

No: 8/91

Ref: EW/G91/06/11

Category: 2c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Enstrom F-28C, G-BGSN

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming HIO-360-E1AD piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1979

Date & Time (UTC): 12 June 1991 at 0954 hrs

Location: Marchlyn Mawr, Snowdonia, Wales

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Extensive

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence (Helicopters)

Commander's Age: 33 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 149 hours rotary wing (all on type)
and 40 hours fixed wing

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The helicopter was to fly over and around the dam at Marchlyn Mawr reservoir, with the pilot and a photographer aboard. The wind at the dam is reported by the pilot to have been 210°/15-20 kt and the helicopter was operating in the lee of high ground rising 150 feet above the water level. Localised pockets of turbulence and downdraughts are reported to have been affecting the area.

The pilot reports that he picked up his passenger from an area below the dam and lifted off at 0950 hrs. The task necessitated firstly hovering, into wind, at about 60 feet over the western corner of the dam structure for about 45 seconds and then moving eastwards across the water to take some more photographs.

With the first task complete, the pilot turned the helicopter to face eastwards and then attempted to accelerate downwind. As this resulted in an immediate loss of height, he increased the engine power to 36 inches of manifold pressure and pushed the cyclic stick further forward in order to increase the airspeed. The helicopter continued to lose height rapidly as the indicated airspeed reached 10 to 15 kt and the pilot states that, although the engine rpm was at the top of the green sector, the main rotor rpm was rapidly decaying. He therefore successfully carried out a downwind ditching and switched off the

engine and master electrics switch, whilst keeping the helicopter upright with the cyclic control. The machine was sinking very rapidly and, as the main rotor struck the water, the pilot assisted the passenger out through the right side door.

The helicopter was recovered from the water the same day and subsequent inspection has revealed nothing to suggest that there had been any mechanical failure prior to the ditching.