AIRPROX REPORT No 2011055

Date/Time: 10 Jun 2011 1453Z

Position: 5248N 00121E (7·5nm NNE Norwich - elev 117ft)

Airspace: LFIR (*Class: G*)

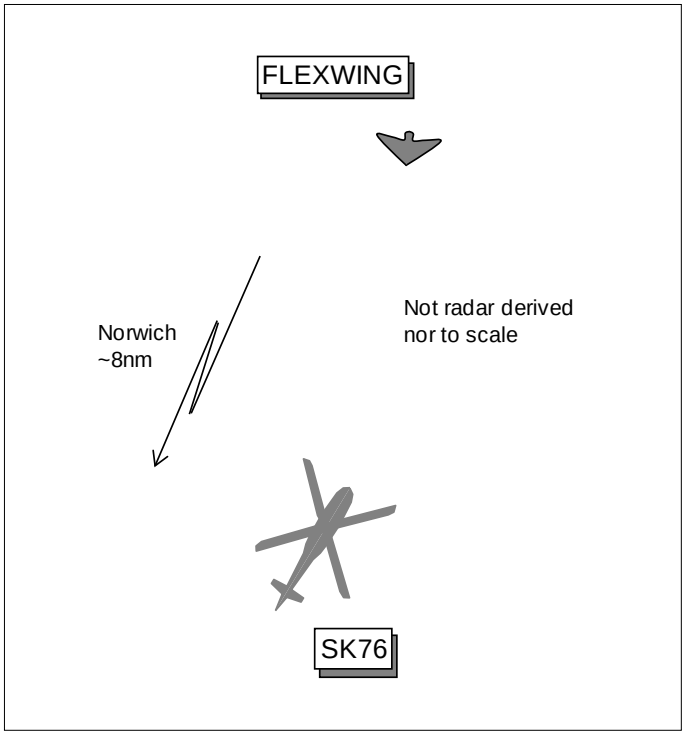
	Reporting Ac	*Reported Ac*
Type:	SK76	Untraced Flexwing M/Light
Operator:	CAT	NK
Alt/FL:	2000ft (RPS 1010mb)	(NK)
Weather:	VMC CLBC	NK
Visibility:	>10km	NK

Reported Separation:

100ft V/200m H

Recorded Separation:

NR



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE SK76 PILOT reports outbound from Norwich IFR to an offshore platform and in receipt of a TS from Norwich Radar on 119·35MHz, squawking 0245 with Modes S and C; TCAS was not fitted. The visibility was >10km flying 1000ft below cloud in VMC and the helicopter was coloured red, white and blue with HISL, nav and anti-collision lights all switched on. About 3nm W of Bacton heading 036° at 2000ft Yarmouth RPS 1010mb and 140kt they were alerted to a, "contact 12 o'clock 1nm no height information". The traffic was sighted about 1nm ahead at the same level on a converging track from the N. They took avoiding action by executing a hard R turn downward. The traffic, a silver/grey coloured Flexwing M/Light passed about 100ft above and 200m clear to their L before passing about 0·5nm behind without taking any avoiding action and he assessed the risk as high.

THE SK76 COMPANY FLIGHT SAFETY OFFICER comments that, whilst not relevant to this Airprox (M/Light not fitted with a transponder) the Board may wish to be aware that with the completion in May of the EASA STC for the fitment of TCAS II to their company SK92A fleet, work is starting on a similar STC for the SK76 fleet.

RAC MIL reports that despite extensive tracing action the identity of the M/Light remains unknown. Seven Flexwing M/Lights landed at Cromer Airfield between 1354 – 1427Z and no other M/Lights landed after that time.

THE NORWICH RADAR CONTROLLER reports controlling 4 ac providing DS, TS and BS. The SK76 carried out a standard RW27 departure onto an outbound track of 035° and after being transferred to his frequency the flight was identified, placed on a TS and instructed to adjust to altitude 2000ft Yarmouth RPS 1010mb. Having noticed a pop-up intermittent primary only contact close the SK76's intended track TI was passed stating it was in its 12 o'clock range 1nm crossing L to R no height information. The pilot stated that he was looking and later called visual and that the ac was heading SW. He requested the height of the unknown traffic and was told it was close to the helicopter's altitude. No discernable avoiding action by the pilot of the SK76 was noticed on radar and a short time later the pilot stated that he wished to file an Airprox. The other ac was described

as a Flexwing M/Light and it was observed for some time after the incident, appearing to disappear from radar O/H Cromer/Northrepps airfield.

