

AIRPROX REPORT No 2011042

Date/Time: 19 May 2011 1238Z

Position: 5403N 00100W
(6nm E Linton - elev 53ft)

Airspace: Lon FIR (Class: G)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: Tucano Untraced Glider

Operator: HQ AIR (TRG) NR

Alt/FL: 2500ft NR
(QFE 1015mb) NR

Weather: VMC CAVOK NR

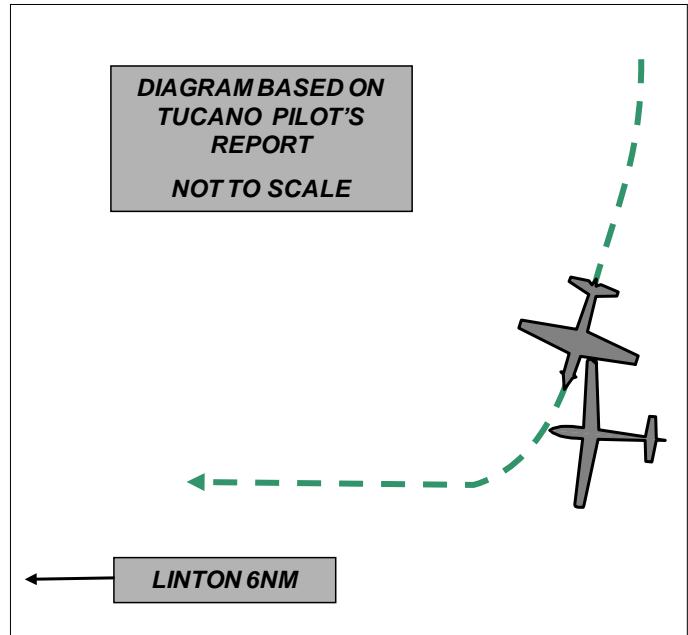
Visibility: 40km NR

Reported Separation:

100ft V/Nil H NR

Recorded Separation:

NR



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE TUCANO PILOT reports that he was flying a black ac with all lights on, on a dual local training flight from Linton-on-Ouse, squawking 4576 [he thought] with modes C and S; TCAS1 was fitted. While heading 240° at 260kt and at 2500ft (QFE) on recovery to Linton-On-Ouse in receipt of a BS, a contact with height unknown was passed by Linton APP. Despite keeping a good lookout no ac was seen and, as there was no contact on TCAS, they suspected the contact to be a glider. Just before turning R to line up on the extended C/L for RW28, the handling pilot caught sight of a white, low-wing glider flying from left to right immediately in front of them and level with their ac. He bunted hard to -0.5G to avoid a collision and flew underneath a white low-wing glider in straight and level flight, clearing it by about 100ft. He assessed the risk as being very high [and reported the incident to TWR on first contact].

UKAB Note (1): Despite extensive procedural tracing action, the glider could not be identified.

LINTON-ON-OUSE APPROACH CONTROLLER (APP) reports that at about 1240 [1237:01 from transcript] the Tucano called for a visual recovery. The aerodrome details were passed and the ac turned towards the aerodrome [and a BS was agreed]. As the ac turned he noticed a non squawking (primary) contact 1nm S of its position, tracking NW. He passed TI to the pilot, who replied that he was 'looking'; he then reported visual and changed frequency to TWR.

UKAB Note (2): The Tucano shows on the Great Dun Fell radar recording throughout, initially squawking 4577. It changed squawk to 4506 at 1238:35 then turned R onto the RW28 15sec later. The glider does not show at any time.

HQ 1GP BM SM reported that this Airprox occurred between a Tucano on a VFR recovery at 2500ft QFE, in receipt of a BS from Linton APP and an un-traced glider, 6nm E of Linton-on-Ouse

The Airprox does not appear on the radar replay, consequently this investigation has been based on the tape transcript and reports of the pilot and controller involved.

At 1237:01, the Tucano pilot free-called APP for a visual recovery and was passed the airfield details and placed under a BS in accordance with the Linton FOB.

APP reported that as the Tucano turned to position for the recovery he noticed a primary radar contact and passed TI stating, “*traffic believed to be you has traffic south, one mile, tracking north-west, no height information*”. The next transmission from the pilot was at 1238:19 stating, “*field in sight, squawking circuit, to tower*” which was acknowledged by APP.

It would appear that the CPA occurred shortly before 1238:31 with the Tucano’s first call on the TWR freq being, “*Er, Tucano C/S just gone underneath the glider*”; 21sec later at 1238:52 and without a further transmission from the Tucano, TWR broadcast joining instructions to the Tucano.

[UKAB Note (3): At 1238:28 the Tucano was descending through FL026.]

In accordance with the service principles laid down within CAP774, APP deemed that a collision risk existed for the Tucano and provided the crew with TI. The ac captain and NHP at the time of the occurrence later stated that they wished to add their thanks to APP for the TI which was, “timely and focussed our attention and lookout at a time when we were also concentrating on the recovery and ‘gaining visual’ with the airfield”.

Gliding activity within the Vale of York has been recognised at Linton as their greatest risk. The Stn has taken action to attempt to mitigate this risk and continues to engage with the local flying community to raise awareness of their operations. In terms of the Airprox itself and to paraphrase the Stn Cdr’s comments, having received TI which alerted them to the presence of the glider, the crew visually acquired it, albeit later than ideal and took action to prevent a collision.

HQ AIR (TRG) comments that Linton is taking steps to reduce the risk from local gliding activity. Non-squawking, difficult to see ac, flown in the vicinity of approach paths to military airfields however, continue to be a significant hazard.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included a report from the Tucano pilot, transcripts of the relevant RT frequencies, radar recordings, a report from the air traffic controller involved and reports from the appropriate ATC and operating authorities.

An experienced Gliding Member was concerned that glider pilots might be perceived by the Board as being non-cooperative by not filing reports and by operating close to military airfields. He opined that they were just as safety-aware as other airspace users and many of their safety initiatives go unnoticed. Most are, however, part-time pilots and the education process is necessarily continuous and unrelenting; he accepted that the Military authorities wish to raise the profile of the risk of collisions with gliders and concurred this position. He also briefed that if the Tucano pilots report that the ac involved was a ‘low-wing’ glider, was accurate, in his opinion, it would most likely have been a motor glider; if that were the case, it could have taken off from anywhere in the UK and would therefore be very difficult to trace.

The Board commended the vigilance of the APP Controller for pointing out the intermittent primary only radar contact to the Tucano crew (on a BS) while they were descending and turning into conflict with it; this, Members considered, had been a significant factor in raising their level of lookout and had possibly lead to them seeing the glider, albeit later than optimum. The crew did, however, see the glider just in time for their ‘bunt’ to take effect and thereby prevent any risk of collision; the lateness of this reaction, however, convinced Members that there had been a reduction of normally accepted safety margins.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: Possibly a non-sighting by the glider pilot and a late sighting by the Tucano crew.

Degree of Risk: B.