

MID -AIR COLLISION BETWEEN AN ASK 21 AND AN ASK 13 NEAR LASHAM ON 5 AUGUST 2011

Preliminary Information

Introduction

The following factual report is based upon one written by the CFI at the Club where the collision occurred, and uses information from the pilot's witness statements and data from the FLARM unit fitted to the K13. The K21 was not fitted with FLARM and the collision was not witnessed by anyone on the ground.

The accident was notified to the AAIB, who elected to delegate the investigation of the event to the BGA.

History of the flight

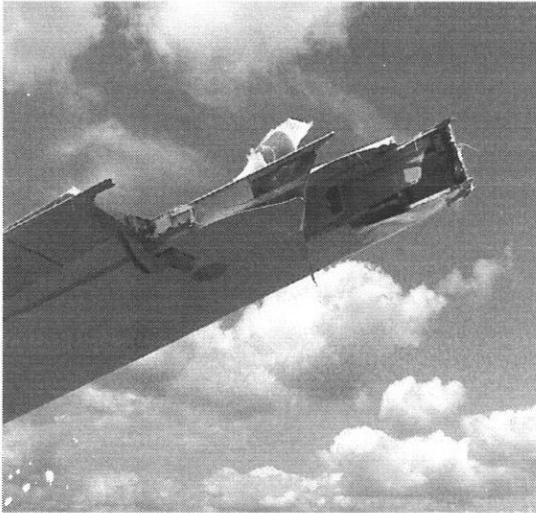
It was a busy day at the club and, because of the number of people wanting to fly, two winches were in operation. A launch rate of about 20 gliders per hour was being achieved at the time of the accident; the cloud base was approximately 2,500 ft agl with visibility 30 km+. The wind was less than 5 knots from the west.

The K21, with an instructor in the rear seat and a cadet (aged 18) in the front seat, was launched by winch at 11:58 hrs. Approximately four minutes later the K13, also with an instructor and youth member (aged 16) on board, was launched. After releasing the cable, it flew straight ahead for about 30 seconds before making a turn to the right with a bank angle of some 40°. Having completed approximately 180° of the turn, the right outer wing of the K13 impacted with the leading edge of the right wing of the K21. At the time, the pilot of the K21 reported that his glider was flying straight and level and it was probable that it had just completed a 180° turn on to a northerly heading. The nature of the damage suggested that the gliders were banked relative to each other at the time. The collision occurred approximately 500 m to the west of the airfield at a height of 1,200 ft. There were no reports of limitations to vision due to glare from the sun.

Both gliders sustained substantial damage in the collision, and as both were assessed by their respective pilots as being capable of controlled flight, they carried out an immediate landing without further incident. All four occupants were wearing parachutes and no injuries were sustained.

Damage

The K13, a Lasham based glider, lost approximately the outer 5 feet of its right wing, which included the outer half of the aileron, outboard of the drive rod/mass balance weight. This was located the following day in a small wood at the western end of the main runway. The K21, a Booker based glider, sustained relatively localised crushing damage to the leading edge of the right wing ahead of the airbrake box, with additional damage to the spar and shear web in this area, see below.



ASK 13



ASK 21

Crew

Both gliders were being flown by Lasham based instructors and both reported that they were the handling pilots at the time of the collision. Both were in current flying practice on the gliders they were flying and the launch method they were using.

The youth member in the K13 had completed 40 training flights and was considered close to making her first solo flight. The cadet in the K21 was making his first flight in a glider.

Issues for consideration

- Lookout training (theory and practice)
- High launch rates using the winch, launching with gliders in the vicinity of the top of launch
- Clearing of winch area after cable release
- FLARM. All club gliders at Lasham are fitted with FLARM - approx. 70% of all gliders at Lasham reportedly have FLARM installed. Question - Would FLARM in the K21 have prevented this accident?
- Bail-out training/guidance for instructors and students (straps, canopy jettison, likely problems in evacuation the glider, etc)
- Training/guidance in use of parachutes (instructors and pupils)
- Structural damage - the fly or jump decision (not easy - depends on height, assessment of handling, assessment of known damage, etc)

Peter Claiden
Chairman
BGA Safety Committee
12 November 2011