

## **AIRPROX REPORT No 2012091**

Date/Time: 30 Jun 2012 1401Z (Saturday)

Position: 5115N 00041E (4.5nm SE  
DET)

Airspace: LFIR (Class: G)

Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: TB10 PA28

Operator: Civ Pte Civ Trg

Alt/FL: 2400ft 2200ft  
QNH (1011hPa) QNH

Weather: VMC NR VMC

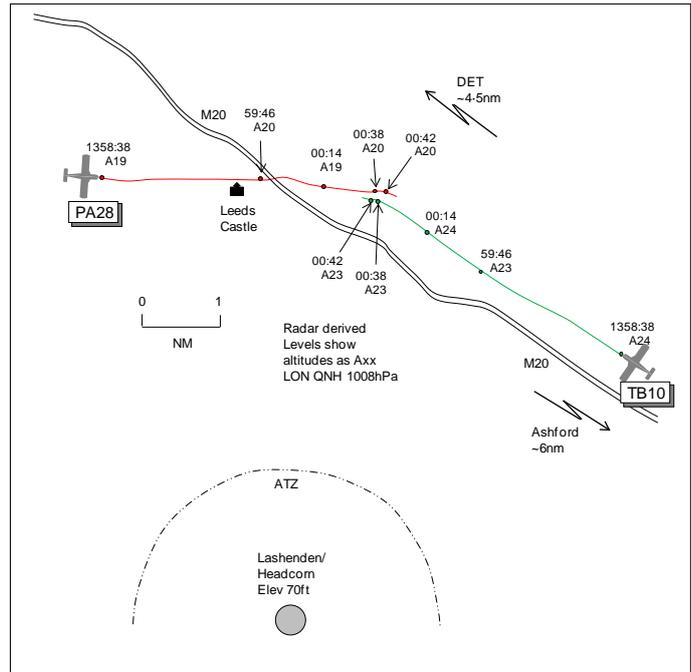
Visibility: Unltd NR

Reported Separation:

50ft V/300m H <100ft V/50-  
100m H

Recorded Separation:

300ft V/<0.2nm H



## **PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB**

**THE TB10 PILOT** reports en-route from France to Biggin Hill, VFR and not in communication with any ATSU, squawking 7000 with Modes S and C. The ac was coloured white/blue with anti-collision beacon switched on. Heading 290° at 115kt he descended from 4000ft to 2400ft just S of Ashford in order to clear a bank of cloud and remain below the London TMA. He had been in receipt of a BS from Lydd Approach until he reported at Ashford when he was advised to squawk 7000 and freecall Farnborough Radar on 123.225MHz. He received no response to his call to Farnborough (not unusual as they are often shut on busy afternoons) and he elected to continue non-radio until nearer Biggin Hill. Leaving Ashford, he routed just to the E (ie the RHS) of the M20, intending to turn L at Maidstone, towards Sevenoaks to join the Biggin cct. He deviated W a couple of miles to avoid a number of gliders operating in the vicinity of Challock, then continued up the RHS of the M20; the sun was in his 8 o'clock. His first view of the other ac was as it banked and began a turn to the E/N. It appeared to be coming directly towards him, and no movement was visible until the ac banked. The oncoming ac was in his 1 o'clock range 0.5nm and slightly below. He instinctively jerked the controls to the L, and turned for an estimated 5sec at approximately 45° bank. His own wing then blanked his view of the other ac. Rolling out of the turn, he saw the PA28 pass 50ft below and 300m to his R. At this point, quite unnerved, he checked his position on the ground and noticed Leeds Castle just in front of him. He checked his altitude (which had deviated by about 60ft) and descended back to 2400ft. Then (in all honesty, simply to hear a friendly voice), he contacted London Information on 124.6MHz and requested a BS. As he proceeded towards Sevenoaks, he considered the events and elected to report an Airprox. The initial filing was made to the London Information operator while orbiting to the E of Sevenoaks, before he transferred to Biggin Approach. The flight then proceeded uneventfully. He assessed the risk as low. It is worth noting that there were some moderate thermals in the area (giving about 500fpm) that made accurate altitude holding more difficult; this undoubtedly distracted from his visual scan. However, in the excellent visibility at the time, he spotted a number of other ac and gliders. He had recently purchased a PCAS unit, but had not yet had a chance to familiarise himself with it, and so did not use it on this flight. Apart from the thermal activity, his workload was light – he was in a familiar area, monitoring his position on a panel mounted GPS and by reference to the DET VOR. Normally he would have a portable GPS recording his flight route, but the battery was flat so this information was sadly unavailable.

