

AIRPROX REPORT No 2011084

Date/Time: 1 Jul 2011 1011Z

Position: 5211N 00004W (1.5nm SW Bourn)

Airspace: LFIR (Class: G)
Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: ASW27B PA28

Operator: Civ Pte Civ Club

Alt/FL: 3000ft↑ 3000ft
QFE QNH

Weather: VMC CLBC VMC CLOC

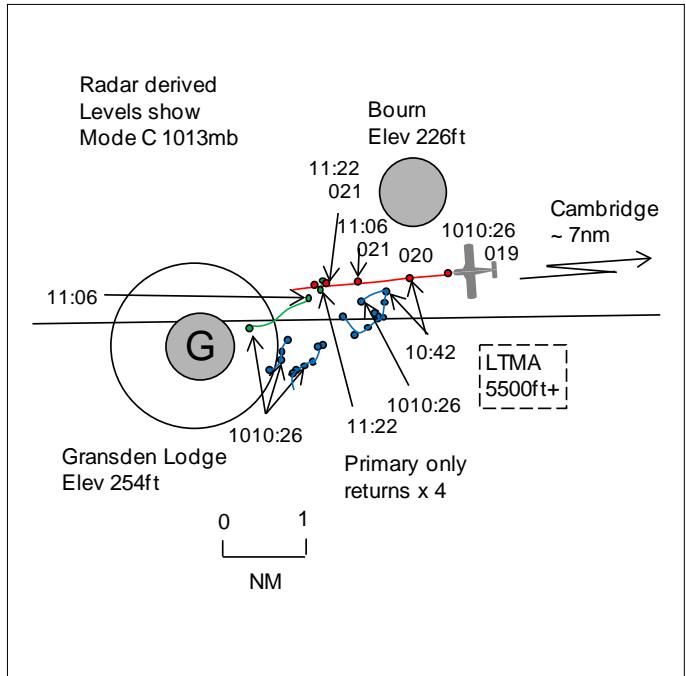
Visibility: 15km 10km

Reported Separation:

200ft V/300m H 100ft V/3-400m H

Recorded Separation:

NR



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE ASW27B PILOT reports, 3 weeks post incident, flying a cross-country flight from Gransden Lodge and in communication with Gransden Lodge Radio on 131.275MHz. She was thermalling, banked to R about 5km SE of Bourn airfield [actually SW], at about 3000ft Gransden Lodge QFE in a bid to climb to cloudbase which was around 4000ft. The visibility was 15km in VMC and the ac was coloured white. Turning through heading 045° at 65kt she suddenly saw a red/white single-engine ac heading SW from the direction of Cambridge and then changing course to a more W'ly direction at approximately the same height. She banked sharply L and flew towards Bourn airfield and observed the ac pass about 300m to her R and 200ft below where she had been thermalling. She believed the other ac's pilot had not seen her glider. She assessed the risk as medium. There were a number of gliders in the same area as it was a good gliding day.

THE PA28 PILOT reports, 10 weeks post incident, flying a dual training sortie to Turweston, VFR and possibly in communication with, or may have just left, Cambridge squawking 7000 with Mode C. The visibility was 10km in VMC and the ac was coloured white/red; no lighting was mentioned. When SW of Bourn heading W at 3000ft QNH and 100kt a glider appeared below their ac's nose to their L at about 300-400m. It appeared to be continuously climbing and banking from the moment it emerged from below their ac's nose ahead to when it left their forward view to the top R of their screen about 100ft above. He assessed the risk as medium to low.

UKAB Note (1): Following receipt of the ASW27B pilot's report, tracing action was commenced by RAC Mil. The reported position was 5km SE of Bourn at 1105UTC which necessitated further clarification from the ASW27B pilot. The PA28 was identified by 12 Aug and the pilot was contacted through the PA28's club; the pilot's report was received at the UKAB on the 12th Sep. Owing to the time delay no RT was retrievable from Cambridge ATSU.

UKAB Note (2): The Stansted radar recording at 1010:26 shows the PA28 1.1nm SSE of Bourn tracking 265° indicating unverified FL019 (~2300ft LON QNH 1027mb) with 4 primary only radar returns to its SW. The nearest is 1.25nm away and closes to within 0.25nm at 1010:42 before it is seen to turn away and manoeuvre to the S. The other 3 primary returns track NE'ly before the 2 S'ly targets fade 0.75nm of the PA28's intended track. The most W'ly of the primary returns, possibly the ASW27B, tracks NE'ly before fading at 1011:06 in the PA28's 1130 position range 0.6nm; the PA28

showing FL021 (~2500ft QNH). The primary return reappears at 1011:22 in the PA28's 1130 position, range 0.1nm tracking N'ly. The next sweep shows the primary return 0.1nm NE of the PA28, the ac having crossed. The ASW27B pilot reported flying at 3000ft QFE (Gransden Lodge elevation 254ft) which would equate to over 700ft separation but this does not accord with the subject pilots' reported separation of between 100-200ft V and 300-400m H.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

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

Members were not surprised that the PA28 encountered a glider owing to the proximity of Gransden Lodge gliding site to the PA28's track to the S of Bourn. As this Airprox occurred in Class G airspace both pilots had equal responsibility to maintain separation from other ac through see and avoid. On this occasion, the ASW27B pilot saw the approaching PA28 and, although having right of way, she perceived the potential for conflict and turned L away from the PA28, which passed 300m to her R and 200ft below. The PA28 pilot saw the ASW27B 300-400m ahead and slightly below which one Member thought had been a late sighting. This view was not shared by the majority of Members who, cognisant of the known difficulty in visually acquiring thermalling white gliders against a backdrop of cloud, thought the PA28 pilot had seen the glider as soon as reasonably practicable in the conditions that pertained at the time. The PA28 pilot watched the ASW27B cross ahead of his track from slightly below before moving away to his R and above by 100ft. Members agreed that the ASW27B pilot had shown good airmanship; her actions were judged to have been timely, appropriate and effective in resolving this conflict and quickly removing the risk of collision.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A conflict in Class G airspace resolved by the ASW27B pilot.

Degree of Risk: C.