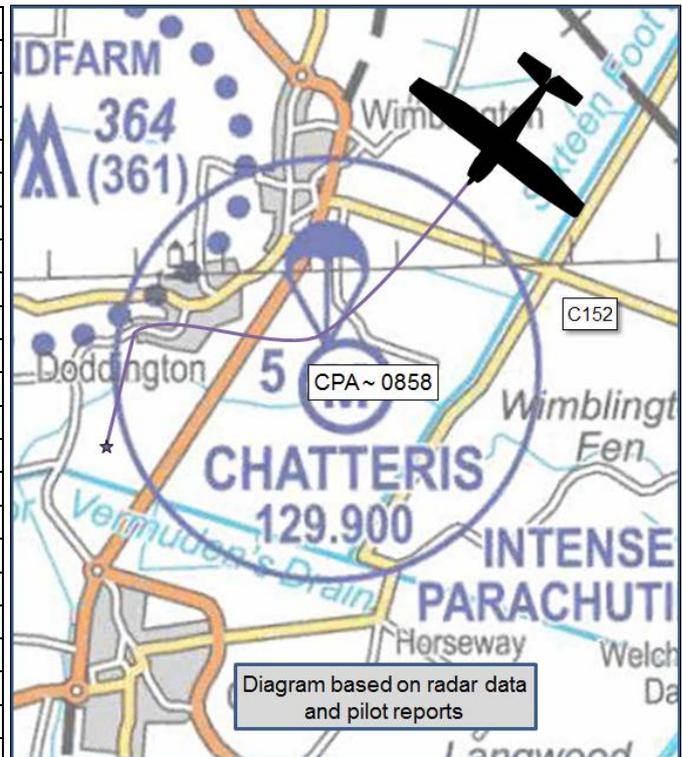


AIRPROX REPORT No 2016081

Date: 15 May 2016 Time: 0858Z Position: 5229N 00005E Location: Chatteris Parachute Site

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	DHC-6	C152
Operator	Civ Comm	Civ Trg
Airspace	Chatteris	Chatteris
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	Traffic	None
Provider	Lakenheath	Bourn
Altitude/FL	NK	NK
Transponder	Not Fitted	C
Reported		
Colours	NK	White
Lighting	NK	NK
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	20nm	NK
Altitude/FL	2000ft	
Altimeter	NK	
Heading	210°	
Speed	NK	90kt
ACAS/TAS	Unknown	Not fitted
Alert	Unknown	N/A
Separation		
Reported	300ft V/0nm H	NK
Recorded	NK	



THE DHC-6 PILOT reports that he had dropped his parachutists and then shortly afterwards saw an aircraft flying on an approximate heading of 210 degrees through the group of eight canopies, some above and some below the aircraft. The C152 pilot appeared to see the canopies and, whilst in the middle of them, he appeared to cut power and turn onto a heading of approximately 240 degrees. The DHC-6 pilot estimated the reported separation of 300ft based on a subsequent conversation on the ground with the tandem instructor parachutist, who was involved.

He assessed the risk of collision as ‘High’.

THE C152 PILOT reports that he was on a general handling sortie when the aircraft came into proximity with a group of parachutists. The incident happened west of the Bedford canals and south of March. The initial sighting was of a parachutist at a lower height than the airplane. Very shortly after this more parachutists were sighted at approximately the same level as his airplane. Both sightings were on the port side of the aircraft, moving in a direction from approximately 11 o’clock towards 5 o’clock. In order to ensure deconfliction, a turn to the right was initiated immediately. He can’t remember the exact heading of the aircraft prior to the turn to the right, but he believes it was a southerly or south-westerly heading. He does not know the exact height at which this incident occurred, but believes it was while he was climbing to 2000ft. He acknowledges that he misappreciated his position with respect to the airspace around Chatteris aerodrome. He later realised it would also have been better to have changed frequency to Cambridge and then Chatteris rather than remain on Bourne A/G. He understands that the execution of this flight was not perfect, and went on to report that he understands that the highest standards are expected of pilots and he expects them of himself; he is very focused on ensuring that in planning and execution of flights he does not depart from the standards expected.

