

AIRPROX REPORT No 2012022

Date/Time: 26 Feb 2012 1205Z (Sunday)

Position: 5212N 00137W
(Wellesbourne Short
Final RW18 - elev 158ft)

Airspace: Wellesbourne ATZ (Class: G)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: PA28 PA28

Operator: Civ Trg Civ Pte

Alt/FL: 100ft 10ft
NK NK

Weather: VMC CAVOK VMC CLBC

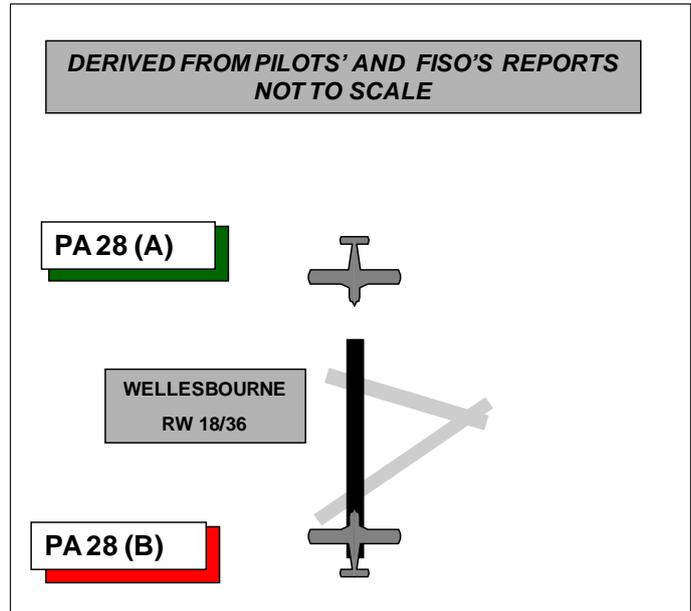
Visibility: >10km 1km

Reported Separation:

100ft V/50m H 4m V/920m H

Recorded Separation:

NK



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

PA28 (A) PILOT reports that he was flying as an instructor and was performing a currency check on a PPL holder in a white and green ac with strobes switched on and in receipt of a BS, he thought, from Wellesbourne and squawking 7000 with Mode C but Mode S was not fitted.

While on short final for RW18 at 70kt and about 100ft, he noticed another ac above the horizon and around 1000m ahead, which he believed had just departed [on RW36]. As the ac was descending, he believed it must have been carrying out a practice engine failure after takeoff. A few moments later he saw the other ac descend below a tree line ahead and as he could still see it he realised it must be coming towards him. He took control from the HP and immediately initiated a go-around, somewhat in disbelief; the other ac continued to land on RW36.

He first saw the ac when they were at a height of around 150ft and the other ac was at a similar height; he initiated the go-around at about 50ft. He then positioned on the deadside of the RW18 cct and when they were abeam the other PA28 it was no more than 100ft in height and possibly closer than 50ft horizontally.

He reported the incident immediately to Wellesbourne Information.

The biggest factor from his perspective was that the last thing he expected to see was an ac approaching head-on at such a late stage of landing. His student, a PPL holder, was a little unsure as to why the pilot had taken control as he did not see the other ac until it was pointed out, almost as they passed abeam it.

He assessed the risk of collision as being extremely high.

PA28 (B) PILOT reports flying in a red white and blue ac on a VFR private flight from Gloucester to Wellesbourne, squawking with Mode C but Mode S was not fitted. While inbound to Wellesbourne

heading 360° at 65 kt, he was not able to contact them on 124.025, which he later learnt was because you need to pull the radio control out in order to get the 02. He inadvertently called on frequency 124.05 [he thought see ATSI report] believing it to be Wellesbourne Information but the agency replied "Contact East Midlands Radar". He asked why he was being asked to do this when he was positive of his location but there was no response to any further requests from him although he could hear the controller referring other ac to the same East Midlands frequency.

