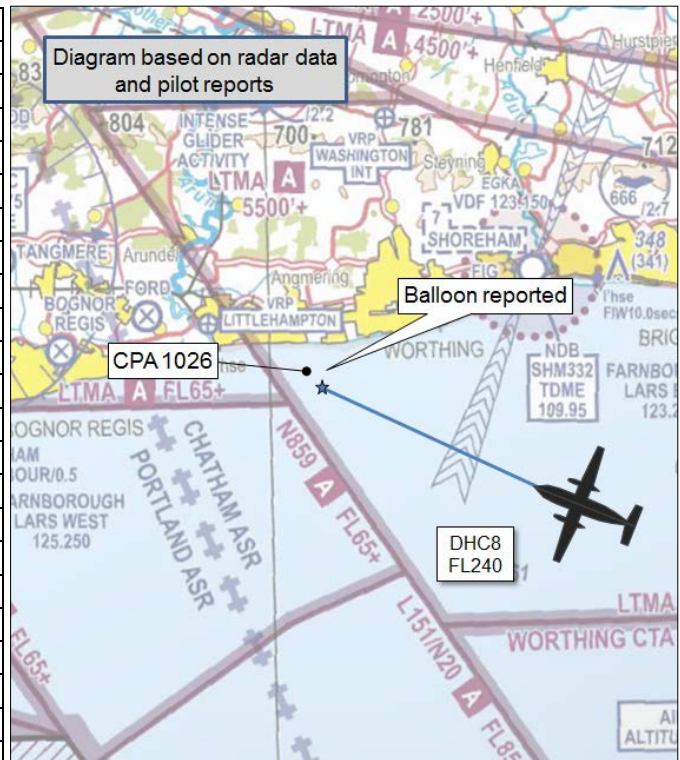


AIRPROX REPORT No 2016226

Date: 21 Oct 2016 Time: 1026Z Position: 5046N 00225W Location: 15nm SW Goodwood

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	DHC8	Weather Balloon
Operator	CAT	Unknown
Airspace	London FIR	
Class	C	
Rules	IFR	
Service	Radar Control	
Provider	Swanwick	
Altitude/FL	FL240	
Transponder	A, C, S	
Reported		
Colours	Company	
Lighting		
Conditions	NK	
Visibility		
Altitude/FL	FL240	
Altimeter	1013hPa	
Heading	300°	
Speed	~220kts	
ACAS/TAS	TCAS II	
Alert	Unknown	
Separation		
Reported	0ft V/20-30ft H	
Recorded		NK



THE DHC8 PILOT reports that he was at FL240, about 20nm south-west of Gatwick when he saw a large, white, weather balloon. It passed just to the right-hand side of the aircraft about 20-30ft away.

THE MET OFFICE reports that they do not believe balloon was one of their radiosonde ascents. Although they had a launch from Larkhill at 0928, the flight took 67 minutes and travelled 76.8km from the launch site on a heading of between 090-120°, passing 24,000ft 30 minutes after launch. They considered that it was therefore unlikely to be the one seen by the DHC8 pilot.

Factual Background

The weather at Gatwick was recorded as follows:

METAR EGKK 211020Z 33007G21KT 270V350 9999 FEW011 BKN015 11/08 Q1020=

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

An estimated track of the Met Office Balloon is at Figure 1. At the same time the radar replay shows the DHC8 just off the south coast. It is recognised that amateur balloon launches up to an altitude of many tens of thousands of feet are also conducted but these require CAA permission; there was no record of a CAA permission near that location for the date of the Airprox.

