

No: 3/92

Ref: EW/G92/01/08

Category: 2c

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

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

Year of Manufacture: 1989

Date & Time (UTC): 17 January 1992 at 0910 hrs

Location: Wayker Farm, near Windsor, Berkshire

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - Minor Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Aircraft destroyed

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence with Night rating

Commander's Age: 37 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 108 hours (of which 100 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and additional telephone inquiries

The pilot took-off from Wycombe Air Park with the intention of flying to a private landing site near Egham. Before departure he obtained forecast weather for his planned route by reference to the current Airmet Form 215. This indicated that the weather for the proposed flight would be generally fine with the possibility of isolated mist giving a visibility of 4000 m. However, an amended forecast issued by the Meteorological Office at 1015 UTC indicated that an area of fog initially forecast to be to the west of the pilot's intended track had in fact moved to the east to effect the area of the accident flight. This amended forecast indicated the possibility of widespread fog with a visibility of 200 m and cloud with a base of between ground level and 500 feet above ground level. On departure, the weather was satisfactory and the pilot requested a Special Visual Flight Rules clearance through the London Control Zone. This was granted with the instruction to route via Ascot not above 1000 feet on the London QNH. On entering the zone at Cookham, the pilot observed that patches of fog and cloud were forming below him but he still had good visual contact with the ground. Shortly after this, the pilot saw that ground visibility had further reduced and decided to return to Wycombe Air Park. Before he could inform London ATCC of his intended return, he was passed a revised clearance to route direct to destination not above 500 feet QNH. The pilot acknowledged the revised clearance and commenced a turn onto a reciprocal heading while descending towards 500 feet with the intention of informing

London of his decision to return to Wycombe Air Park when the manoeuvre was complete. On initiating the descent, the pilot experienced difficulty in controlling the helicopter in yaw and shortly thereafter entered cloud. The pilot referred to his flight instruments and noted that he had a rate of descent of 550 ft/min with the aircraft level and that the IAS had reduced from the cruising figure of 60 kt to 40-45 kt. The nose of the helicopter was lowered to increase the airspeed and the pilot noted a rate of descent of 600 ft/min. At this point, the Low Rotor RPM warning sounded and the pilot increased rotor RPM. The warning horn ceased to sound as the helicopter broke out of cloud at a height of about 50 feet above ground level and the pilot made an immediate run-on landing in a ploughed field at about 40 kt. On impact the helicopter rolled over and broke up. The pilot, who was wearing a lap and diagonal harness, was able to evacuate the wreckage having sustained only minor injuries. The helicopter subsequently caught fire and was totally destroyed.

A subsequent examination of the wreckage by the maintenance organisation failed to reveal any defect that could have either caused or contributed to the accident.