

Robinson R22 Beta, G-RUSO

AAIB Bulletin No: 5/2000 Ref: EW/G2000/03/17 Category: 2.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Robinson R22 Beta, G-RUSO

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

Year of Manufacture: 1990

Date & Time (UTC): 27 March 2000 at 1533 hrs

Location: Thruxton Airfield, Hampshire

Type of Flight: Training

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None - Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Substantial damage to cockpit, rotor head and blades. Tail boom severed

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence (Helicopters) with instructor rating

Commander's Age: 37 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 313 hours (of which 268 were on type)

Last 90 days - 51 hours

Last 28 days - 32 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Having completed the general handling element of their exercise, an instructor and his student returned to the airfield in order to practice landings and take offs to the hover. The weather was fine with a visibility of 7 km but with a moderate wind of 030°/15 to 20 kt.

The student had been hovering the helicopter for some 5 to 10 minutes and had successfully completed two landings and takeoffs. The helicopter was then established in a stable 8 feet hover into wind. Suddenly it started to yaw quickly to the left. The instructor took control and applied right pedal to oppose the yaw. The helicopter started to drift to the right, descended and struck the ground before rolling onto its right side. In doing so the rotor blades severed the tail boom with one blade coming to rest 80 metres from the main structure. The uninjured instructor and student, who were both wearing lap and diagonal seat belts, vacated the helicopter through the left main door.

The chief flying instructor assessed the cause of the accident as being due to the student's loss of control and the late intervention of the relatively inexperienced instructor.