ATSI reports that the Airprox occurred at 1453:20, within Class G airspace and 7·5nm to the NNE of Norwich Airport.

The Airprox was reported by the pilot of an SK76C operating IFR, en-route from Norwich Airport to the 'Loggs'- Offshore Platform, in receipt of a TS.

The other ac was reported as a Flexwing M/Light, which was observed by Norwich radar until the ac faded from radar in the vicinity of Northrepps Aerodrome, which is situated 13nm to the N of Norwich Airport.

The Norwich controller was operating as the Approach Radar Controller, with 4 ac on frequency. The workload was considered as medium and all equipment was reported as serviceable.

CAA ATSI had access to RT and NATS radar recordings, together with written reports from the Norwich Radar controller and the SK76 pilot. The Flexwing M/Light was untraced and did not show on the radar recording.

METAR EGSH 101450Z 19009KT 140V240 9999 FEW028 15/05 Q1013 NOSIG=

The SK76 helicopter departed from Norwich at 1448:00. At 1450:32, the SK76 flight contacted Norwich Radar and reported passing 1500ft on departure. The controller replied*, "(SK76 c/s) good afternoon identified Traffic Service climb to altitude two thousand feet on the Yarmouth one zero one zero."* This was acknowledged corrrectly by the SK76 pilot.

At 1453:02, the radar controller advised, *"(SK76 c/s) intermittent contact at twelve o'clock one mile left right slow moving no height."* The radar recording shows the SK76, 7·2nm NNE of Norwich Airport indicating FL021. The M/Light is not shown on the radar recording. The SK76 pilot replied, *"....looking"* and, *"(SK76 c/s) visual one microlight."* The Radar controller then asked, *"Roger thanks is he below you."* The pilot reported, *"er he's just about level (S76 c/s) and heading southwest."*

At 1453:26, radar recording shows the SK76, indicating FL020 and then at 1453:46, shows the SK76 make a R turn of about 5°.

Shortly afterwards the SK76 pilot reported the incident as an Airmiss [Airprox] and described the other aircraft as a Flexwing M/Light.

At 1455:26, the SK76 flight was transferred to Anglia Radar on 125·275MHz.

The SK76 flight was in receipt of a TS. The Radar controller observed pop up traffic, close to the track of the SK76 and passed TI. The Manual of Air Traffic Services (MATS) Part 1, Section 1, Chapter 11, Page 5, paragraph 4.1.1 and 4.5.1, states:

> 'A Traffic Service is a surveillance based ATS, where in addition to the provisions of a Basic Service, the controller provides specific surveillance derived traffic information to assist the pilot in avoiding other traffic. Controllers may provide headings and/or levels for the purposes of positioning and/or sequencing; however, the controller is not required to achieve deconfliction minima, and the avoidance of other traffic is ultimately the pilot's responsibility.
>
> The controller shall pass traffic information on relevant traffic, and shall update the traffic information if it continues to constitute a definite hazard, or if requested by the pilot. However, high controller workload and RTF loading may reduce the ability of the controller to pass traffic information, and the timeliness of such information.'

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the SK76 pilot, transcripts of the relevant RT frequencies, radar video recordings, reports from the air traffic controllers involved and reports from the appropriate ATC authorities.

Members were disappointed that the Flexwing M/Light could not be traced which left them with only the reporting pilot's viewpoint on the incident. Since the Airprox occurred in Class G airspace, there was equal onus on both pilots to maintain separation from other ac through see and avoid. The SK76 crew had supplemented their lookout with a TS from Norwich ATSU and the controller had done well in quickly passing TI when the pop-up contact from the M/Light appeared on radar. This alerted the SK76 crew to the M/Light's presence and enabled them to see the conflicting traffic almost immediately. It is not known if the M/Light pilot saw the helicopter, although the SK76 crew reported that the M/Light was not seen to take any avoiding action as they passed; however, the SK76 crew took prompt and robust avoiding action which quickly resolved the conflict. On the limited information available, the Board elected to classify this incident as a conflict in Class G airspace where the SK76 crew's actions had effectively removed any risk of collision.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A conflict with an untraced M/Light in Class G airspace.

Degree of Risk: C.