

INCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Robinson R44 Clipper II, G-SHAN	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming IO-540-AE1A5 piston engine	
Category:	2.3	
Year of Manufacture:	2005	
Date & Time (UTC):	10 June 2005 at 1900 hrs	
Location:	Private site 2 nm west of Chesham, Buckinghamshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 2
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Damage to main rotor mast fairing	
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	41 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	9,000 hours (of which 4,500 were on type) Last 90 days - 200 hours Last 28 days - 70 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The helicopter had taken off from a private site on a farm and five minutes later, while making a normal approach to a field in another part of the property, the pilot heard a slight noise when the aircraft was about 100 ft agl. After landing it became apparent that one of a pair of wires, which traversed the field and the valley in which it lay, had been severed by coming into contact with the helicopter's main rotor mast fairing. The damage to the aircraft was limited to the mast fairing.

This experienced pilot concluded that the accident was caused by his inability to see the wires, which spanned approximately 900 feet across the valley. He described the wires as green in colour and set against a green background of trees and grass. The telegraph

poles that supported the wires at each side of the field were obscured by trees and shrubs and the wire that was broken was reported as being of corroded copper.

The weather at the time of the accident was good, with less than five knots of wind, visibility in excess of 10 km and no significant cloud. The approach to land had been made into the evening sun and the contrast between the bright sky and darker ground vegetation probably contributed to masking the presence of the wires. It is not known why one wire was struck and not the other but it may have been that one sagged further than the other as they hung across the valley.

Another report (see AAIB Bulletin No: 1/2004, registration G-BAGL) describes a wire strike in which the pilot of that helicopter did not see a pair of green wires when he was taking off from a field. Again the

pilot described the green wires as difficult to see against the background, which in that case was a set of buildings. It was also reported that the telegraph poles which supported the wires were, again, hidden by trees.