

AIRPROX REPORT No 2010127

Date/Time: 3 Sep 2010 1215Z

Position: 5053N 00205W (4nm
NE Blandford Forum)

Airspace: LFIR (Class: G)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: Luscombe 8E PA28

Operator: Civ Pte Civ Club

Alt/FL: 2000ft 1950ft
(QNH 1021mb) (QNH 1025mb)

Weather: VMC CLBC VMC HAZE

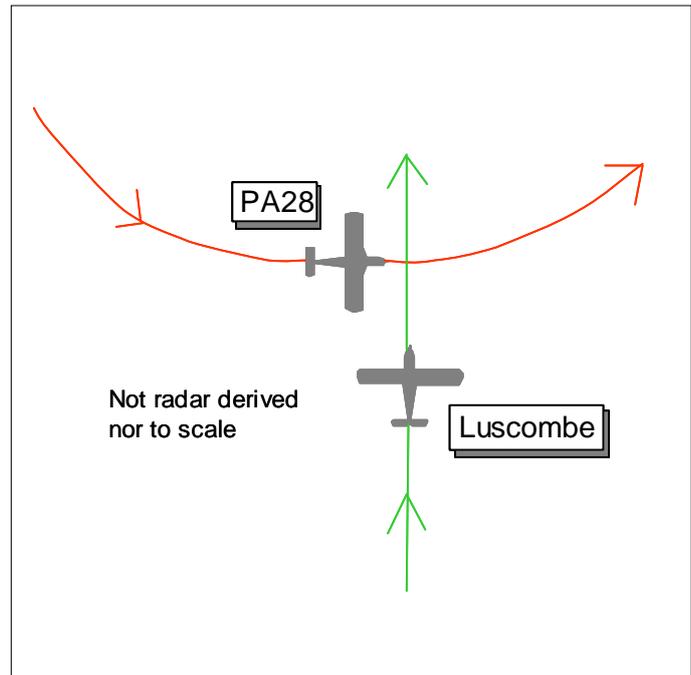
Visibility: 30km 6-8km

Reported Separation:

20ft V/<100ft H 300ft V/400ft H

Recorded Separation:

NR



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE LUSCOMBE PILOT reports flying a local sortie from a private site to the SW of Blandford Forum VFR and listening out with Bournemouth Approach on 119.475MHz, squawking 7000 with Mode C. The visibility was 30km flying 1500ft below cloud in VMC and the ac was coloured white/red with strobe and nav lights switched on. As he was approaching the 'Great Dorset Steam Fair' site, heading N at 2000ft QNH and 100kt, a yellow/ochre coloured PA28 appeared <100ft directly in front and 20ft above, its registration could be clearly seen, heading 070-080° flying straight and level. It was not seen earlier owing to the angle and point of approach, it being obscured by his ac's high wing. He assessed the risk as high. Later he spoke to the PA28 pilot who was apparently unaware an Airprox had occurred.

THE PA28 PILOT reports flying a local sortie from Compton Abbas VFR and in receipt of an A/G service from Compton Abbas on 122.7MHz, squawking 7000 with Mode C. The visibility was 8km in haze, reducing to 6km into sun, in VMC and the ac was coloured yellow/brown with anti-collision and strobe lights switched on. He was in a constant L turn at 1950ft QNH and 98kt around a large event on the ground and, as he was in a low-wing ac, he had positioned himself at the lowest permissible height above the event so he could focus his lookout above. Having turned around the event onto W he was surprised to see a white coloured high-wing ac, a Luscombe, 400ft on his L heading in the opposite direction about 300ft below and directly above the event. On sighting the ac he turned R onto a N'y heading to avoid. After landing he received a telephone call from the pilot of the Luscombe stating that whilst turning his PA28 gently L from S onto N passing E, the Luscombe had passed beneath his ac with <100ft separation. He had not seen the Luscombe at this time. He believed that at the time the Luscombe pilot reported approaching him from the S it would have been out of view under his R wing and coming out of sun, where there was poor visibility, making it very difficult for him to have spotted it. The Luscombe pilot said that after passing under his PA28 he positioned his Luscombe onto a reciprocal heading so that it would be visible to him.

UKAB Note (1): The RoA Regulations Rule 5 Low Flying Prohibitions Para (3) (e) Flying over open air assemblies states:

'Except with the written permission of the CAA, an aircraft shall not fly over an organised open-air assembly of more than 1,000 persons below the higher of the following heights:

- (i) 1,000 feet; or

- (ii) such height as would permit the aircraft to land clear of the assembly in event of a power unit failure.

UKAB Note (2): Met Office provided a Bournemouth METAR and an assessment of the Wx conditions in the area. EGGH 031220Z 13009KT 9999 SCT030 21/12 Q1021=. In terms of the general situation, an area of high pressure centred just to the north of Shetland maintained a light SE'ly flow over southern England. An occluded front lay to the W of Ireland, but not affecting the Bournemouth area. The visibility in the area was generally good, in the range 20-25km. The cloud was SCT, locally BKN with a base of 2500ft to 3000ft (type shallow cumulus). No weather was reported in the Bournemouth area. The QNH in the area was 1021 hPa.

UKAB Note (3): The Airprox occurs outside of recorded radar coverage.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac.

Pilot Members agreed that there were 2 valuable lessons to be learnt from this incident. First, pilots should endeavour to be extra vigilant when planning to view a ground feature or event because of the potential to encounter other like-minded pilots. Second, with both pilots reporting that their view of the approaching ac had been obscured by known ac blind-spots, these known deficiencies should be mitigated by moving the ac (lifting/lowering a wing) and/or moving the pilot's head at regular intervals to ensure that the previously obscured airspace is clear of traffic. However, in this case the Luscombe passed unsighted to the PA28 pilot whilst Luscombe pilot only saw the PA28 as it appeared in front crossing from L to R, effectively a non-sighting.

Looking at risk, some Members thought that the ac had passed with more than a fair share of luck, and that there had been a definite risk of collision. Other members were more reticent, believing that when the Luscombe pilot saw the PA28, the ac were already passing each other, admittedly with separation margins reduced, but sufficiently distant that there was no instinctive reaction to take avoiding action. Without radar information to corroborate the actual geometry and separation distances that pertained, Members could only decide on the limited information available in the pilots' reports. In the end, the Chairman asked the Board to vote and, by a slim majority, it was decided that safety had not been assured during this encounter.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A non-sighting by the PA28 pilot and effectively a non-sighting by the Luscombe pilot.

Degree of Risk: B.