He assessed the risk of collision as ‘Low’.

THE CHATTERIS PARACHUTING SITE CHIEF INSTRUCTOR reports that he and a few other parachutists, including the DZ controller, saw the incident. The C152 flew straight through the DZ and over the planned landing area (PLA) whilst canopies were in the air. One canopy was fairly close to the aircraft but it was difficult to tell exactly how close it was. The Tandem Instructor concerned estimates that the aircraft was within 300ft of him.

Factual Background

The weather at Mildenhall was recorded as follows:

METAR EGUN 151058Z AUTO 28007KT 9999 -RA SCT038 14/06 A3017=

Chatteris parachute jumping site is promulgated in the UK AIP ENR 5.5 (Aerial Sporting and Recreational Activities); page 5.5-2 dated 2 April 2015 as follows:

<p>CHATTERIS, CAMBS A circle, 1.5 nm radius centred at 522919N 0000512E</p>	<p>Upper limit: FL150</p>	<p>Phone: 01354-740810. London Control (Swanwick): 01489-812420.</p>	<p>Activity notified on the day to London Control (Swanwick). Alternative contact: 129.900 MHz. Hours: Normally during daylight hours Tue-Sun & PH.</p>
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Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

The DHC-6 aircraft involved was engaged in parachute drop flights and, although the pilot filed the Airprox, it was not the actual aircraft but eight of the parachutists who came into close proximity with the C152; the DHC-6 was above the conflicting aircraft.

Summary

An Airprox was reported by a DHC-6 pilot between eight of his parachutists and a C152. The incident took place overhead Chatteris paradropping site, which had notified paradropping activity up to FL150, at 0858 on Sunday 15th May 2016. The C152 pilot was operating under VFR in VMC, the C152 pilot was not in receipt of an Air Traffic Service.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from the pilots of both aircraft and one of the parachutists.

The Board first looked at the actions of the C152 pilot who seemed to have either been uncertain of his position and had inadvertently flown over the parachuting site, or was unaware of its existence. A GA member commented that modern gps-based electronic maps were available that could either be carried in tablet form or installed as part of the aircraft avionics. These not only assist in navigation but also warn the pilot when they are too close to an avoidance area or NOTAM. Whilst it was acknowledged that this equipment represents best practice and is not mandatory, he wondered if the C152 pilot had considered their use in order to assist in his navigation task. Other members then questioned the C152 pilot's lack of Air Traffic Service and, although noting that in Class G airspace this is not mandatory, commented that it is also good practice to seek at least a Basic Service, and that this would probably have allowed Air Traffic Control to give an early indication to the C152 pilot that he was transiting towards an active parachuting site in time to avoid the area. As for the incident itself, although the C152 pilot had turned to avoid the parachutists as soon as he had seen them, the Board opined that he was already amongst the parachutists by this point and so his avoiding action had probably only marginally reduced the risk rather than acting as preventative action *per se*.

The Board quickly determined that the cause of the Airprox was that the C152 pilot had flown through the overhead of a promulgated and active parachuting site and into conflict with eight parachutists. In considering the risk, the Board were unanimous that it had simply been providence that had prevented a collision with the parachutists, and that the proximity had been such that a serious risk of collision had existed; therefore, the degree of risk was assessed as Category A.

Although not specifically germane to the incident, the Board wondered why the DHC-6 aircraft was not transponder equipped and therefore unable to display the appropriate parachuting SSR conspicuity code of '0033'. Although this is not mandatory for aircraft up to FL100, they felt that this would have enabled Air Traffic units in the area to maintain a greater degree of SA, and might have alerted other aircraft to the presence of the DHC-6 if they were TAS or TCAS equipped. This in turn would have provided another possible barrier to any potential mid-air collisions or inadvertent flights through the DZ area whilst the DHC-6 was conducting parachute drops.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The C152 pilot flew through the overhead of a promulgated and active parachuting site and into conflict with eight parachutists.

Degree of Risk: A.