

AIRPROX REPORT No 2010055

Date/Time: 30 May 1521 (Sunday)

Position: 5205N 00127W (0.5nm
ESE Edge Hill/Shenington
G/S - elev 642ft)

Airspace: LFIR (Class: G)
Reporting Ac Reported Ac

Type: KA6 H500

Operator: Civ Club Civ Pte

Alt/FL: 500ft↓ 100ft↑
(QFE) (agl)

Weather: VMC NR VMC CAVOK

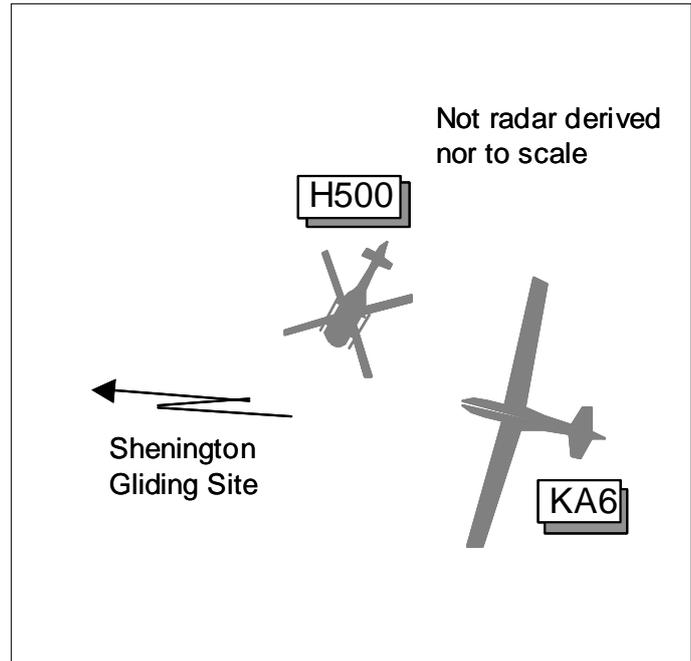
Visibility: NR 40km

Reported Separation:

200ft V/NR H Not seen

Recorded Separation:

NR



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE KA6 PILOT reports returning to Edge Hill from a 5hr 20min Silver endurance flight and in communication with Shenington Radio on 129.975MHz. The Wx was VMC and the ac was coloured white/green. After turning on to the approach at 600ft heading 280° at 55kt a helicopter took off from a field between the perimeter fence and the school, and then flew directly across his approach path. As he descended through 500ft on his approach, the helicopter passed just ahead and then about 200ft below him. At the time the strong wind and turbulent thermals precluded a go-around and gain of height from his position on the final approach. Also, an avoidance L or R turn was not possible owing to a lack of suitable landing fields. He was also concerned that the rotor wash could have potentially caused loss of control at this critical phase of flight. He assessed the risk of collision as none.

THE H500 PILOT reports lifting-off from a private site adjacent to Edge Hill/Shenington airfield and in communication with Shenington on 129.975MHz, squawking with Mode C. The visibility was 40km in CAVOK and the helicopter was coloured dark blue with nav and strobe lights switched on. He had first telephoned and advised the airfield operations/comms manager that he intended to lift within 2min and had asked whether there was any conflicting traffic. The manager was not aware of any conflicting traffic and said he would advise those gliding of his intentions. He duly lifted into about a 100ft hover and made a general broadcast of his intentions before he made a very low-level departure, about 200ft, heading 200° and 80kt, specifically to avoid potential traffic that may be landing – given the location of the departure site and RW in use, traffic on approach would have been above him. Neither he, nor the pilot seated in the front or the pax in the rear saw any traffic, despite all having been requested to keep a good lookout. He had telephoned 3 days prior to the trip and had asked that relevant notices be placed on the clubhouse notice board of his 1230 arrival time on the 30th May. He had called again on the day, prior to his departure on route to Shenington, advising of his ETA of 1220 and that he would use the general traffic frequency to notify other traffic when about 6nm out from the landing site. All the necessary calls were made and a good lookout was kept for gliders approaching to land; departures taking-off to the W were not in conflict.

THE GLIDING CLUB SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR reports being positioned at the launch-point about 100m from the airfield boundary at the upwind end of RW28 and seeing the KA6 turning onto its approach at 600ft on a day with strong wind and turbulent thermals. A black H500 took-off from a

field near Shenington village and flew directly across the approach path of the K6 at a height of 300ft. It was just beyond the boundary fence, probably avoiding the village. The H500 pilot had telephoned the club during the previous week stating he was visiting the village and was aware of gliding practices. The pilot had not asked to use the airfield and his name/registration was not recorded.

UKAB Note (1): The Airprox is not captured on recorded radar. The KA6 does not show at any time whilst the H500 first appears at 1521:29 0.5nm ESE of Edge Hill/Shenington tracking 200° squawking 7000 with NMC. The H500 is seen to continue in a slow L turn onto a S'ly track until 1.5nm S of Shenington when it turns onto a track of 220°.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac and radar video recordings.

The Board commended the planning and preparation undertaken by the H500 pilot in the days before his flight to the area. Furthermore, on the day in question and prior to his departure from the landing site, he had made great efforts to deconflict from Edge Hill/Shenington traffic. Having lifted into a 100ft hover, he had broadcast his intentions on the Shenington frequency and departed low-level to the SSW, cognisant that he was underneath the approach to the RW in use. It was unfortunate that he did not see the glider on final approach. Members also thought that the gliding club could have done more with the information provided by the H500 pilot. It was unclear whether the H500 pilot's initial contact had been promulgated widely or where the pre-departure telephone call was answered, possibly in the clubhouse, and whether it was feasible to pass the information to the A/G operator, the winch-operator or duty pilot/instructor in the time available. The CAT helicopter Member agreed that the H500 pilot's pre-flight preparation and departure phase planning had been good but questioned whether the departure transmission had been heard by the KA6 pilot and others on the frequency. However, irrespective of RT/telephone calls on the day, the Member opined that there was no substitute for a good lookout in this see and avoid environment. He would not have expected a clearing turn to be carried out at 100ft in the hover at a critical phase of flight but, notwithstanding that gliders are notoriously difficult to see, he would have expected the H500 pilot to have ensured the approach path was clear of traffic before transitioning from the hover. In the end the H500 pilot departed into conflict with the KA6, which he did not see and this had caused the Airprox.

Turning to risk, the GA/Gliding Member opined that it was sensible for the KA6 pilot, flying a relatively low performance glider, to make a steep approach in the strong winds. This steep approach may have contributed to the H500 pilot's difficulty in seeing the glider higher and closer to the gliding site than he might have expected. The KA6 pilot was correct to be wary of rotor wash but it was felt that he always had the option of closing the airbrakes and landing long. Although the H500's departure had been ill-timed with the KA6 passing unsighted to its pilot, the Board believed that the KA6 pilot was always in a position to adjust his flightpath to avoid the H500 and that there had been no risk of collision during this encounter.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The H500 pilot took off from a site in the vicinity of the approach to Edge Hill/Shenington and into conflict with the KA6, which he did not see.

Degree of Risk: C.