

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Enstrom 280FX Shark, G-BYSW	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming HIO-360-F1AD piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1988	
Date & Time (UTC):	30 August 2008 at 1120 hrs	
Location:	Hay Tor, Dartmoor, Devon	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Minor)	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to all rotor blades and to left side of fuselage	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	78 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	Total hours N/K (but 267 were on type) Last 90 days - 9 hours Last 28 days - 4 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The pilot was intending to conduct a late morning flight from Plymouth to Dunkeswell and had obtained a weather forecast from Plymouth ATC. However, the Met Form 215 he obtained was issued that morning, but was only valid from 1400 hrs. The pilot also contacted Dunkeswell for their actual weather conditions. Based on this information, and that the top of Dartmoor was clearly visible from Plymouth, the pilot departed with the opinion that the weather conditions were suitable for the flight. As the flight progressed across Dartmoor, he was forced to make several deviations to keep clear of low patches of stratus cloud. At approximately 1120 hrs the pilot attempted a precautionary landing due to a lowering cloud base and reduced visibility.

The landing site appeared to be shallow heather but was in fact deep gorse bushes. The helicopter sank into the bushes and rolled to the left, damaging the rotor blades and left door. The pilot, who was uninjured, carried out the shutdown checks and vacated the helicopter through the right door.

The pilot candidly noted that factors leading to the accident were the inadvertent use of the incorrect forecast and not fully considering the possible effects on the cloudbase of a south-easterly wind blowing onto the eastern side of Dartmoor.