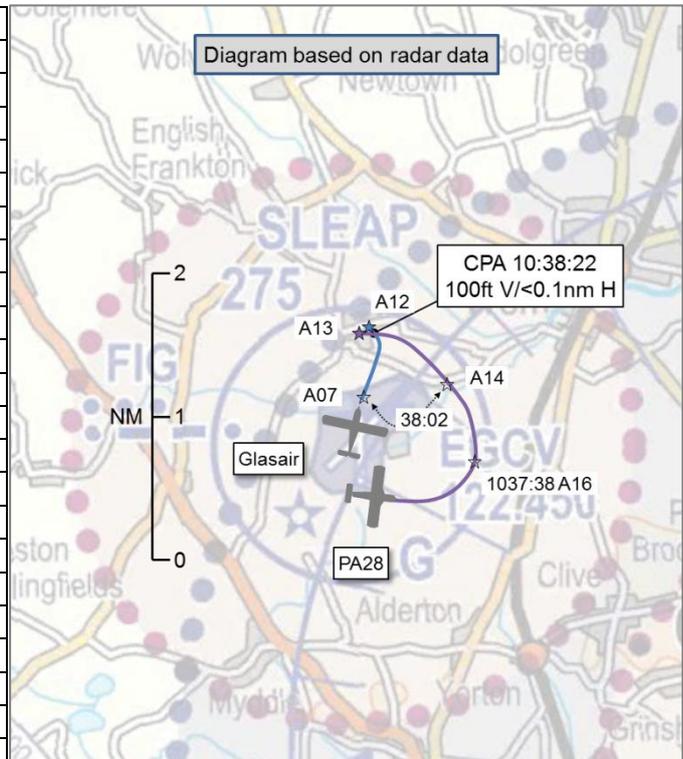


AIRPROX REPORT No 2015087

Date: 26 Apr 2015 Time: 1038Z Position: 5250N 00246W Location: Sleaf Airfield

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Glasair	PA28
Operator	Civ Pte	Civ Pte
Airspace	Sleaf ATZ	Sleaf ATZ
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	Air/Ground	Air/Ground
Provider	Sleaf	Sleaf
Altitude/FL	1200ft	1300ft
Transponder	A, C, S	A, C, S
Reported		
Colours	White	Red/white
Lighting	Strobes	Strobes
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	~1400ft	2000ft
Altimeter	NK	QFE (1001hPa)
Heading	010°	NK
Speed	120kt	NK
ACAS/TAS	Not fitted	Not fitted
Separation		
Reported	75ft V/0m H	Not seen
Recorded	100ft V/<0.1nm H	



THE GLASAIR PILOT reports departing from Sleaf aerodrome on RW36. As he rolled, he heard another pilot call ‘descending deadside’. He did not see the other aircraft and assumed it would pass behind him, over the upwind threshold of the runway. He continued his take-off and, passing 1400ft at a point about ½-1nm beyond the upwind threshold, a blue, low-wing, ‘T tail’, single-engine Piper aircraft passed directly over him, perpendicular to his flight path and about 50-100ft above. Neither the Glasair pilot, sitting in the left seat, nor the pilot qualified passenger sitting in the right seat, saw the other aircraft before CPA and there was therefore no time to take avoiding action.

He assessed the risk of collision as ‘High’.

THE PA28 PILOT reports that he did not see an aircraft in close proximity and had no recollection of being in a position that he considered to be an Airprox. He had flown to Sleaf for solo circuit practice. He conducted a standard overhead join at 2000ft QFE for 2 left-hand circuits on RW36 and then a full-stop landing. He noted that the time given for the Airprox suggested the reported incident may have been during the arrival phase of his flight rather than during the circuits. He recalled some other traffic in the circuit but also that the circuit was not busy. He had a note of the QFE on his flight log, indicating that he received at least an initial response from Sleaf Radio for joining instructions and airfield details, and that his other standard positioning calls would have been made ‘blind’.

THE SLEAP A/G OPERATOR did not file a report.

Factual Background

The weather at Shawbury was recorded as follows:

METAR EGOS 260950Z AUTO 35013KT 9999 NCD 09/M01 Q1010
 METAR EGOS 261050Z AUTO 33014KT 9999 FEW040/// 09/M00 Q1010

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

The Glasair and PA28 pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard¹. An aircraft operated on or in the vicinity of an aerodrome shall conform with or avoid the pattern of traffic formed by other aircraft in operation². The 'standard overhead join' is not defined in statute but is regarded as 'normal aviation practice'. The CAA GA Safety Poster 'The Standard "Overhead" Join'³ states that pilots should 'Position to cross at (or within if no other activity) the upwind end of the runway at circuit height'. The poster also states, 'Watch for aircraft taking off, as they could pose a hazard'.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a Glasair and a PA28 flew into proximity at 1038 on Sunday 26th April 2015. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, in receipt of an A/G Service from Sleaf. The Glasair pilot had just taken-off and was departing upwind when he saw the PA28 pass directly above, on a perpendicular track, at a vertical separation estimated to be 50-100ft; the PA28 pilot had just arrived at the airfield and was on the crosswind leg of his overhead join. He did not see the Glasair.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from the pilots of both aircraft and radar photographs/video recordings.

The Board members spent some time discussing upon whom the onus of responsibility lay with regard to collision avoidance in this incident. Both aircraft were being operated in the vicinity of the aerodrome, and hence both pilots were required to 'conform with or avoid the pattern of traffic formed' by the other. Members agreed that this was not a useful solution and, in the absence of specific legislation, agreed that the best guidance available lay in the definition of the 'Standard Overhead Join'. In this regard, the departing Glasair pilot would have reasonably expected the PA28 pilot to cross near the upwind threshold of the runway, whereas the radar replay indicated the Airprox occurred at a distance equal to about a runway length north of the upwind threshold.

Members reiterated that both pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance, and that both aircraft were there to be seen, but they agreed that in this instance, by not adopting the Standard Overhead Join, the PA28 pilot had essentially flown into conflict with the Glasair. It was also agreed that if the Standard Overhead Join procedure had been followed there would have been much greater separation and reduced risk; therefore they agreed that not conforming had been contributory to the Airprox. Considering the risk, members agreed unanimously that safety margins had been much reduced below normal; they noted that the Glasair pilot did not see the PA28 before CPA, and the PA28 pilot did not see the Glasair at all. Therefore, they considered that chance had played a major part in events and nothing more could have been done to improve matters.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The PA28 pilot flew into conflict with the Glasair.

Contributory Factor: The PA28 pilot did not conform to the 'Standard Overhead Join' procedure.

Degree of Risk: A.

¹ SERA.3205 Proximity.

² SERA.3225 Operation on and in the Vicinity of an Aerodrome.

³ <http://www.caa.co.uk/application.aspx?catid=33&pagetype=65&appid=11&mode=detail&id=2166>, reproduced at Annex A.

