

**AAIB Bulletin No: 6/93**

**Ref: EW/G93/04/07**

**Category: 2c**

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** Robinson R22 Beta, G-CGCG

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

**Year of Manufacture:** 1992

**Date & Time (UTC):** 17 April 1993 at 1625 hrs

**Location:** Newtonards, Co. Down, Northern Ireland

**Type of Flight:** Private

**Persons on Board:** Crew - 1                      Passengers - 1

**Injuries:** Crew - Minor                      Passengers - Minor

**Nature of Damage:** Helicopter damaged beyond economic repair;  
wind sock destroyed

**Commander's Licence:** Private Pilot's Licence

**Commander's Age:** 41 years

**Commander's Flying Experience:** 205 hours (all on type)  
Last 90 days - 10 hours  
Last 28 days - 6 hours

**Information Source:** Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot, who was the owner of the helicopter, flew to Newtonards to refuel where the weather was fine and the wind was 270°/15 kt. He approached along Runway 22 and hover taxied to the apron adjacent to the refuelling point. The fuel pump installation has a wind sock mounted on a 15 feet high pole about three feet from the pump. The pilot parked the helicopter into wind with the wind sock on his left and abeam the tail rotor assembly.

After refuelling the pilot lifted off with the intention of hover-taxiing to clear the refuelling area. As he did so, the wind sock was seen by an observer to change direction by about 120° and catch on the tail rotor. The helicopter then spun to the left and then crashed onto its left side. There was no fire and both occupants scrambled clear through the pilot's door.

Newtonards has a helipad about 20 metres from the refuelling pump which is linked to the refuelling area by a concrete taxiway. Normal practice is for helicopter pilots to land on the helipad and then wheel their aircraft to the fuel pumps. On this day the pilot of 'CG' chose to land adjacent to the fuel pump because the ground manoeuvring wheels were not on board his helicopter.