

Robinson R44, G-UTTS, 5 November 2000

AAIB Bulletin No: 4/2001 Ref: EW/G2000/11/02 Category: 2.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Robinson R44, G-UTTS

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-540-F1B5 piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 2000

Date & Time (UTC): 5 November 2000 at 1035 hrs

Location: Retford (Gamston) Airport

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1- Passengers - 3

Injuries: Crew - None - Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Serious damage to rear fuselage and tail rotor; one main rotor blade damaged

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence (Helicopters and Gyroplanes)

Commander's Age: 42 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 225 hours (of which 10 were on type)
Last 90 days - 27 hours
Last 28 days - 5 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and telephone enquiries by the AAIB

The helicopter was parked on an asphalt taxiway and between two fixed wing aircraft; it was facing into a headwind of approximately 6 to 10 kt. After a normal start, the pilot lifted into a low hover. However, as he did so he was not comfortable with the handling of G-UTTS and decided to land. Unfortunately, the helicopter had drifted slightly and the rear of the skids touched down just off the taxiway on the grass. G-UTTS tilted backwards and the tail rotor struck the ground; one of the detached tail rotor blades struck a main rotor blade. The pilot carried out the emergency shutdown procedures and all the occupants evacuated the helicopter without injuries.

When the pilot returned to inspect the helicopter, he found that the switch for the hydraulic cyclic and collective controls was in the 'Off' position. In an honest report, the pilot acknowledged his error.