

Factual Background

The weather at Lashenden Headcorn at 1120 was recorded as:

METAR EGMD 081120Z 22006KT 190V250 9999 FEW040 22/13 Q1020

Analysis and Investigation

CAA ATSI

The C152 pilot had called in advance for a pre-flight briefing and was advised that RW28 was in use. When the C152 first contacted Lashenden Radio, the A/G operator passed the runway in use and circuit direction. The A/G operator recalled being busy at the time and remembered that the D31 called departing RW28 and the C152 had reported on final. The Lashenden A/G operator reported that Lashenden does not have a VCR but he had a good view of the RW28 approach but not the RW10 approach.

After the D31 was airborne, the pilot reported that the C152 was on final for RW10 and had got very close. The A/G operator advised the C152 to break off his approach; he remembered that the C152 had turned right and carried out a right-hand circuit on RW28, but was too close to the aircraft ahead and went around. The C152 then routed over the village to the north, before rejoining downwind and continuing to land on RW28.

The A/G operator recalled that, after landing, the C152 pilot had apologised and reported that he had made a mistake positioning and had lined up for the wrong runway.

UKAB

The C152 pilot was required to conform to the pattern of traffic formed by other aircraft intending to land at the aerodrome or keep clear of the airspace in which the pattern was formed.¹

Summary

An Airprox was reported in the visual circuit at Lashenden Headcorn when a C152 (whose pilot was lining up for RW10 by mistake), and a D31 (which was taking-off on RW28), came in to conflict in Class G airspace.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both aircraft, a report from the A/G operator and a report from the appropriate ATC authority.

Board members firstly commended the C152 pilot for his frank and candid self-assessment but noted that there were many cues such as wind-socks, other cockpit instruments and airfield markers that should have helped to correct his cognitive misperception. Nonetheless, they appreciated the pilot's honesty and agreed entirely with his assessment; the cause was that the C152 pilot had mistakenly made an approach to the reciprocal runway. In assessing the degree of risk, the Board noted that the separation reported by both pilots had been uncomfortably close for a head-on encounter. They agreed that the actions of both pilots had improved separation to some extent, but they considered that safety standards had still remained well below normal, and agreed a risk category of B.

¹ Rules of the Air 2007, Rule 12, Flight in the vicinity of an aerodrome, and Regulatory Article 2307(1) Para 16

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The C152 pilot flew into conflict with the D31 whilst on approach to the reciprocal runway.

Degree of Risk: B.

ERC Score²: 20.

² 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.