

Robinson R22 Beta, G-GDAY

AAIB Bulletin No: 8/99 Ref: EW/G99/04/20 Category: 2.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Robinson R22 Beta, G-GDAY

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-320-B2C piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1987

Date & Time (UTC): 24 April 1999 at 1056 hrs

Location: Blackpool Airport

Type of Flight: Private (Training)

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None - Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Helicopter destroyed

Commander's Licence: Student Pilot

Commander's Age: 35 years

Commander's Flying Experience: Total 30 hrs of which 29 were on type
Last 90 days - Not known
Last 28 days - 1 hr 50 minutes

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Earlier that morning the student pilot had flown from Coventry to Blackpool with an instructor. After a half-hour break he was authorised to fly G-GDAY solo; this was to be his fourth or fifth solo flight. He intended to spend some time practising spot turns and hovering manoeuvres at the airport's helicopter practice area. After starting the engine the student attempted to lift into the hover but lost control of the helicopter almost immediately. In response he lowered the collective lever fully and the machine struck the ground heavily. It bounced into the air again, adopted a vertical pitch attitude and fell a second time in a tail low attitude. As a result the landing skids broke in half, the tail boom separated from the fuselage and the main rotor blades were liberated when the mast fractured.

The pilot was unhurt. He noticed what he thought was smoke rising from the engine area so he isolated the electrics and evacuated the aircraft through the right hand door of the body of the machine, which was lying, on its left side. The aerodrome controller saw the helicopter crash and activated the crash alarm. The airport fire service arrived at the scene very quickly, saw smoke rising from the engine area and dispensed foam as a precaution.

The student pilot attributed the accident to a lapse of concentration. His instructor was nearby at the time but did not see the accident.