

Bell 206B, G-LGRM

AAIB Bulletin No: 2/2001

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Aircraft Type and Registration: Bell 206B, G-LGRM

No & Type of Engines: 1 Allison 250-C20 turboshaft engine

Year of Manufacture: 1974

Date & Time (UTC): 11 September 2000 at 1345 hrs

Location: Approximately 8 to 10 miles south-east of Caernarvon, Wales

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - 1 (Minor) - Passengers - 1 (Minor)

Nature of Damage: Helicopter destroyed

Commander's Licence: Airline Transport Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 53 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 9,022 hours (of which 6,193 were on type)
Last 90 days - 173 hours
Last 28 days - 69 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further enquiries by the AAIB

The helicopter left Caernarvon to carry out a pipeline survey in North Wales. The forecast weather was for a westerly wind of 10 to 15 kt and visibility greater than 10 km. In the Snowdonia area the forecast was for reduced visibility in cloud and rain. As the helicopter approached Snowdonia the actual conditions, as reported by the pilot, deteriorated as expected to a visibility of 3 to 6 km in rain showers with an overcast cloud base of 1,000 to 1,500 feet in the mountains.

The pilot reported that, with deteriorating conditions ahead and to the right, the helicopter was turned to the left towards a steep hillside and descended in order to maintain ground visual contact. During the turn an unidentified amber caution on the central warning panel illuminated and an undemanded yaw to the right developed. The pilot did not specifically identify the caution but suspected a tail rotor failure when corrective action on the yaw pedals did not arrest the yawing motion. The pilot therefore turned in the direction of the yaw in 'an attempt to fly out and regain directional control'. But the helicopter continued to yaw to the right and in doing so intermittently

entered cloud. Ultimately the helicopter made contact with the ground and broke up. The pilot and observer who were both wearing lap and diagonal seat belts survived with minor injuries.

Subsequent examination of the helicopter showed that the tail rotor drive system was fully functional at impact. Furthermore, the pilot could not be certain which amber caution he had seen illuminated.