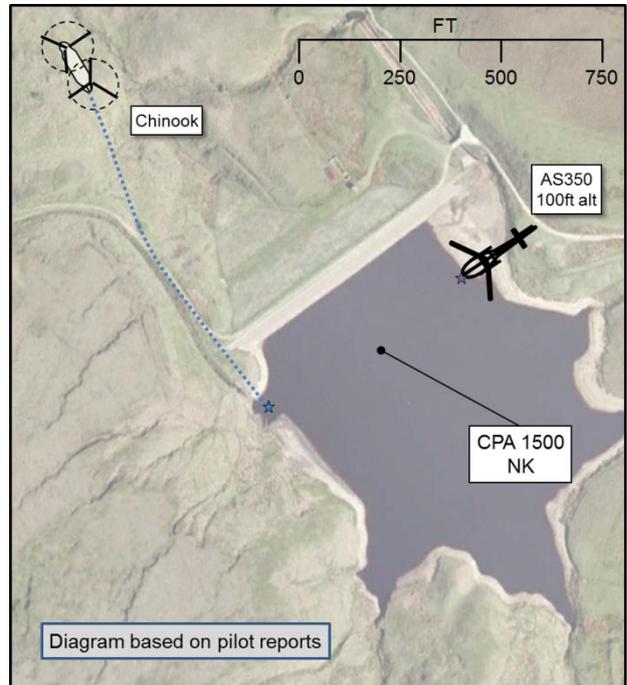


AIRPROX REPORT No 2015010

Date: 12 Feb 2015 Time: 1500Z
 Position: 533352N 15343W Location: Wessenden Head reservoir

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	AS350	Chinook
Operator	Civ Comm	HQ JHC
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	None	None
Altitude/FL	100ft	NK
ACAS/TAS	Not fitted	Not fitted
Transponder	A, C, S	A, C, S
Reported		
Colour scheme	Red/Yellow/Black	Green
Lighting	Anticollision, HISL & position	HISL, landing, nav
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	10km	30km
Altitude/FL	100ft	NK
Altimeter	QNH (1018hPa)	NK
Speed	Hover	120kt
Separation		
Reported	'very slightly above' 200-250m H	NK V/600m H
Recorded	NK	



THE AS350 PILOT reports carrying out low-level external load-lifting work at Wessenden Head reservoir when he was advised by his ground crew on VHF radio that a Chinook was entering the valley. He did not initially see the Chinook, but caught sight of it as he was turning toward the lift-site. The pilot put the AS350 into an immediate 100ft hover to avoid the Chinook, which passed about 200-250 meters ahead, slightly high. He did not see the Chinook taking any evasive action.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

THE CHINOOK PILOT reports carrying out a low-level training exercise. He saw the AS350 at a range of 2 miles and all crew members called visual. Because the AS350 was seen to be operating to the east of the reservoir, he routed his aircraft to the western side of the water remaining visual.

He perceived the severity of the incident as 'Low'.

Factual Background

The weather at Manchester was recorded as follows:

EGCC 121450Z 19007KT 9999 BKN037 05/M00 Q1016 NOSIG

Analysis and Investigation

No radar recordings, analysis or information were available other than the reports from the two pilots.

UKAB Secretariat

Both pilots had equal responsibility for avoiding collisions and for ensuring that they do not fly in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a danger of collision¹. The incident geometry was considered converging, and the AS350 pilot was required to give way to the Chinook², which he did by coming into the hover.

Comments

JHC

The Chinook crew were visual early with the AS350 and applied what they deemed to be suitable de-confliction by remaining to the west edge of the reservoir. The size of the Chinook and the late sighting by the AS350 pilot may have contributed to the situation.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when an AS350 and a Chinook flew into proximity at 1500 on Thursday 12th February 2015. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC in Class G airspace, and neither aircraft were receiving any ATC service.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from the pilots of both aircraft.

The Board first considered the actions of the AS350 pilot: they noted that, after receiving a timely warning call from his ground crew that the Chinook was entering the valley, the pilot had been alerted to its presence and was actively searching for it as he turned. The Board wondered whether the relatively late sighting, the large size of the Chinook, and the fact that it had crossed the track he had been flying just before had all conspired to cause a certain amount of 'startle factor' in the AS350 pilot's assessment of separation as he turned and came into the hover. Not reported as such, the Board wondered whether the AS350 pilot had submitted a CANP (Civil Aircraft Notification Procedure) to highlight the fact that he was conducting load-lifting operations; this would have alerted the Chinook pilot to his activity, and possibly resulted in the Chinook avoiding the area altogether.

Turning to the Chinook pilot's action, the Board noted that he and his crew had reportedly acquired the AS350 visually at 2nm or so and had passed down the western side of the reservoir in order to afford geographical separation. Noting the terrain around the incident, the Board recognised that the Chinook pilot would have probably been attempting to stay in the valley, and that in doing so he had tried to avoid the AS350 by as much as possible by transiting along the opposite side. Notwithstanding, the Board thought that the Chinook pilot could usefully have overtly acknowledged that he was visual with the AS350, either by using landing lights or the equivalent of a 'wing waggle' if appropriate. This would have then allayed any of the AS350 pilot's concerns over whether he had been sighted. In this respect, the Board noted that a trial was underway in Scotland regarding a VHF low-level common frequency (135.475 MHz) intended to provide a deconfliction tool and situational awareness builder; they opined that this incident would have been an ideal situation for its employment, and they hoped that the trial would be extended to the whole of UK in due course.

The Board noted that the Chinook pilot had become visual with the AS350 at a good distance, and had altered his course to the west of the reservoir to prevent any collision. Recognising that the

¹ SERA 3205 (Proximity).

² SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c) (2) Converging.

AS350 was required to give way to the Chinook (which he did by coming into the hover), they thought that the root of the incident lay in the fact that the AS350 pilot had become concerned following the late sighting of the Chinook and, not knowing its pilot's intentions, his uncertainty as to whether its pilot had seen him. Notwithstanding that they agreed that the AS350 pilot was right to file an Airprox due to this concern, they considered that normal safety parameters had in fact pertained.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The AS350 was concerned by the proximity of the Chinook.

Degree of Risk: E.