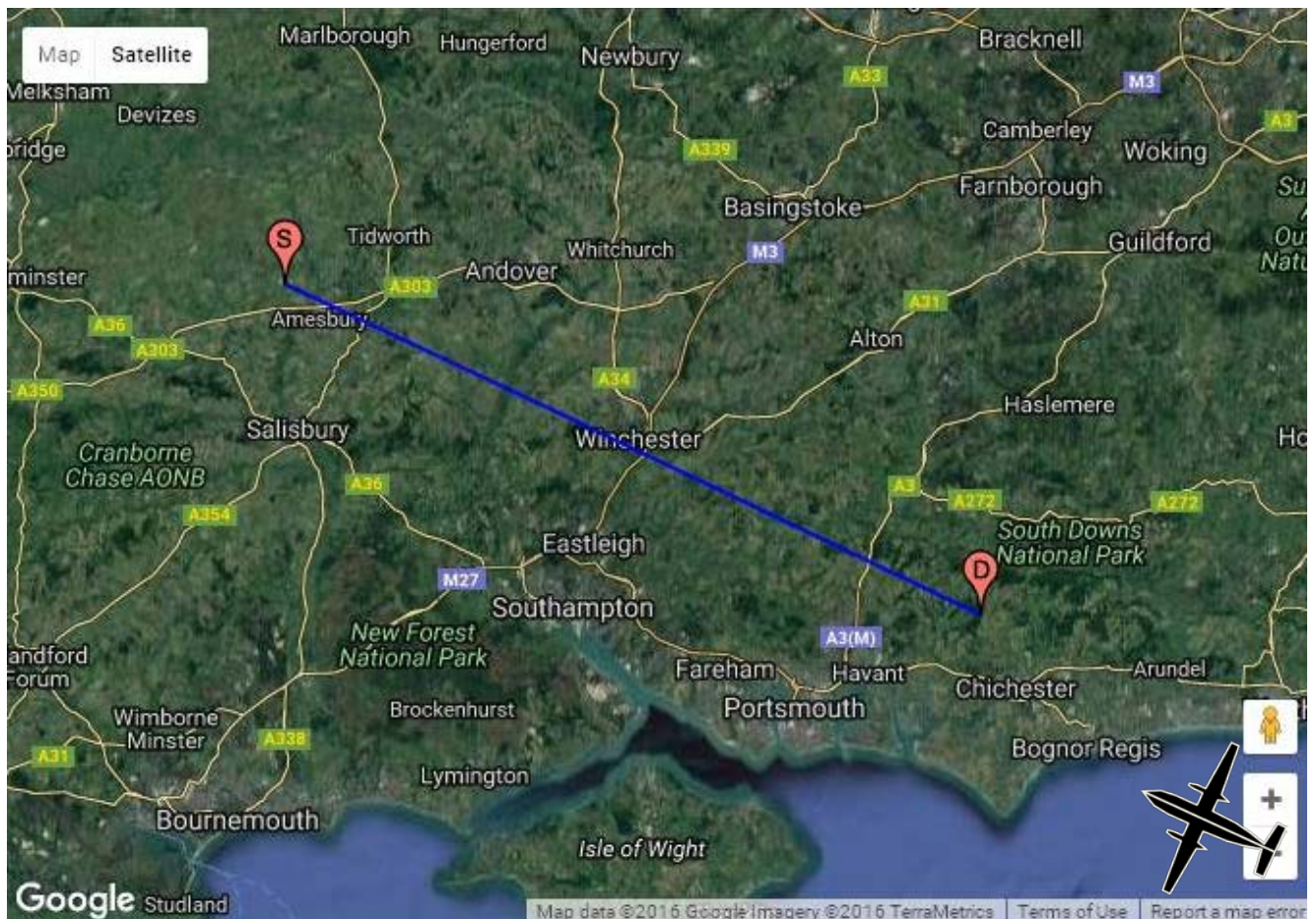


Figure 1, estimated trajectory of the balloon from Larkhill (S), flying for 67mins

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a DHC8 and a weather balloon flew into proximity at 1026 on Friday 21st October 2016. The DHC8 pilot was operating under IFR and in receipt of a Radar Control Service from Swanwick.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from the DHC8 pilot, and from the Met office, and radar photographs/video recordings.

Members agreed that although there were difficulties in accurate range assessment, it was clear that the pilot had experienced a balloon passing in close proximity. The Board noted that there was likely to be some uncertainty about timings and therefore the exact location of the Airprox; they considered that the estimated track of the Met balloon could well have brought it into conflict with the DHC8. It was therefore agreed that there had been a conflict in the Class A airspace of the London TMA, and that providence had played a large part in collision being avoided.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A conflict in Class C.

Degree of Risk: A.