

SA341G Gazelle 1, G-UZEL, 13 February 2000

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Aircraft Type and Registration:	SA341G Gazelle 1, G-UZEL
No & Type of Engines:	1 Turbomeca Astazou 3A turboshaft engine
Year of Manufacture:	1978
Date & Time (UTC):	13 February 2000 at 1116 hrs
Location:	Near Crosby, Isle of Man
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 - Passengers - 3
Injuries:	Crew - None - Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Two main rotor blade tips creased and rotor strike damage to all three vertical stabilisers
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence (Helicopters)
Commander's Age:	53 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	2,300 hours (of which 29 were on type) Last 90 days - 31 hours Last 28 days - 12 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot had been operating the helicopter since December 1999. He reported that, when the helicopter departed from a private landing site at Kirk Michael (Isle of Man), the fuel contents were about 80 litres/64 kg in the main fuel tank and full fuel (90 litres/72 kg) in the auxiliary tank. The standard procedure was to transfer the fuel from the auxiliary tank to the main tank when the main tank contents were below 100 litres/80 kg (corresponding to a blue line marking on the main tank fuel gauge). However, the pilot indicated that this procedure was sometimes delayed until the illumination of the 'FUEL' caption on the warning panel (normally illuminated at main tank contents of 50 litres/40 kg). The fuel feed to the engine was via the main fuel tank only.

The helicopter had been airborne for about 25 minutes and the fuel transfer had not been carried out. The engine failed due to fuel starvation (no fuel in the main tank) and the pilot carried out an autorotation into a field. Just prior to touchdown, the pilot applied additional collective control to avoid a stone wall. The rotor RPM dropped and the helicopter landed heavily and bounced once

before settling onto the ground. During the touchdown, two of the main rotor blades made contact with the three vertical stabiliser surfaces and caused impact damage to them. The main rotor tip weight housings were creased but did not detach.

The four occupants vacated the helicopter through the normal exits. The auxiliary fuel tank was still full at the time of the landing.