

AIRPROX REPORT No 2014029

Date/Time: 23 Mar 2014 1145Z

Position: 5330N 00031W
(Hibaldstow Parachuting Site)

Airspace: London FIR (Class: G)

Aircraft 1 **Aircraft 2**

Type: Parachutist Taylor JT1

Operator: Civ Club Civ Pte

Alt/FL: 1500-1800ft 1500ft
NK QNH (NKhPa)

Conditions: VMC VMC

Visibility: NK 10nm

Reported Separation:

NK V/<2000ft H 500ft V/300m H

Recorded Separation:

NK V/NK H



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE HIBALDSTOW DROP ZONE CONTROLLER reports that parachutists had been dropped to the northwest of the landing-zone when he saw a red single-engine monoplane fly over the aerodrome, tracking around 300° at 1500-1800ft. The aircraft then made what appeared to be an avoiding-action left turn at a range of less than 2000ft from the parachutists. The Drop Zone Controller consulted the parachutists and the paradrop aircraft's pilot after they landed but none of them had seen the Taylor JT1 as it passed.

THE TAYLOR JT1 PILOT reports flying his red aircraft at around 60kt, with no lights, radio or transponder fitted. He was VFR, clear below cloud, flying out-of-sun, and was using his GPS system and Edn 36 of the 1:500,000 chart to navigate. Due to 'shower avoidance' he had to deviate from his planned track and because he had no radio, he was intent on avoiding Humberside and Doncaster-Sheffield Airports as well as looking out for the gliding and parachuting sites marked on the chart. As he approached what he thought to be a disused airfield, with vehicles parked on the runways, he referred to his GPS, which did not show a parachute zone. As he passed over the airfield, the pilot saw several parachute canopies deployed above him in his 3 o'clock position around 400m away, and silhouetted against the cloud layer. He confirmed that there were no parachutists to his left and then executed a left turn to clear the area. After landing he checked his GPS again and confirmed that neither Hibaldstow nor Kirton-in-Lindsey were displayed on the GPS screen.



**Figure 1 Taylor JT1 Monoplane
(Example photograph, not subject aircraft)**

He assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

Factual Background

The weather at Humberside at 1050 was recorded as:

METAR EGXP 231050Z AUTO 31014KT 9999 // FEW029/// BKN037/// 08/02 Q1004

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

The Hibaldstow gliding site is displayed on the 1:500,000 chart Edn 36 as a disused aerodrome and an active parachuting site (Figure 2), although the parachute symbol is partially obscured by the 'disused aerodrome' markings. The parachuting symbology shown on the chart does not oblige pilots to avoid the area of the circle, but acts as a warning to pilots that they can expect to encounter aircraft carrying out parachute support operations and/or parachutists in the air. The JT1 pilot was required to give way to parachutists in the air, which he did. As for Hibaldstow airfield itself, the Rules of the Air state that pilots flying in the vicinity of what they know, or ought reasonably to know, to be an aerodrome are required to conform to the pattern of traffic formed by other aircraft intending to land at that aerodrome or keep clear of the airspace in which the pattern was formed.¹ From his report, the pilot of the JT1 clearly believed the aerodrome he was flying over to be disused; he had not seen, or had not assimilated, the parachuting markings from the chart or GPS, and did not initially recognise the aerodrome he was overflying as Hibaldstow. The Drop Zone Controller was looking out for aircraft flying near the Drop Zone but, when he saw the JT1, the parachutists had already left their aircraft.



Figure 2. Extract from 1:500,000 chart Edn 36

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Summary

An Airprox was reported overhead Hibaldstow parachuting site, in Class G airspace, between parachutists under canopies and Taylor JT1 Monoplane.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilot of the JT1 and the Drop Zone controller.

It was immediately clear to the Board that the JT1 pilot had not intended to over-fly the parachuting site but had flown over Hibaldstow simply believing it to be a disused airfield without other associated activity. Whether or not this had been a navigational error, they opined that, possibly, this could have been caused or compounded both by his use of a GPS system without the chart overlay displayed, and the way the disused airfield and parachute dropping site symbology were displayed on the paper map. The Board noted that parachute dropping symbology shown on maps has the same status as glider sites in that it does not denote any mandatory avoidance area but is displayed only for the guidance of all airspace users. Some members opined that it was a common misperception that the symbology denoted a 'zone' with a protected status, and thought this may be reinforced in the case of parachuting sites because they are often referred to as drop-zones.

Whilst the Board agreed that there was no compulsion for the JT1 pilot to avoid a marked parachuting site, it was clearly unwise to over-fly one and, at all times, he was required to see and avoid other airspace users. In this case, the JT1 pilot had seen the parachutists and, whilst there had been a risk of collision, he had taken effective action to avoid them; consequently, the Board agreed that the cause was that the JT1 pilot had over-flown a promulgated and active parachute dropping site and in to conflict with the parachutists, and that the degree of risk was Cat C.

¹ Rules of the Air 2007, Rule 12, Flight in the vicinity of an aerodrome

The Board thought that the combination of disused airfield and parachuting site symbology for Hibaldstow on the 1:500,000 chart was unclear and resolved to recommend that the CAA should consider its review. They also agreed that the CAA should consider reviewing the definition of 'disused' aerodromes in general where aerial sporting activity takes place. The nomenclature 'disused' implies no activity, whereas disused aerodromes quite often do have sporting aviation activity associated with them and the Board opined that a better nomenclature should be sought for these aerodromes.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

<u>Cause:</u>	The Taylor JT1 pilot flew over a promulgated and active Parachute Dropping Site and into conflict with the parachutists.
<u>Degree of Risk:</u>	C
<u>ERC Score²:</u>	4
<u>Recommendation(s):</u>	The CAA consider reviewing the charting and definition of 'disused aerodromes' where aerial sporting activity takes place.

² Although the Event Risk Classification (ERC) trial had been formally terminated for future development at the time of the Board, for data continuity and consistency purposes, Director UKAB and the UKAB Secretariat provided a shadow assessment of ERC.