**THE PA28 PILOT** reports flying a dual VFR navex from Biggin Hill via N Sevenoaks (M26 motorway) to Deal Kent (track 096°M) with an unknown diversion. The NOTAMs were checked prior to the flight and detailed an airshow at Rochester airport during the period of the flight; this was discussed with the student. They signed off from Biggin approach frequency at Sevenoaks and requested a frequency change to Farnborough Radar E on frequency 123.225MHz. They then turned onto a heading of 105°M, and changed squawk code from 7047 to 7000 as is the normal procedure. The student then attempted to contact Farnborough Radar E for a BS or TS. No reply was received after several attempts. One other flight was heard calling Farnborough on this frequency but also received no reply; no other radio traffic was heard on frequency. Their track took them 2nm S of Rochester ATZ so the student called Rochester Information on 122.25MHz requesting a BS. Rochester replied acknowledging a BS and suggested they stay well S of the ATZ due to the airshow. They were also informed of reports of gliders in the vicinity of DET, presumably from Challock gliding site. They later observed 2 gliders at a lower level closer to Challock. Their track should have taken them 1.5nm N of Leeds Castle but they had drifted S so that they passed just to the S of Leeds Castle. At this point it became evident to the student that they were S of intended track and after a couple of minutes the student informed him he was making a heading correction to the L onto a heading of 095°M. He pointed out that they needed to make an early correction as their projected current track would take them close to Challock gliding site. The student agreed and turned L from 103°M onto a heading of 090°M. He asked the student how he had arrived at his choice of heading and they discussed this for a very brief period. Their position was about 3.5nm SSE of DET flying level at 2200ft QNH, 300ft below cloud in VMC and at 90kt. When he looked up he observed another ac maybe slightly higher at about their 1 o'clock position, range 1nm, just N of the M20 motorway on a reciprocal but parallel track. He assessed that the other ac would pass down their RHS and they made a small turn to the L to ensure that they were on a divergent track; it passed <100ft above and 50-100m clear. He assessed the risk of collision was very low. He did not note the other ac's registration nor did they observe any heading changes by the other ac. Once due S of Sittingbourne they changed frequency to Manston Radar and continued with their planned route.

**THE SWANWICK FIS OFFICER** reports a moderately busy Saturday afternoon and at 1405 the TB10 pilot (in receipt of a BS) reported an Airprox in the vicinity of Maidstone. The TB10 was heading 290° at 2400ft when another ac (reported to be a PA28) passed 50ft below in the opposite direction. The other ac was not in receipt of a service from himself. Details were taken and the TB10 transferred to Biggin Hill at 1411.

**ATSI** reports that the Airprox occurred at 1400:42 UTC, 9nm SE of Rochester Airport and 2nm E of Leeds Castle, between a TB10 and a PA28.

The TB10 was operating VFR on a flight from Le Touquet to Biggin Hill and was not in receipt of an ATIS. After the Airprox the TB10 pilot contacted London FIS to make a report. The PA28 was operating on a local VFR flight from Biggin Hill and was in receipt of a BS from Rochester Information (AFIS) on frequency 122.25MHz.

Farnborough ATSU reported that LARS N and E were closed from 1330 to 1439 due to staff being required to facilitate CAS(T) operations. A NOTAM is not issued for a short closure. The Airprox occurred outside the Farnborough LARS-E area of responsibility.

CAA ATSI had access to: RT recording of Rochester Information; area radar recordings; written reports from the both pilots and a written report from the London FISO. The radar system QNH was 1008hPa.

The Biggin Hill METAR shows: EGKB 301350Z 22013KT 190V260 9999 SCT030 18/10 Q1009=

At 1345:08, the radar shows the TB10, 12.6nm E of Lydd Airport approaching the UK coastline at FL040 and squawking 7066, the Lydd Approach VFR conspicuity code.

At 1350:16, the PA28 is shown 6nm SE of Biggin Hill squawking 7000. The PA28 pilot's written report indicated departing from Biggin Hill on a dual VFR navex and after passing Sevenoaks, the

PA28 pilot attempted to contact Farnborough LARS E on frequency 123.225MHz, without a response.

At 1353:03, the PA28 pilot contacted Rochester Information requesting a BS, and reported routing from Biggin Hill via Deal, Whitstable, to pass S abeam Rochester. The PA28 was 7.8nm SW of Rochester Airport and the pilot reported level at an altitude of 2200ft on 1009hPa. The Rochester FISO passed the QNH as 1009 and reported that a display was taking place at Rochester, with 3 other ac operating in the local area. The PA28 pilot advised that he would report passing S abeam Rochester.