Having failed to establish contact with Wellesbourne he endeavoured to make his presence known by circling O/H at 2000ft while at the same time trying to discern the pattern direction. He circled for one minute, but during this time there were no departures or arrivals, so he concluded that they must have seen him and held ac on the ground and therefore he considered it fairly safe to land. As he approached touch-down, another ac appeared at the opposite end of the RW but it immediately aborted.

He landed in the shortest distance possible taking a quarter of the RW and vacated immediately at the first exit.

The Windssock indicated calm.

ATSI reports that an Airprox was reported by the pilot of PA28 (A) in the Wellesbourne Mountford ATZ (Class G airspace), which is a circle of radius 2nm centred on RW18/36 from the surface up to 2000ft above aerodrome level (159ft); he was approaching to land on RW18 when another PA28(B) was observed to land on RW36.

The reporting PA28, (A) was operating VFR, flying training circuits in the RH cct for RW18 at Wellesbourne Mountford and was in receipt of a FIS from Wellesbourne Mountford TWR on frequency 124.025 MHz. The reported PA28, (B) was operating on a VFR flight from Gloucester to Wellesbourne Mountford.

CAA ATSI had access to recordings of RTF from East Midlands TWR, area radar recordings, with written reports from the pilots of both Cherokees and the Wellesbourne Mountford FISO.

The UK Aeronautical Information Publication pages AD2-EGBW-1-1 to AD2-EGBW-1-5 (21 Oct 10) state that Wellesbourne Mountford is PPR, that the aerodrome is not available to ac unable to communicate by radio and that pilots are requested to contact Wellesbourne at least 10min before ETA Wellesbourne.

The Coventry METARs are provided for 1150 and 1220 UTC:

METAR EGBE 261150Z VRB03KT 9999 FEW016 10/06 Q1029=
METAR EGBE 261220Z 23004KT 190V270 9999 SCT020 10/06 Q1028=

At 1150:00 East Midlands TWR received a very faint call from the pilot of the PA28(B) on frequency 124.0 MHz addressed to "Wellesbourne Information"; the controller gave a very clear station ident of 'East Midlands TWR' and requested the callsign of the ac. The pilot of the PA28 (B) passed his flight details to the controller and requested a handover to Wellesbourne. The East Midlands TWR controller instructed the PA28 (B) to contact East Midlands Radar. The instruction was readback and no further calls were received from the pilot of the PA28 (B) by TWR. No calls were received by East Midlands Radar from the pilot of the PA28 (B).

At 1200:13 radar recordings show the PA28 (B) 2.1nm SW of Wellesbourne Mountford and two other ac making approaches to the airfield, one on final and one downwind for RW18.

Radar recordings show the PA28 (B) make an overhead join at Wellesbourne Mountford while one ac is on final approach to land and another ac getting airborne from RW18. PA28 (B) subsequently made an approach to RW36 and landed.

The report from the pilot of the PA28 (A) states that he saw PA28 (B) at approximately 150ft while on short final for RW18 and he initiated a go-around at approximately 50ft.

The report from the FISO at Wellesbourne Mountford states that the PA28 (A) was about to touch down when the PA28 (B) landed on RW 36. The FISO was unaware of the presence of the PA28 (B) prior to it landing as no radio contact had been made.

The report from the pilot of PA28 (B) states that he could not select the frequency 124.025 MHz due to being unable to operate the radio correctly. The pilot contacted frequency 124.0 MHz (East Midlands TWR) believing it to be Wellesbourne Information. When the pilot called on 124.0 MHz the controller clearly gave the station ident as "East Midlands TWR". When the pilot was instructed to contact East Midlands Radar he readback both the instruction and the frequency correctly. The pilot's report states that he queried the instruction to contact East Midlands radar as he "was positive of his location", but received no response; however, no further calls were received either by East Midlands TWR or East Midlands Radar from the pilot of PA28 (B). Having failed to establish contact with Wellesbourne he circled overhead at 2000ft to make his presence known and to observe the traffic pattern. The pilot's report states that there were no arrivals or departures during that time so he made the decision to land. As the pilot of PA28 (B) approached touchdown he observed another ac at the opposite end of the RW which immediately aborted the approach.

