

AIRPROX REPORT No 2010160

Date/Time: 20 Oct 2010 1332Z

Position: 5308N 00235W (2nm S
Ashcroft - elev 149ft)

Airspace: LFIR (Class: G)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: Mainair Blade PA38
Flexwing M/L

Operator: Civ Pte Civ Trg

Alt/FL: 1200ft ↓1500ft
(QNH 1021mb) (QNH 1021mb)

Weather: VMC CLNC VMC CLBC

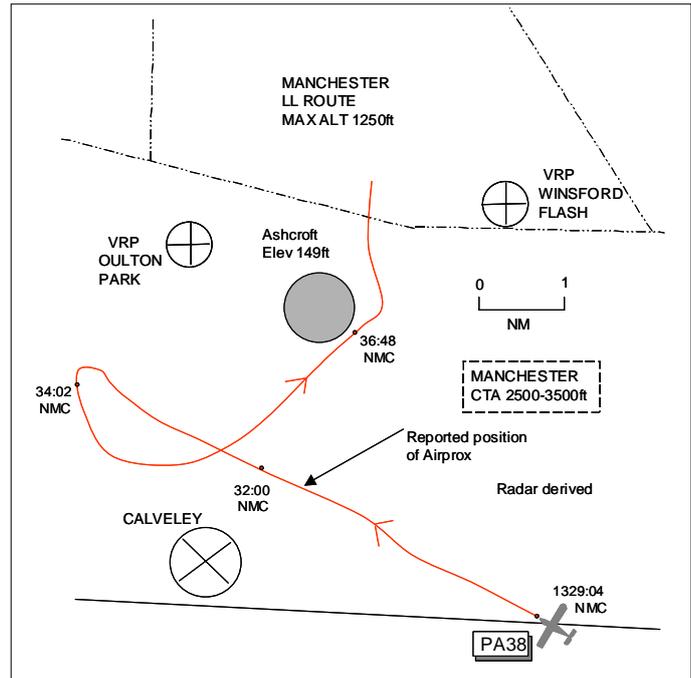
Visibility: 30km >10km

Reported Separation:

Nil V/200m H Not seen

Recorded Separation:

NR



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE MAINAIR BLADE FLEXWING M/L PILOT reports flying a 'Permit to Fly' check flight from Ashcroft, VFR and listening out on Ashcroft frequency 122.52MHz. The visibility was 30km in VMC and the flexwing was coloured white. After climbing out from RW31 he turned onto heading 180° and levelled at 1200ft, Manchester QNH, at 60kt. About 2nm S of Ashcroft flying into very bright sunlight he first saw a PA38 in his 11 o'clock range 200m heading NW at the same altitude. He immediately commenced a tight L turn to avoid a certain collision, the PA38 passing 200m clear on his R without taking avoiding action. He assessed the risk as high.

THE PA38 PILOT reports flying solo on a qualifying cross-country between Halfpenny Green and Blackpool, VFR and in receipt of a BS, he thought, from Manchester on 118.875MHz, squawking 7366 [Conspicuity code for ac operating within 5nm of Manchester CTR maintaining a listening watch on Approach frequency] with NMC. The visibility was >10km in VMC and the ac was coloured blue/white with anti-collision light switched on. On the leg between Hixon and Winsford he was R of track at the halfway point so he altered course to the L by 16° as a correction. Past Crewe heading 305° at 2000ft QNH 1021mb and 90kt tracking to Calverley he recognised Oulton Park to the N and altered course towards it, remaining outside CAS. He commenced 2 orbits to the S of Oulton Park at 2000ft to orientate himself, identifying Winsford and Ashcroft Farm, and then he descended to 1500ft on track to Winsford to enter the LL Route at 1250ft. As he passed abeam Ashcroft he saw a M/Light on his R, which was not close, and he did not consider there to be any risk of collision.

UKAB Note (1): The PA38 was traced by RAC Mil and the pilot was contacted in early November. However the completed CA1094 was not received by UKAB until the 20th December. By then the Manchester RT recording media had been returned into service so no transcript was available; therefore ATSI did not provide a report.

UKAB Note (2): The radar recording does not capture the CPA as the Mainair Blade M/Light does not show at all. The PA38 is seen clearly throughout, tracking 290° and passing 2.2nm S of Ashcroft at 1332, the approximate position of the reported Airprox. Four minutes later at 1334:02 the PA38 is seen to have commenced a L turn 2.5nm S of Oulton Park (3nm SW of Ashcroft) and after a 270° turn the PA38 rolls out on a NE'ly heading before passing 0.5nm SE of Ashcroft at 1336:48.

Thereafter the PA38 turns onto a track of 360° and passes W abeam of Winsford Flash VRP and into the Manchester LL Route.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

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

Although the Airprox was not captured on recorded radar, owing to the Flexwing not showing, the PA38's track is clearly seen, which broadly verifies the reported pilot's recollection of his flightpath. The PA38 student pilot had initially passed just over 2nm S of Ashcroft tracking 290°, the reported Airprox location. However, he had not seen the Mainair Flexwing at this time, only later seeing a M/Light as he passed Ashcroft after he had set course towards Winsford. Members sympathised with the student pilot, who was concentrating on his navigation by identifying ground features, which almost certainly was to the detriment of maintaining a good lookout for other traffic. Fortunately the Flexwing pilot, who was looking into sun, saw the PA38 as it approached on a NW'ly track, albeit late, and took prompt and robust avoiding action to the L, estimating separation as 200m. This action was enough to persuade the Board that any risk of collision had been quickly and effectively removed.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A non-sighting by the PA38 pilot and a late sighting by the Mainair Flexwing pilot.

Degree of Risk: C.