

AIRPROX REPORT No 2013057

Date/Time: 26 Jun 2013 1247Z

Position: 5212N 00152W
(Alcester)

Airspace: Lon FIR (Class: G)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: Ventus 2 CT PA28

Operator: Civ Club Civ Club

Alt/FL: 3100ft 2200ft
QNH (1030hPa) QNH (1030hPa)

Weather: VMC NK VMC NK

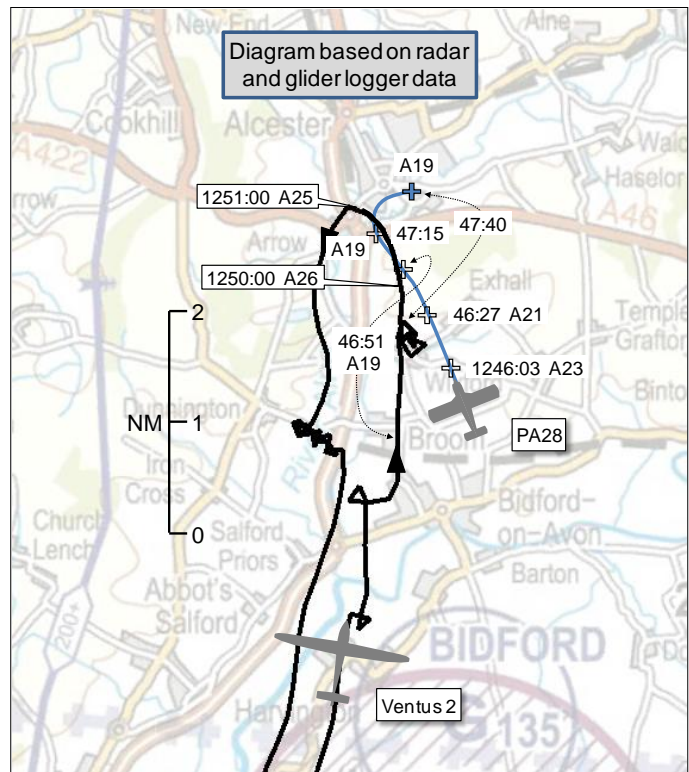
Visibility: 30km >10km

Reported Separation:

0ft V/100m H 200ft V/0.5nm H

Recorded Separation:

NK¹



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE VENTUS PILOT reports conducting a cross-country route. He was flying under VFR in VMC without an ATS. The white and orange glider was not fitted with lighting or an SSR transponder. The ac was fitted with FLARM. He was approaching Alcester, cruising between 70-80kt when a powered ac approached from behind on his L side at a distance of around 100m and slightly below. The other pilot then turned slowly R in front of him, the distance between them now being less than 100m, and at the same height, as the glider had descended slightly. The distance was sufficiently close that he was able to make a note of the other ac's registration. The other pilot continued to clear to the R, took no avoiding action, and the glider pilot doubted that he had been seen.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE PA28 PILOT reports transiting from Evesham to Alcester. He was operating under VFR in VMC with a BS from Wellesbourne Information [124.025MHz]. The white and blue ac had the SSR transponder selected on with Modes A and C; the lighting selection was not reported. The ac was not fitted with an ACAS. He stated that there were many gliders operating throughout the area and that he was aware of having to keep a good look out. He saw a glider at around 1nm in his L 11 o'clock position and pointed it out to his passenger. He decided to steer clear as the glider had right of way and noted that it was initially difficult to ascertain in which direction the glider was turning. He decided the glider was in a RH turn passing from R to L in his L 11 o'clock, so he turned to the R. He did not believe the two ac came 'dangerously close'. He stated that he was a PPL holder with IMC and Night ratings, that he flew for enjoyment and that he took his flying very seriously. He believed he tried to practice 'good airmanship'.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

¹ A clear radar recording and glider logger file were obtained with the relative flight paths corresponding to the reported confliction, however, the flight paths did not correlate in time. This may have been due to an error in the radar and/or glider logger time base but it was not possible to establish the reason definitively.

Factual Background

The weather at Birmingham was recorded as follows:

METAR EGBB 261250Z 31010KT 9999 SCT033 SCT039 19/11 Q1030

UKAB Secretariat Analysis

Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC and were equally responsible for collision avoidance²; the glider pilot had right of way³. Whilst the combined radar recording and glider logger picture at first sight showed tracks that correlated to the glider pilots' report, on closer examination it was apparent that there was a timing discrepancy and an estimated 700ft difference in altitudes. The glider pilot read the PA28 registration as the ac passed.

Summary

A Ventus glider pilot and a PA28 pilot, both operating under VFR in VMC in Class G airspace, flew into proximity with each other at about 1247 on the 26th June 2013, in the vicinity of Alcester.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, radar video recordings and a GPS logger file.

Given the reported facts and the recorded data, Board members were unsure whether the PA28 pilot had seen the subject glider. There was no doubt that the Ventus pilot had seen the PA28, as he had recorded the registration. Ultimately, the Board opined that the PA28 pilot probably hadn't seen the subject glider but was reporting his encounter with a different glider. The timing and altitude of the 2 aircraft's recorded tracks introduced a significant degree of confusion but the Board decided that the geometry was such that the diagram was most probably an appropriate representation of the incident, notwithstanding requiring coincident timing. A glider pilot member noted that the performance of the Ventus was such that there would not have been much overtake from the PA28 and that both pilots therefore had plenty of time to see the other. He also noted that where one glider was seen, there were often others, especially in 'thermic' conditions, where they could well be found in a vertical stack, whilst thermalling.

The Board considered that the cause of the Airprox was a non-sighting by the PA28 pilot; whilst some Members opined that safety margins were not significantly reduced, the majority considered that they had been reduced much below normal.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A non-sighting by the PA28 pilot.

Degree of Risk: B.

ERC Score: 20⁴.

² The Rules of the Air Regulations 2007, Rule 8 (Avoiding Aerial Collisions)

³ The Rules of the Air Regulations 2007, Rule 11 (Overtaking)

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.