

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT NO. 5/90

REPORT ON THE ACCIDENT TO BELL 206B JETRANGER, G-SHBB 2 MILES EAST SOUTH EAST OF BIGGIN HILL AERODROME, KENT, ON 18 DECEMBER 1989

The Inspector's report on this accident was submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport on 19 December 1990. He has agreed to its publication and the report is now available from HMSO Bookshops and accredited agents.

The accident occurred shortly after the helicopter had departed from Biggin Hill aerodrome for Folkestone, Kent. The commander encountered weather conditions that were unsuitable for continued flight solely with visual reference to the surface and announced his intention of returning to the aerodrome. One minute later the helicopter crashed out of control into woodland near Cudham village. The report concludes that the accident was most likely due to the commander suffering from spatial disorientation following his inadvertent entry into Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC). He was neither experienced nor qualified to fly in such conditions. The helicopter's Directional Gyro Indicator (DGI) had been temporarily removed due to its unserviceability. Its absence as a primary flight instrument, although allowable under certain conditions, may have hampered any attempted recovery from an inadvertent entry into IMC.