

AIRPROX REPORT No 2011122

Date/Time: 14 Sep 2011 1604Z

Position: 5118N 00025E
(16nm E Biggin Hill)

Airspace: Lon FIR (Class: G)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: C152 Pipersport

Operator: Civ Pte Civ Pte

Alt/FL: 2200ft 2100ft
QNH (1018mb) NK

Weather: VMC CLBC VMC NK

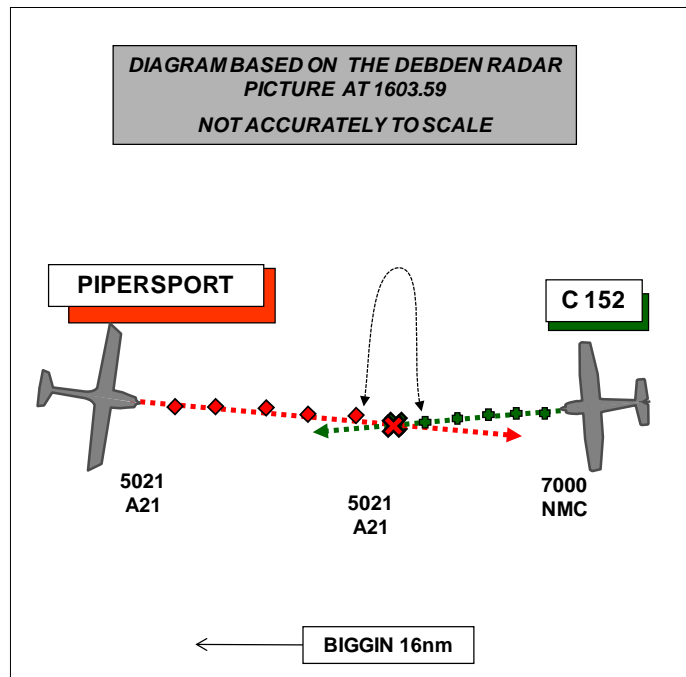
Visibility: >10km 10km

Reported Separation:

150ft V/0m H NK

Recorded Separation:

<0.1nm H



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE C152 PILOT reports flying a white ac, solo on a private flight from Biggin Hill with the landing light switched on but the nav lights switched off and with SSR (no Modes C or S). He was heading 270° at 90kt flying into sun, while in receipt of a BS from Rochester when he spotted a PA28 [type] ac 0.5-1nm away head-on at the same level, heading 090° but marginally to his R. As the ac was spotted so late, turning R would have increased collision risk and turning L might have presented a further risk if the other pilot had spotted him and followed the flight rules and turned R. With that in mind, he chose to select the throttle to idle and initiate a rapid descent from 2200ft to about 2000ft passing directly below the other ac, which appeared to take no action.

He assessed the risk as being high and reported the incident to Rochester Info before climbing back to 2200ft and returning to Biggin Hill, landing at 16:05.

His flight plan was: Biggin to Biggin, via Sevenoaks, Tenterden, Ash, and Sevenoaks.

THE PIPERSPORT PILOT reports flying a private flight from Blackbushe to Maypole in a white and blue ac with all external lights switched on, initially in receipt of a BS from Farnborough Radar; TCAS was not fitted. He flew to the S of the Fair Oaks ATZ then headed directly towards Biggin Hill and was handed over to Biggin Approach for an O/H transit at 2100ft; at 5nm E of the airfield he was handed back to Farnborough Radar and headed direct to DET to fly S of Rochester ATZ.

While E of Biggin tracking 094° at 118kt he saw an ac approaching from the NE (i.e. was in his 10 o'clock) and it appeared to be climbing. His initial impression was that it had departed from Rochester Airfield and was climbing out from the ATZ; the ac then flew above him, climbing and he had it in sight for only 1-2sec but he could not react quickly enough to change course. The ac crossed into his 5 o'clock and could not re-acquire it due to the angle of the sun.

He assessed the risk as being high.

He attached a GPS logger trace of his route.

ATSI reports that the Airprox occurred at 1603:40 UTC, 3nm to the SE of Rochester Airport in Class G airspace.

The Reims Cessna F152 (C152) was on a local VFR flight from Biggin Hill and in receipt of a BS from Rochester Info. The Czech Sport AS Pipersport (Pipersport) was operating on a VFR flight from Blackbushe to Maypole and in receipt of a BS from Farnborough LARS East.

CAA ATSI had access to area radar recordings, RTF recordings from Rochester Info and reports from both pilots. CAA ATSI did not receive identification of the second ac until the 10 Nov 2011 resulting in the RTF recording from Farnborough no longer being available.

METAR: EGKB 141550Z 27007KT 230V310 9999 SCT040 17/07 Q1018=

The C152 contacted Rochester Info at 1553, reporting S of Sittingbourne returning to Biggin Hill at 2200ft on pressure setting 1017mb and routing S of the Rochester ATZ. Rochester agreed a BS and passed the QNH as 1018, advising about two Cherokee Arrows and a departure to operate in the local area. Rochester asked the C152 to call overhead or abeam.