At 1353:31, the TB10 is 4.2nm SE of Ashford indicating FL024. The TB10 pilot's written report indicated descending to 2000ft to the S of Ashford changing squawk to 7000 and leaving the Lydd frequency to call Farnborough Radar on frequency 123.225MHz, without any response. The pilot decided to continue non-radio until nearer Biggin Hill. At this point the TB10 was outside of the Farnborough LARS E area of responsibility but within the coverage of Manston and Southend LARS.

At 1356:15, the TB10 at 2400ft, is shown 2.8nm N of Ashford, squawking 7000. The PA28, at 2100ft, is tracking SE'ly and the distance between the 2 ac is 15.6nm. By 1358:38 the distance between the 2 ac is 7.1nm, the PA28 at altitude 1900ft and the TB10 at altitude 2400ft.

At 1400:14, the TB10 at 2400ft, is shown 9nm NW of Ashford, on a NW'ly track. The PA28 is in the TB10's 11 o'clock at a range of 1.6nm, at 1900ft on an E'ly track.

[UKAB Note (1): The CPA occurs between radar sweeps. At 1400:38, the PA28 at 2000ft is shown 0.2nm NW of the TB10 at 2300ft. The PA28 is tracking E and the TB10 is shown commencing a L turn. The next radar sweep at 1400:42 shows the 2 ac have passed abeam and are diverging at a range of 0.2nm, with the TB10 at 2300ft and the PA28 at 2000ft. It was estimated that the 2 ac passed abeam at a range of <0.2nm with a vertical distance of 300ft.]

At 1401:23, the PA28 pilot reported passing abeam Rochester and requested a change of frequency to Farnborough on 123.225MHz.

The TB10 pilot contacted London Information on frequency 124.600MHz. The written report from the London FISO indicated that at 1405 the TB10 pilot reported an Airprox in the vicinity of Maidstone, on a heading of 290° at 2400ft. The PA28 was reported as the other ac travelling in the opposite direction and 50ft below. The TB10 was transferred to Biggin Hill at 1411.

The TB10 flight was not in receipt of an ATS at the time of the Airprox. The PA28 flight was in receipt of a BS from Rochester AFIS. CAP 774, UK Flight Information Services, Chapter 2, Page 1, Paragraph 1, and 5, states:

'A Basic Service is an ATS provided for the purpose of giving advice and information useful for the safe and efficient conduct of flights. This may include weather information, changes of serviceability of facilities, conditions at aerodromes, general airspace activity information, and any other information likely to affect safety. The avoidance of other traffic is solely the pilot's responsibility.'

Rochester Information (AFIS) were able to provide information regarding ac operating in the vicinity of Rochester Airport. The Airprox occurred 9nm SE of Rochester and the FISO was not aware of the TB10. The Manual of Flight Information Services, CAP410 Part B, Chapter 1, Page 1, Paragraph 1, states:

'The FISO's area of responsibility is the aerodrome, the aerodrome traffic zone and the immediate surrounding local area.'

The FISO may pass traffic or essential aerodrome information to anyone who calls on RTF. Any traffic information passed can relate only to known traffic operating, or intending to operate within the area of responsibility.'

Both flights were operating within Class G airspace. CAP774, Chapter 1, Page1, 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 Airprox occurred when the TB10 pilot became concerned about the proximity and relative position of the PA28.

The Rochester FISO was not aware of the TB10 and was unable to provide TI to the PA28 pilot.

In Class G airspace, the pilots are ultimately responsible for collision avoidance and should consider service provision to be constrained by the unpredictable nature of this environment.

## **PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS**

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, transcripts of the Rochester FISO RT frequency, radar video recordings, reports from the London FISO involved and reports from the appropriate ATC authorities.

Both pilots were responsible for maintaining their separation from other traffic through see and avoid within the Class G airspace. Both had tried to supplement their SA by obtaining a service from Farnborough LARS but were unsuccessful owing to its temporary closure. The PA28 pilot elected to contact Rochester FISO who was unaware of the TB10 whilst the TB10 pilot was not in receipt of any ATS at the time of the Airprox. From the reports provided it appeared that both pilots had seen each other's ac at about the same time, within 1nm, which Members thought were late sightings and were the cause of the Airprox. The ac had approached each other on a line of constant bearing with the conflicting traffic appearing as a stationary object within the pilot's field of view making the ac more difficult to detect owing to there being no relative movement. The same visual perspective of the incident (1 o'clock sightings) was presented to both pilots who both turned L which resulted in the ac passing starboard to starboard. Taking these elements into account, the Board were able to conclude that the actions taken by both pilots had been enough to remove quickly and effectively any risk of collision.

## **PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK**

Cause: Late sightings by the pilots of both ac.

Degree of Risk: C.