencies, radar recordings, reports from the air traffic controller involved and reports from the appropriate ATC authorities.

Members were shown photographs of the Dunstable Glider Launching Site to familiarise them with the local area. The gliding Member advised the Board that the high ground to the NW, precludes the ground party seeing ac approaching from that direction. They were also briefed that the glider site is very busy 7 days per week when the weather is suitable and therefore the entry in the UKAIP advises that ac transiting the Luton CTR under VFR give Dunstable a wide berth. There are no significant airspace restrictions to the W of Dunstable that would have precluded the T67 from routing further to the W and avoiding the circuit area.

Although the incident took place in Class D Airspace, both ac were operating VFR under the 'see and avoid' principle and not deconflicted in any way by ATC. The gliding Member opined that it would be helpful if Luton controllers could remind transiting pilots of the maximum height of the launch cable as an incentive to remain clear of the site. In this case although both pilots saw the other ac in good time, thus removing any risk of collision, Members agreed that the T67 should have avoided the Dunstable Glider Launching Site and the associated circuit area by a greater margin.

The Gliding Member suggested that Luton ATC should, as well as stating that Dunstable is active, remind pilots that the cable height is 2000ft agl; the NATS Advisor agreed to investigate.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The T67 pilot flew close to Dunstable Glider Launch Site and into conflict with the ASK21 downwind in the circuit.

Degree of Risk: C.