

AIRPROX REPORT No 2015220

Date: 29 Dec 2015 Time: 1129Z Position: 5309N 00236W Location: 1nm SW Ashcroft airfield

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	EV97	PA38
Operator	Civ Pte	Civ Club
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	None	Basic
Provider	N/A	Liverpool
Altitude/FL	FL013	NMC
Transponder	A, C, S	A only
Reported		
Colours	Silver	White, blue
Lighting	Nil	Wing-tip strobes
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	1000ft	1500ft
Altimeter	QFE (1008hPa)	QNH (1014hPa)
Heading	240°	318°
Speed	70kt	90kt
ACAS/TAS	Not fitted	Not fitted
Separation		
Reported	50ft V/20m H	200-300ft V/ 0.5-1nm H
Recorded	NK V/<0.1nm H	



THE EV97 PILOT reports he had just departed Ashcroft RW27 and was climbing out when an aircraft suddenly appeared at close range, high in his left 10 o'clock. He pushed the nose down and banked sharply left, flew a 360° orbit and saw the other aircraft continue straight and level en-route. He identified the aircraft as a blue and white, low-wing, single-engine piston type. He did not think the other pilot saw him. The EV97 pilot noted that he was just about to change radio frequency when the other aircraft had appeared from a bright low sun, which had been obscuring it previously.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE PA38 PILOT reports conducting a navigation exercise. He had completed all 'zone entry checks' and received clearance to enter the Liverpool CTR at Oulton Park [VRP]. He continued towards Oulton Park, maintaining his lookout. Nothing was seen until approximately 1 minute from Oulton Park, when he became aware of another aircraft to the right, passing below his level and already turning towards the southeast. He assessed that the two aircraft were 'close' when he saw the other aircraft, but by turning, the other pilot had removed any risk which had existed. The PA38 pilot felt it was safe to maintain heading and proceeded on track to Oulton Park.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'Low'.

Factual Background

The weather at Liverpool and Manchester was recorded as follows:

METAR EGGP 291120Z 16008KT 110V210 9999 FEW030 10/07 Q1014=
 METAR COR EGCC 291120Z 18012KT 9999 FEW025 10/06 Q1014 NOSIG=

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

The EV97 and PA38 pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard¹. If the incident geometry is considered as converging then the PA38 pilot was required to give way to the EV97². 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 operation³.

Comments

PA38 Operating Company

Ashcroft Farm is a small grass strip close to Oulton Park VRP. All our students / pilots are warned to take care at this point, because it can be difficult to pick out the strip at times. Aircraft entering the zone at Oulton Park are required to descend to not above 1500ft by air traffic control. We encourage all our pilots to give Ashcroft Farm a wide berth when entering the zone at Oulton Park, particularly if approaching from the southeast.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when an EV97 and a PA38 flew into proximity at 1129 on Tuesday 29th December 2015. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, the PA38 pilot in receipt of a Basic Service from Liverpool Radar.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

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

The Board quickly agreed that the Airprox occurred in a busy area of airspace, with Ashcroft airfield located at the southern end of the Liverpool/Manchester Low Level Route and in proximity to VRPs for entry and exit to the Liverpool and Manchester CTRs. Consequently, effective lookout was of the upmost importance. In the event, the EV97 and PA38 were on almost perpendicular tracks, with the consequential lack of relative movement for the pilots to detect; with the EV97 climbing after departure and being below the PA38 it was felt that the PA38 pilot would have had little opportunity to visually acquire it against the clutter of ground features.

The PA38 pilot's description of the event indicated that he saw the EV97 too late to take avoiding action, effectively a non-sighting. Fortuitously, the EV97 pilot saw the PA38, albeit late as it came out of sun, and was able to take avoiding action. It was felt that although his actions had undoubtedly increased separation, safety margins had been much reduced below normal. Members noted that there had previously been a number of Airprox in the same area (2015174 (C), 2015092 (B), 2010160 (C) and 2007113 (C)), and wondered whether the PA38 pilot could have obtained a Traffic Service to improve his situational awareness, at least in the vicinity of the entry/exit to the Liverpool/Manchester Low Level Route.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A late sighting by the EV97 pilot and effectively a non-sighting by the PA38 pilot.

Degree of Risk: B.

¹ SERA.3205 Proximity.

² SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c) (2) Converging.

³ SERA.3225 Operation on and in the Vicinity of an Aerodrome.