

AIRPROX REPORT No 2013025

Date/Time: 28 Apr 2013 1041Z (Sunday)

Position: 51 17N 000 05W

(1.5nm S of Kenley Aerodrome)

Airspace: (Class: G) (Class: G)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: Viking Glider GA7 Cougar

Operator: HQ Air (Trg) Civ Pte

Alt/FL: ↓1700ft 1800-2000ft
(QFE 1001hPa) (QNH 1018hPa)

Weather: VMC CAVOK VMC CAVOK

Visibility: 40km 10nm

Reported Separation:

10ft V/50ft H NR V/NR H

Recorded Separation:

<0.2nm H (before loss of radar contact)

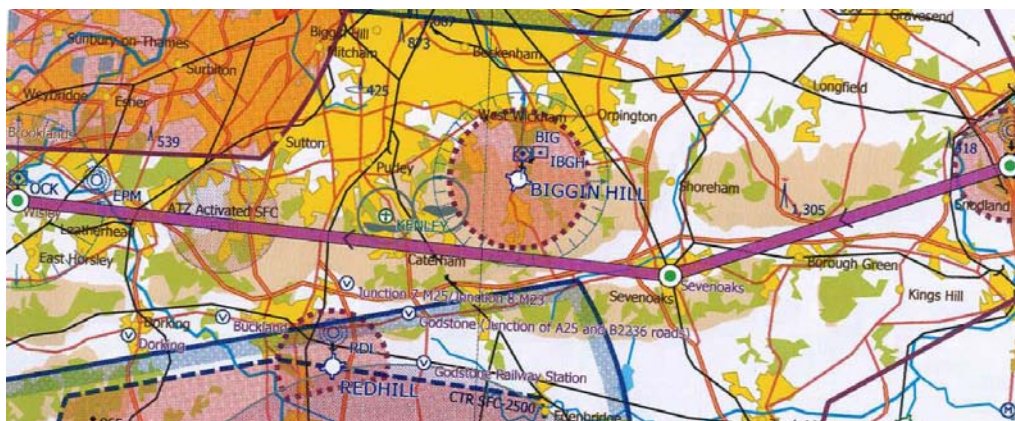


PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE VIKING PILOT reports flying a GH and instructor training sortie just to the S of Kenley in a white glider in contact with Kenley Radio. The Captain reports that he spotted the blue and white GA7 Cougar in their 9 o'clock, slightly below them as the student instructor was conducting a nose high steep stall 8-10 secs before the CPA. He took control of the glider, turned L and descended with 80° L bank whilst attempting to maintain visual contact with the GA7 and present its pilot with a plan view of the glider. He was able to identify the other ac, read its registration and estimated the CPA to be 10ftV and 50ft H. He reports that the other ac did not appear to manoeuvre.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE GA7 PILOT reports flying VFR from Rochester to Fairoaks via Sevenoaks Lakes and Ockham in his white ac squawking Mode 3/A 7000 with Mode S selected on. The pilot set his altimeter to 1018hPa at Rochester, cruised at 2000ft and selected Biggin APP frequency. He reports that Biggin APP was busy so he 'kept a listening watch.' He recalls hearing traffic heading for Sevenoaks at 2000ft so he descended to 1800ft and set course for Ockham. He reports that his route took him to the S of Kenley and that he did not see any gliders. The pilot included his map in his report:



UKAB Note (1): ANALYSIS OF THE RADAR shows the GA7 tracking W abeam Sevenoaks squawking Mode 3/A 7000 and as it approaches Hurley Lodge the squawk changes to 7047, Biggin Hill Airport Conspicuity. At 1040:01 the radar recording shows the GA7 3.3nm SE of Kenley tracking 275° whilst the Viking is 0.9nm SSE of Kenley; the ac are 2.6nm apart. The Viking appears to manoeuvre L and then R without covering much track distance and then disappears from the radar recording at 1040:23, 1.3nm SSE of Kenley, in the GA7's R 1 o'clock position at a range of 1.9nm. The GA7 continues to maintain its track and at 1040:44 the Viking reappears in the GA7's R 1 o'clock position at a range of 0.5nm. The Viking paints 3 more returns which give the impression of a manoeuvre to the R through the GA7's 12 o'clock position and then disappears again 0.2nm ahead of the GA7. This point is the closest measurable CPA but the relative speeds of the ac mean that it is likely that the CPA was much closer as reported by the Viking pilot who was able to identify the GA7's registration.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of the reports from the pilots of both ac and radar video recordings.

The GA and Gliding Board Members lead the discussion on this event; they were surprised that the GA7 pilot did not see any gliders as it is a busy gliding area at weekends. The Board debated the route chosen by the GA7 pilot and the manoeuvring area selected by the Viking crew and concluded that given the congested nature of the airspace they had both made reasonable choices.

In Class G airspace both pilots had a responsibility to see and avoid the other ac; the Viking glider had right of way. Part of the Cause, therefore, was that the GA7 pilot did not see the Viking at any stage; for his part the Viking Captain had seen the GA7, but it was a late sighting at 8-10 seconds before the CPA, and the other part of the Cause. Turning to the Risk, the Board considered the measured and reported CPA distances. Although the Viking pilot's estimate of 10ftV/50ftH could not be confirmed by recorded radar, the Board was in no doubt that it was a close encounter. However, the Board concluded that once the Viking pilot had seen the other ac he had taken a sensible course of action that had a positive effect on the outcome and prevented a collision. Nevertheless the Board agreed unanimously that safety had been compromised and that this was a B Risk Airprox.

The Board discussed the safety barriers which were relevant in this Airprox and concluded that they were aircrew rules and procedures, visual sighting and aircrew action. Neither ac was in receipt of an ATC service and, as the GA7 pilot had not seen the glider, he could not apply the Rules of the Air. Whilst the Viking pilot saw the GA7 and took appropriate action, it had been so late that this barrier was not fully effective. The Board concluded that the remaining safety barriers had been minimally effective resulting in a score of 20 on the ERC matrix.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A non-sighting by the GA7 pilot and a late sighting by the Viking pilot.

Degree of Risk: B

ERC Score: 20