At 1559:08, radar recordings show the Pipersport ac, 10.5nm SW of Rochester Airport, squawking 5024, tracking E and indicating an alt of 2200ft. The C152 was shown 5nm SE of Rochester Airport tracking W on a squawk of 7000 with no Mode C.

At 1601:07 the C152 reported passing S abeam Rochester at 2200ft on QNH 1018 and Rochester asked the C152 pilot to report changing frequency.

At 1603:12, radar recordings show the range between the two ac was 1.5nm, on reciprocal tracks.

At 1603:37, the C152 pilot reported, *"Rochester (C152) c/s I've just had to take avoiding action to avoid a Cherokee."*

At 1603:39 the distance between the two ac was 0.1nm, with the Pipersport indicating an alt of 2200ft. The next radar returns show that the two ac have passed abeam and the Pipersport has descended to 2100ft; the two ac then continued on their respective tracks.

The C152 pilot reported that he had not seen the registration of the other ac, adding that it was travelling E to W (it is believed that the pilot meant W to E) at the same alt of 2200ft.

Rochester asked the pilot to pass any further details he could remember to ATC at Biggin Hill after landing. The C152 pilot reported the approximate position of the Airprox as being 17nm W [meaning E] of BIG (DME). Radar recording showed the position of the Airprox was 16nm E of BIG (VOR) and 3nm SW of Rochester Airport.

The Pipersport pilot's report indicated being in receipt of a BS from Farnborough. The pilot did not report that any TI or warning was passed by the Farnborough controller.

The C152 was in receipt of a BS from Rochester Info and the Pipersport was in receipt of a BS from Farnborough LARS. CAP 774, UK Flight Information Services, Chapter 2, Page 1. Paragraphs 1 & 5, State:

'A Basic Service is an ATS provided for the purpose of giving advice and information useful for the safe and efficient conduct of flights. This may include weather information, changes of serviceability of facilities, conditions at aerodromes, general airspace activity information, and any other information likely to affect safety. The avoidance of other traffic is solely the pilot's responsibility.'

'Basic Service relies on the pilot avoiding other traffic, unaided by controllers/FISOs. It is essential that a pilot receiving this service remains alert to the fact that, unlike a Traffic Service and a Deconfliction Service, the provider of a Basic Service is not required to monitor the flight.'

'Pilots should not expect any form of traffic information from a controller, as there is no such obligation placed on the controller under a Basic Service outside an Aerodrome Traffic Zone (ATZ), and the pilot remains responsible for collision avoidance at all times. However, on initial contact the controller may provide traffic information in general terms to assist with the pilot's situational awareness. This will not normally be updated by the controller unless the situation has changed markedly, or the pilot requests an update. A controller with access to surveillance derived information shall avoid the routine provision of traffic information on specific ac, and a pilot who considers that he requires such a regular flow of specific traffic information shall request a Traffic Service. However, if a controller considers that a definite risk of collision exists, a warning may be issued to the pilot.'

The Airprox occurred when the two ac operating VFR came into close proximity. Rochester was not aware of the Pipersport ac and the Pipersport pilot's report does not indicate that any TI or warning was given by Farnborough LARS. Under a BS there is no obligation placed upon the controller to provide TI and there was no requirement for the controller to monitor the flight.

UKAB Note (1): The recordings of several radars showed the incident. The geometry is as outlined in the ATSI report and depicted above. However the reported Pipersport passed 100ft directly below another C152 (tracking 180°) 2min before the CPA with the reporting C152.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, transcripts of the relevant RT frequencies, radar recordings, reports from the air traffic controllers involved and reports from the appropriate ATC authority.

The Board noted that both pilots were operating legitimately in the Class G airspace to the S of Rochester and shared an equal responsibility to see and avoid other ac. The C152 was under a BS from Rochester while flying into sun, and the Pipersport a BS from Biggin following its transit immediately above their ATZ. While understanding why the respective pilots were under a BS from the respective units, the Board pointed out that a higher level of service would most likely have been available from Farnborough and either a TS or a DS would probably have identified the opposing ac significantly earlier.

The Board was informed that the radar recording showed another ac (identified as a second C152 and not shown on the diagram) transiting from NE to SW and crossing the Pipersport's track about 2 min before the CPA. Since the geometry of the incident as described by the Pipersport pilot did not match that described by the reporting pilot, but did match the earlier encounter, it was agreed that he had probably seen the first ac but not the one flown by the reporting pilot.

The Board noted that the C512 pilot had been faced with unenviable geometry and his late but rapid descent, although not verified by the radar, had most likely been effective in removing the risk of collision; its lateness however, had resulted in a reduction of normally accepted safety margins.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A non-sighting by the Pipersport pilot and a late sighting by the C152 pilot.

Degree of Risk: B.