Both ac were operating VFR in class G airspace. CAP 774, Chapter 1, Paragraph 2 states:

'Within Class F and G airspace, regardless of the service being provided, pilots are ultimately responsible for collision avoidance and terrain clearance, and they should consider service provision to be constrained by the unpredictable nature of this environment. The Class F and G airspace environment is typified by the following:

It is not mandatory for a pilot to be in receipt of an ATS; this generates an unknown traffic environment;
Controller/FISO workload cannot be predicted;
Pilots may make sudden manoeuvres, even when in receipt of an ATS.'

The pilot of PA28 (B) attempted to contact Wellesbourne at 1150, approximately 10min before arriving in the overhead but due to being unable to operate the radio correctly, contacted East Midlands TWR. It is unclear why the pilot believed that Wellesbourne Information would be available on 124.050 MHz when he was unable to select the correct frequency of 124.025 MHz. It is unfortunate, that being aware that he was unable to select the correct frequency to contact Wellesbourne, the pilot did not seek assistance from the station he had established contact with, East Midlands TWR. The pilot continued to Wellesbourne Mountford and orbited overhead in order to make his presence known; however, this was unsuccessful as the FISO and the ac in the RH cct were unaware of the PA28 (B)'s presence until it landed. The pilot of PA28 (B) states in his report that whilst he was orbiting overhead Wellesbourne there were no arrivals or departures but radar recordings show one ac departing and one landing during the time PA28 (B) was overhead the airfield.

The pilot of PA28 (B) did not make contact with Wellesbourne Mountford and landed against the established traffic pattern.

The FISO at Wellesbourne Mountford was unaware of the presence of PA28 (B) and was therefore unable to provide assistance in the form of TI.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, transcripts of East Midlands RT frequencies, radar recordings, reports from the air traffic controllers/FISO involved and reports from the appropriate ATC authorities.

The Secretariat was asked whether the pilot of PA28 (B) was a student pilot on a qualifying Cross-Country; although this was not known at the time of the Board Meeting, it was subsequently determined that he was a recently qualified PPL holder, not a student.

The GA Board Member observed that the pilot of PA28 (B) had most likely been nervous and not properly briefed on the radio controller. Although his planned course of action for the approach to Wellesbourne had been correct, this was thrown into disarray when a key element, namely permission to approach and airfield information on the RT, was not available and his back-up plan was rushed and ill-considered. There was enough information available to the pilot (namely 2-way communication with East Midlands TWR) to indicate that his radio (in use) was not unserviceable. That being the case, D&D on 121.5 would have answered any call for assistance and would have been able to contact Wellesbourne (or any other airfield) by land line and relay information or instructions, albeit fairly slowly, thus most likely requiring an orbit in the overhead at a height providing good separation from traffic joining or in the circuit. Another Member pointed out that as far as he was aware, PA28s normally have two radios thus offering another possible solution. A third Member opined that all these factors were symptomatic of inadequate preparation for the flight or insufficient instruction on the ac fit.

Members observed that Wellesbourne has no local RT failure procedures and in the situation faced by PA28 (B) pilot, strict adherence to the UK RT fail procedures (civil) promulgated in the AIP, may not have resolved the situation, merely moved the problem to another location. Therefore Members understood his decision to land at Wellesbourne, despite the 'mandatory RT' requirement; they agreed unanimously, however, that the pilot should have been more patient in attempting to determine visually and subsequently confirm the RW in use and circuit direction, particularly since there is no 'signals area' at Wellesbourne. Although self-generated, the pilot was in a genuine emergency situation and landing at Wellesbourne was agreed to be the safest course of action.

In the event however, Members agreed that since PA28 (A) reacted quickly and appropriately by going around and PA28 (B) landed and vacated the RW expeditiously, there was no risk that the ac would have collided.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: Unable to make RT contact with Wellesbourne, the pilot of PA28 (B) did not conform to the circuit pattern established by other ac and landed into conflict with PA28 (A).

Degree of Risk: C.