

AIRPROX REPORT No 2012069

Date/Time: 25 May 2012 1528Z

Position: 5541N 00407W (O/H
Strathaven M/Light Site -
elev 847ft)

Airspace: SFIR (Class: G)
Reporting Ac Reported Ac
Type: Pegasus R44
Quantum M/Light

Operator: Civ Trg Civ Pte

Alt/FL: 10ft↑ 1400ft
QFE (998hPa) QNH

Weather: VMC CAVOK VMC CLOC

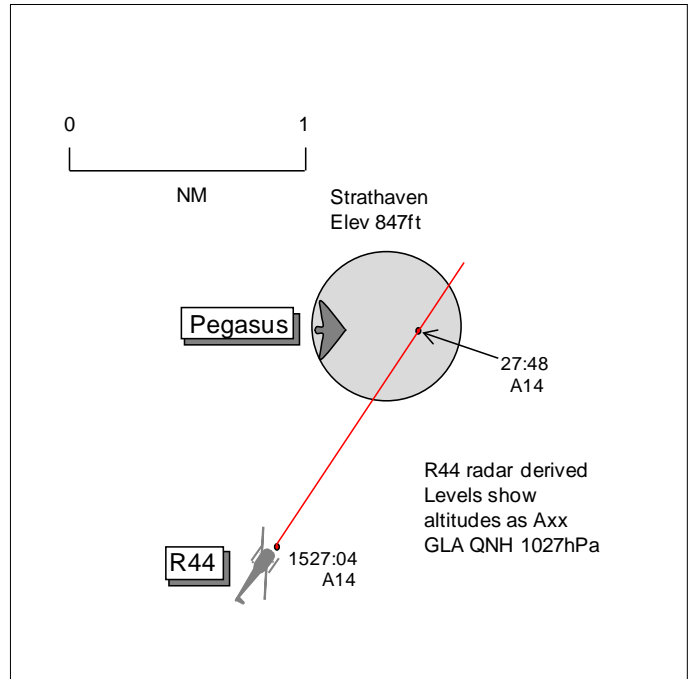
Visibility: 30nm 20nm

Reported Separation:

500ft V/350m H Not seen

Recorded Separation:

NR



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE PEGASUS QUANTUM M/LIGHT PILOT reports flying a local dual training sortie from Strathaven VFR and utilising Safety Common frequency 135.475Mhz. The visibility was 30nm in CAVOK VMC and the ac was coloured blue with a blue/white wing; no lighting was carried. On departure RW09, flying out of sun heading 090° at 50kt when just airborne climbing through 10ft QFE 998hPa he made a quick scan to his R and L to take advantage of the increased visibility and spotted a white coloured R44 helicopter 400m to his R and about 500ft above transiting from the SSW to the NNE. He assessed there was a risk of collision or that his ac would fly through the helicopter's rotor-wash if his departure was continued so he cut power and landed straight ahead back onto RW09. The helicopter passed 350m ahead and 500ft above and he assessed the risk as medium. He called Scottish Information from his mobile phone immediately afterwards to obtain further information. The R44 flight did not call on the Safety Common frequency. He went on to say that Strathaven had been the location of 3 Airprox last year which involved helicopters and this incident occurred just weeks after new charts had been issued denoting Strathaven with 'Intense Microlight Activity'; also Glasgow Airport had released part of the Class D CTR to the W back to Class G. He presumed the R44 pilot was therefore not using a current chart.

THE R44 PILOT reports en-route from N Ireland to Perth, VFR and in communication with Prestwick Approach and then Scottish Information, squawking with Modes S and C. The visibility was 20nm in VMC and the helicopter was coloured white with nav and strobe lights switched on. His route was through the E side of the Prestwick CTR to Darvel [7nm SW Strathaven] to Falkirk [22nm NE Strathaven] and then direct to Perth via the high ground. After hand-off from Prestwick back to Scottish Information, which he had worked prior to transfer to Prestwick, Scottish confirmed that they would look after his flight as he would be on the E CTR boundary of Glasgow and that Glasgow were busy. Heading 045° at 1400ft QNH and 110kt he was asked to report abeam Cumbernauld which he did by 8nm and he carried on to Perth. At no time was he aware that an Airprox had happened. Post flight he checked his GPS and it showed his ac passing waypoint STR2 [Strathaven M/Light Site] on his RHS by 1km.

UKAB Note (1): The Strathaven Website shows the ARP coordinates as 5540.8N 00406.33W. This position converts to deg/min/sec: 554048N 0040620W, which were the coordinates used in the UK

AIP up until AIRAC 01/2012 12th JAN. However, the AIRAC 02/2012 9th FEB, which incorporated an amendment to the Strathaven entry, shows the coordinates as 554049N 0040654W; this is the actual position of the site, 625metres W of the position published on the Strathaven website. The R44 pilot confirmed that the STR2 waypoint coordinates in the GPS database are 554048.3N 0040617.8W, which is slightly further E than the position shown on the Strathaven website. The Strathaven site operator was contacted by the UKAB Secretariat and informed of the discrepancy between the coordinates shown on the website and repeated in a VFR Flight Guide as opposed to those promulgated in the AIP. The Operator agreed to amend coordinates on the website and inform the appropriate Flight Guide publishers of the change.

ATSI reports that the Airprox was reported by the pilot of a Pegasus Quantum 912 M/Light when the pilot observed an R44 in the vicinity of the Strathaven M/Light site.

The M/Light was about to depart Strathaven for a local VFR flight and was monitoring SafetyCom on 135.475MHz. Since 9 February 2012 the Strathaven entry in the UK AIP (ENR 5-5-4-3) is fully promulgated, including the SafetyCom frequency. In addition VFR charts now show the area as one with Intense Microlight Activity.

