

## S1/2004 Agusta A109E, G-PWER

<b>AAIB Bulletin No: S1/2004</b>	<b>Ref: EW/C2004/03/01</b>	<b>Category: 2.2</b>
<b>Aircraft Type and Registration:</b>	Agusta A109E, G-PWER	
<b>No &amp; Type of Engines:</b>	2 PW206C turboshaft engines	
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	2000	
<b>Date &amp; Time (UTC):</b>	3 March 2004 at 1939 hrs	
<b>Location:</b>	1 mile east of Bournemouth Airport, Dorset	
<b>Type of Flight:</b>	Private	
<b>Persons on Board:</b>	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
<b>Injuries:</b>	Crew - 1 (Fatal)	Passengers - 1 (Fatal)
<b>Nature of Damage:</b>	Aircraft destroyed	
<b>Commander's Licence:</b>	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence	
<b>Commander's Flying Experience:</b>	3,094 hours (of which 78 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 54 hours	
	Last 28 days - 11 hours	
<b>Information Source:</b>	AAIB Field Investigation	

### Background

The Agusta 109E helicopter, G-PWER, had been purchased by the owner in December 2003 and was used for private and business purposes. The owner was not a licensed pilot but regularly flew in the helicopter as a passenger. The helicopter was fully equipped for operation under Instrument Flight Rules. The pilot held a United Kingdom Airline Transport Pilot's Licence (Helicopter) with a type rating for the Agusta 109E; he did not hold a UK Instrument Rating. He had frequently operated this helicopter on flights between Battersea Heliport and Bournemouth.

### History of the flight

The pilot had positioned the helicopter from Bournemouth Airport to Battersea Heliport, where he landed at 1856 hrs; no one else was on board the helicopter for this flight. The owner was escorted to the helicopter and occupied the rear left seat in the passenger cabin; a member of the ground staff placed the owner's three pieces of hand luggage onto the seat opposite. Having seen the owner secure his seat belt the ground handler closed the cabin door and indicated to the pilot that the aircraft was secure. No other bags or freight were loaded onto the helicopter.

The aircraft departed from Battersea at 1859 hrs. The reported meteorological conditions there included a visibility of 7 km; broken cloud at 3,800 feet and no significant weather. Recorded radar data indicates that the helicopter flew a direct track for Bournemouth and the helicopter was eventually cleared to an altitude of 1,400 feet. At 1920 hrs the pilot contacted Solent Radar who provided a Flight Information Service. The aircraft descended to an altitude of 1,100 feet, and was

cleared to fly via Romsey in order to avoid other traffic. Recorded area radar information ceased shortly after this point due to normal terrain screening 10 nm from Bournemouth Airport.

The reported meteorological conditions at Bournemouth Airport at 1920 hrs were: surface wind 180°/10 kt; visibility 2,700 metres in light rain with a few clouds at 1,200 feet; scattered cloud at 1,700 feet and broken cloud at 2,500 feet. At 1930 hrs the pilot was asked to contact Bournemouth Approach who cleared the helicopter on a direct track to the airfield; at 1931 hrs the pilot was instructed to change to the tower frequency. The pilot requested a 'straight in' approach to Runway 26, which was approved, and he was asked to report the airfield in sight. The visual controller and the approach radar controller were both in the visual control room but neither was able to see the helicopter. However, from information on a radar monitor, located in the visual control room, they could see that the helicopter was tracking the extended centreline for Runway 26. The pilot was cleared to land and reported that he was on the final approach and that he was just becoming visual with the airfield. Information from the radar monitor indicated that when it was approximately 1 nm from the airport the helicopter entered a descending turn to the left. This left turn was continued thorough about 540°, with erratic height indications. In responding to the offer of assistance by the visual controller the pilot indicated that he was in difficulty and he transmitted continuously for the final 29 seconds of flight. During this period the pilot confirmed that he had a problem, but did not describe what that problem was. The visual controller had tried to locate the helicopter. She was not able to do so but saw the fireball created by the impact with the ground.

The helicopter struck the ground at high speed in a nose down attitude with left bank applied and both persons on board were fatally injured. Although the aircraft was substantially consumed by fire, it appears from the distribution of the wreckage, and the evidence of an eyewitness, that the aircraft was intact at the point of impact.

### **The investigation**

Inspectors from the Air Accident's Investigation Branch (AAIB) attended the accident site that evening. After an inspection of the aircraft and the recording of evidence the remains of the aircraft were removed to the AAIB facility in Hampshire. Detailed investigation into the underlying cause of this accident is continuing and a full report will be published by the AAIB in due course.