

Serious Incident

Aircraft Type and Registration:	AS355F1, G-BOSN	
No & Type of Engines:	2 Allison 250-C20F turboshaft engines	
Year of Manufacture:	1982 (Serial no: 5266)	
Date & Time (UTC):	4 October 2023 at 1125 hrs	
Location:	Gunnersbury Park, London	
Type of Flight:	Commercial Air Transport (Passenger)	
Persons on Board:	Crew – 1	Passengers – 5
Injuries:	Crew – None	Passengers – None
Nature of Damage:	Minor damage to right rear cabin door	
Commander's Licence:	Commercial Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	32 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	2,164 hours (of which 84 were on type) Last 90 days – 105 hours Last 28 days – 29 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

During a commercial sightseeing flight, the helicopter's right cabin doors both opened unexpectedly. Unable to close the doors in flight, the pilot carried out an immediate landing on nearby parkland. Once on the ground he was able to establish the doors had sustained only minor damage and concluded they were likely not to have been securely locked before departure. He re-closed the doors, checked their locking pins were correctly located, and continued the flight as planned.

History of the flight

The helicopter was taking five passengers on a commercial sightseeing tour of London when, approximately 20 minutes into the flight, the cabin doors on the right side of the helicopter opened unexpectedly. The pilot could see the rear door had swung open and was "still attached but being held fully open by the airflow." The forward door was also ajar. Concerned by the risk of the rear door detaching, he elected to make an immediate landing at the nearby Gunnersbury Park.

After shutting the helicopter down the pilot saw there was minor skin damage on the rear door and that its window was cracked. The crack was contained, with no loose fragments, and appeared to have been caused by the window striking the baggage compartment hinge (Figure 1) when the door swung backwards as it opened.

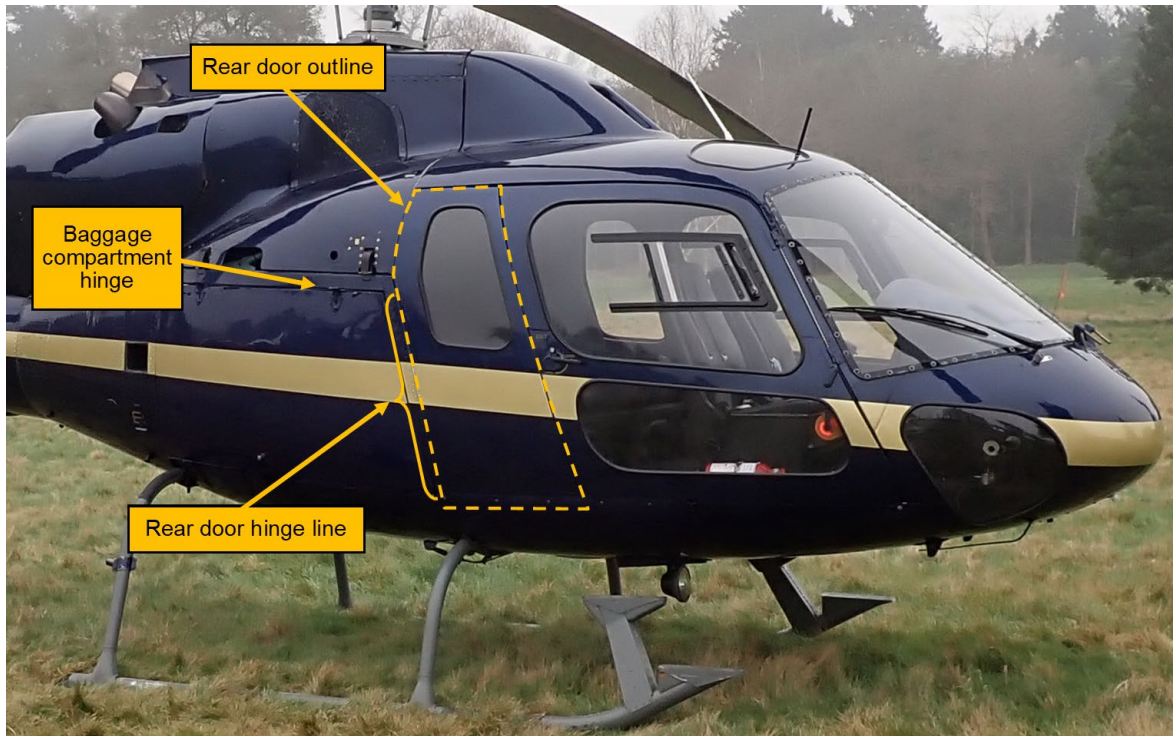


Figure 1

Doors on right side of G-BOSN (library image)

While on the ground at Gunnersbury Park, the pilot assessed the reason for the doors opening was they had likely not been securely locked before departure. He could not recall checking the rear door's locking pins were correctly located when he initially closed it. He also reported that because he "closed the front door from a seated position which is slightly awkward [he] might not have properly secured it to the rear door."

After checking the passengers were happy to continue, the pilot re-closed the doors, confirmed they were securely attached and locked, and completed the planned flight without further incident.

The pilot reflected that a more thorough check of all four doors' security prior to the initial departure would likely have prevented the incident.