The R44 was on a private VFR flight from N Ireland to Perth and was in receipt of a BS from Scottish Information on 119.875MHz.

Scottish Information is a non-surveillance based service and only offers Basic or Alerting Services. Scottish Information may request an ac squawk 7401 to assist in the prevention of airspace infringements.

ATSI had access to both pilots' reports, recorded area surveillance and recording of the Scottish Information frequency 119.875MHz. Additional information was also provided by the ANSPs at Glasgow and Prestwick Airports.

Both pilots reported visibility at 20nm or greater; however neither pilot cited cloud cover in their report. The meteorological information for Glasgow Airport, 15nm to the NW, was:-

METAR EGPF 251520Z 06015KT CAVOK 24/14 Q1027=

The R44 flight called Prestwick ATC on 129.450MHz at 1504Z and remained with Prestwick until 1521. The R44 transited Prestwick's CAS and left CAS 2nm E of Mauchline. The R44 pilot had informed Prestwick that his intentions were to route "up the eastern side of Glasgow, up towards Cumbernauld".

At 1512 Prestwick ATC telephoned Glasgow ATC advising of the R44. Glasgow informed Prestwick that they had no traffic to affect the R44 and, being busy with IFR traffic, declined to work the ac.

Prestwick ATC then passed the R44's details to Scottish Information and, at 1521, the R44 was transferred to Scottish Information. At this time Prestwick Multi-Radar Tracking showed the R44 approximately 10nm SW of the Strathaven ARP (554049N 0040654W) at altitude 1600ft (calculated using Glasgow QNH 1027hPa). The R44 was continuing on a NE'y track.

The R44 flight called Scottish Information at 1521:30. The FISO had already received basic details from Prestwick ATC and requested the R44's present level and position. This was given as 1400ft, 2nm S of Darvel. The FISO informed the R44 flight it was a BS and requested the ac squawk 7401. The pilot read back the SSR code but did not acknowledge the service being provided. Next, a confirmation of the R44's routing was requested. This was given as, "*if possible to skirt Glasgow's eastern boundary Cumbernauld onwards to Stirling...*". The FISO then requested a position report at Cumbernauld and informed the R44 pilot that Glasgow did not need to work the flight.

At 1522 the R44's SSR code changed from 7000 to 7401. ATSI observed the activation of the ac's SPI feature on the surveillance replay.

At 1526:27 the R44 was 2nm SSW of the Strathaven ARP at altitude 1400ft and tracking 050°.

By 1527:36 the R44 was immediately S of the Strathaven ARP by approximately 0.25nm at altitude 1400ft having adjusted its course L onto 040°.

Between 1527:44 and 1527:52 the surveillance replay shows the R44 fly over the Strathaven grass strip at an altitude of 1400ft. The Strathaven ARP has an elevation of 847ft. (See image below)



The M/Light pilot reported to UKAB that he observed the R44 on his RHS as he lifted [from a RW09 departure, prevailing NE'ly winds]. The pilot cut power to the M/Light and landed to avoid flight through rotor wash.

The R44 then continued away from Strathaven in a NE'ly direction.

Within the previous 12 months from the date of this Airprox there have been 3 other reported Airprox in the vicinity of the Strathaven M/Light site. Further to these previous incidents work has been completed on updating the Strathaven M/Light site AIP entry and changing the VFR chart entry to indicate Intense Microlight Activity.

Additionally, since 5 April 2012, airspace changes in the vicinity of Glasgow have resulted in airspace to the SE of Glasgow changing to Class G uncontrolled airspace below altitude 3500ft thus allowing VFR traffic transiting the area to do so without the requirement to call Glasgow ATC. [UK AIP AD 2-EGPF-4-1 refers].

The Airprox occurred in the vicinity of the Strathaven M/Light site when a M/Light pilot airborne from RW09 observed a R44 cross approximately 550ft R to L above the grass strip. The M/Light pilot aborted his departure and landed.

UKAB Note (2): The RoA Regulations Rule 12, Flights in the vicinity of an aerodrome states:

'(1) Subject to paragraph (2), a flying machine, glider or airship flying in the vicinity of what the commander of the aircraft knows, or ought reasonably to know, to be an aerodrome shall:

- a) conform to the pattern of traffic formed by other aircraft intending to land at that aerodrome or keep clear of the airspace in which the pattern is formed; and
- b) make all turns to the left unless ground signals otherwise indicate.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply if the air traffic control unit at that aerodrome otherwise authorises.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, radar video recordings and reports from the appropriate ATC and operating authorities.

From the radar recording it was clear the R44 had flown O/H Strathaven M/Light site and through the cct pattern at an altitude below cct height, contrary to Rule 12, placing the helicopter into conflict with the departing Pegasus Quantum, which went unseen by the R44 pilot, causing the Airprox. Members agreed that thorough pre-flight planning should have revealed Strathaven M/Light site, which is clearly depicted on the 1:500000 and 1:250000 topographical charts, and due regard should have been taken by either giving it a wider berth, transiting well above the cct pattern or calling on the appropriate frequency for information on activity. It was fortunate that the Pegasus Quantum pilot saw the R44 immediately after take-off, 400m to his R and 500ft above, and was in a position to be able to abort the departure, landing back safely on the remaining RW as the R44 passed 350m ahead and 500ft above. The prompt action taken by the Pegasus Quantum pilot was enough to persuade the Board that any risk of collision had been quickly and effectively removed.

Members noted the action being taken by the Strathaven Operator to ensure the correct coordinates for the Microlight site are promulgated.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The R44 pilot did not comply with RoA Rule 12 and flew O/H a promulgated and active M/Light site, into conflict with the Pegasus Quantum, which he did not see.

Degree of Risk: C.