

No: 6/87

Ref: 2c

Aircraft type and registration: Robinson R22 Alpha G-JASM

No & Type of engines: 1 Lycoming O-320-B2L piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1984

Date and time (UTC): 8 April 1987 at 1335 hrs

Location: Steyning, Near Shoreham, Sussex

Type of flight: Private (pleasure)

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — 1

Injuries: Crew — None Passengers — None

Nature of damage: Gash in tail boom, damage to main rotor blades and mast

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

Commander's Age: 25 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 158 hours (of which 7 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and telephone enquiries by AIB.

After about one hour of general handling in the local area, the helicopter was climbing to a planned cruising height of 500 feet and passing through 300 feet when it encountered a strong gust of wind. The pilot states that he reacted by applying forward cyclic pitch which resulted in a negative 'g' manoeuvre. The helicopter entered a spiral dive to the right which the pilot controlled by quickly applying aft and then left cyclic pitch. Meanwhile the rotor rpm had dropped, so the pilot restored this and recovered the helicopter to a level attitude. The pilot states that apart from the upset, he was unaware of any damage having occurred neither was there any unusual vibration. Since he was flying over a wooded area he decided to return to his base at Shoreham where an uneventful landing was made. Inspection of the aircraft revealed that the main rotor had struck the tail boom such that it was partially severed, although the tail rotor drive shaft was undamaged. Damage was also apparent on the rotor head and blades. The wind at the time of the accident was 12 knots gusting to 22 knots.