

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Robinson R44 Astro, G-WEMS	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-540-F1B5 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2000	
Date & Time (UTC):	15 November 2009 at 1610 hrs	
Location:	Shobdon Airfield, Herefordshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - 1 (Minor)
Nature of Damage:	Aircraft damaged beyond economic repair, damage to hangar and other helicopters	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	48 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,016 hours (of which 8 were on type) Last 90 days - 18 hours Last 28 days - 2 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

Whilst touching down close to a hangar, the helicopter started to oscillate and the pilot lost control. It rolled onto its right side and the hangar, and some helicopters inside, were also damaged by flying debris. The pilot and passenger were uninjured.

taxiing for takeoff from Runway 27 'hard', so the pilot hover-taxied past this aircraft and turned right towards the north and the landing pads outside the helicopter's base hangar, although it appears he intended to stop on the wide concrete apron in front of the hangar.

History of the flight

The pilot was returning to Shobdon after a short flight which had included a landing away and a shutdown. It was agreed with Shobdon Air/Ground radio that he would join for an approach to Runway 27 'grass' on the north side: the approach was normal and the helicopter came to a hover 30 metres past the threshold. Shobdon Radio then called to advise that an aircraft would be

As it settled onto the apron, the pilot reports that the helicopter entered a violent oscillation, "shaking in all directions" before falling onto its right side and shedding large sections of its main rotor blades. Still under power, the stubs of the blades drove the helicopter sideways until it came to rest against the hangar doors. The pilot shut the engine down and evacuated the helicopter with his passenger through the shattered windscreen

on the right side. Neither had been injured apart from very minor whiplash. The doors and roof of the hangar had been badly damaged by flying debris and a Twin Squirrel helicopter inside the hangar sustained a broken windscreen; a further helicopter was slightly damaged.

The pilot was unable to account for the perceived oscillations and loss of control. The wind was light

and variable from the west and he had not been so close to the hangar that the rotor blades might have made contact. Unfortunately, there were no eyewitnesses to the actual touchdown, although several people heard the subsequent crash and rushed outside to assist. The pilot did, however, mention that his very low hours on this helicopter type as Pilot in Command (0.7 hours) may have been a factor.