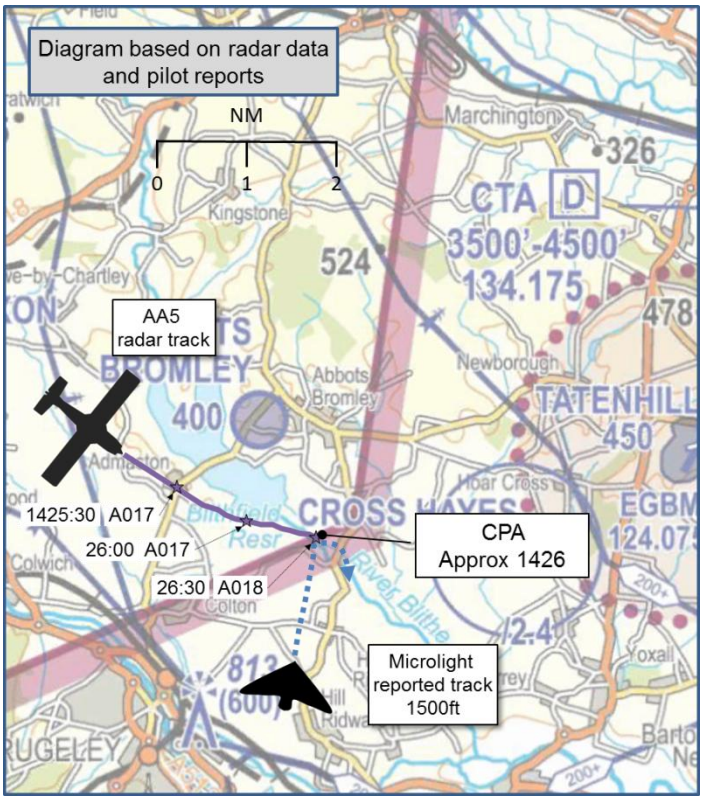
AIRPROX REPORT No 2014088

Date/Time: 15 Jun 2014 1426Z (Sunday)

Position: 5250N 00159W (4nm W of Tatenhill)

Airspace: London FIR (*Class*: G)

	Aircraft 1	*Aircraft 2*
Type:	Quantum 15 Microlight	Grumman AA5
Operator:	Civ Pte	Civ Pte
Alt/FL:	1500ft QNH (1028hPa)	1600ft QNH (NK hPa)
Conditions:	VMC	VMC
Visibility:	12km	>10km
Reported Separation:	50-70ft V/30-50m H	200ft V/0m H
Recorded Separation:	NK V/NK H	



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE MICROLIGHT PILOT reports flying VFR in VMC in a yellow flex-wing microlight with a white and black wing and the landing light illuminated. The aircraft did not have a transponder, TCAS or FLARM fitted. He was flying straight-and-level at 1500ft, at 48kt, and on an approximately northerly heading passing abeam Abbots Bromley to avoid Tatenhill ATZ when he saw a low-wing, single-engine, predominantly white aircraft appear from his left and slightly behind, in around his 8 o'clock position. The other aircraft passed 'very close in front' of his aircraft, and the microlight pilot commenced an 'energetic right-turn'. Almost immediately it became clear that the danger of collision had passed, so the pilot resumed his original heading but did not see the other aircraft make any avoidance manoeuvres. The microlight pilot reported that the CPA was close enough for him to see the other aircraft's markings and registration very clearly.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE AA5 PILOT reports flying on a training sortie with 2 students in a predominantly white aircraft with the beacon and navigation lights illuminated and squawking transponder Modes 3/A, C and S. They were operating under VFR, 200ft below cloud, on an 'overcast', 'dark and gloomy' afternoon, heading 075° at 100kt and approximately 1600ft, in receipt of an A/G[1] service from Tatenhill Radio. He saw the microlight in his 2.30 position, around 0.5km away, about 200ft below, and assessed that there was no collision risk and no need to alter his flight path. He assessed that the low right-hand wing of his AA5 may have shielded the microlight from his view but, when he did see it, he did not see any lights in operation but could identify that the pilot was wearing something yellow or orange in colour. The AA5 pilot reports that he presumed that the microlight pilot had not seen his aircraft because he thought that, if he had, the pilot would have turned his microlight to the left to go behind the faster AA5 instead of 'flying underneath' it.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'None'.

[1] Air-Ground

Factual Background

The weather at Tatenhill at 1350 was recorded as:

METAR EGNX 151350Z 07005KT 9000 VCSH FEW013 BKN017 15/14 Q1029

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

The aircraft were converging, and the microlight was on the right of the AA5, so the AA5 pilot was required to give way[2]

Summary

An Airprox was reported 4nm to the west of Tatenhill between a Quantum 15 microlight and a Grumman AA5 in Class G airspace. The microlight pilot was not in receipt of an ATS[3]; the AA5 pilot was in receipt of an A/G service from Tatenhill Radio. The CPA was not recorded on radar but the microlight pilot reports it as 50-70ft V/30-50m H and the AA5 pilot reports it as 200ft V/0ft H.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both aircraft, and radar photographs/video recordings.

Board members noted that the aircraft were converging, and that the microlight was on the right of the AA5 so the AA5 pilot was required to give way to it. Although the AA5 pilot appeared not to be concerned by the proximity of the microlight, members agreed that the Rules of the Air and the superior performance of his aircraft meant that he could, and should, have taken some action to improve separation. Members opined that the AA5 pilot would have been wiser to have avoided over-flight of microlight for several reasons: some lateral separation would have made maintaining visual contact easier; there would be less chance of a collision if either pilot had needed to manoeuvre rapidly for any reason; and there would be less chance of turbulence from the AA5 perturbing the microlight, which was a flexible, suspended-wing design.

Some members thought that the cause of the Airprox was that the AA5 pilot had flown close enough to cause the microlight pilot concern; others thought that, because he had seen the microlight 0.5km away and had elected not to take any action, that the cause was that the AA5 pilot had flown into conflict with the microlight. In the end, after some discussion, the Board voted and agreed that the AA5 pilot had flown into conflict with the microlight. Some members thought the degree of risk was C because the AA5 pilot had seen the other aircraft and was content to take no action; however, others opined that over-flight of the microlight with 200ft (or possibly less) vertical separation meant that safety margins had been considerably reduced. In the end, members agreed, by a majority, that the risk was Category B.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The AA5 pilot flew into conflict with the Microlight.

Degree of Risk: B.

ERC Score[4]: 20.

[2] Rules of the Air 2007, Rule 9, Converging
[3] Air Traffic Service
[4] 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.