

# SA341G Gazelle 1, G-PYOB, 30 January 1998 at 1246 hrs

## AAIB Bulletin No: 4/98 Ref: EW/G98/01/17 Category: 2.3

<b>Aircraft Type and Registration:</b>	SA341G Gazelle 1, G-PYOB
<b>No &amp; Type of Engines:</b>	1 Turbomeca Astazou 3A turboshaft engine
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	1974
<b>Date &amp; Time (UTC):</b>	30 January 1998 at 1246 hrs
<b>Location:</b>	Battersea Heliport, London
<b>Type of Flight:</b>	Private
<b>Persons on Board:</b>	Crew - 1 - Passengers - 1
<b>Injuries:</b>	Crew - None - Passengers - None
<b>Nature of Damage:</b>	None
<b>Commander's Licence:</b>	Private Pilot's Licence (Helicopters)
<b>Commander's Age:</b>	46 years
<b>Commander's Flying Experience:</b>	857 hours (of which 262 were on type) Last 90 days - 25 hours Last 28 days - 14 hours
<b>Information Source:</b>	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot had flown from Sittingbourne, Kent, to Battersea Heliport via Rochester where the helicopter had been refuelled. When the pilot made initial contact with ATC for the heliport he was allocated landing spot 4, which is located on the western side of the landing area. As the helicopter approached from the east both the controller in the tower and one of the allocated ground crew noted a liquid spray issuing from beneath the helicopter. As the helicopter came closer it became obvious that this was fuel coming from the area of the fuel tank. The controller alerted the fire crew and told the pilot that the fuel cap was hanging down the side of the fuel tank, he encouraged the pilot to land as soon as possible and shut down. The pilot, however, elected to continue to his originally allocated landing spot where he shut down the engine. The passenger moved away from the helicopter promptly but the pilot began to check the exterior of the aircraft, he replaced the fuel cap before moving away.

A pool of fuel was lying beneath the helicopter so the fire crew laid a foam blanket under the helicopter as a precaution. By this stage ATC had summoned the local fire service who had reacted promptly, with 3 fire appliances, and together with the heliport fire crew they monitored the helicopter whilst the engine cooled down. Once the danger of a fire had receded the fire crews flushed the remaining fuel residue from the area of the engine and fuel tank and washed down the parking area. The pilot stated in his report that he believes that ATC overreacted to the situation.

During the refuelling at Rochester the tanker driver had pointed out to the pilot that the fuel cap did not fit correctly and appeared to be worn. The pilot explained that it just needed tightening beyond the red 'line-up' marks and insisted that it was satisfactory.