

No: 5/86

Ref: 3a

Aircraft type and registration: Grob G109 Self Launching Motor Glider G-BJZX

No & Type of engines: One Limbach Motorenbau L2000 EB 1A engine

Year of Manufacture: 1982

Date and time (GMT): 6 April 1986 at 1730 hrs

Location: Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire

Type of flight: Training

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — 1

Injuries: Crew — None Passengers — None

Nature of damage: Damage to the undercarriage, propeller, fuselage and wing, engine cowling and canopy

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

Commander's Age: 54 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 2300 hours (of which 1800 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot.

Whilst on an out and return training flight from Enstone the aircraft commander decided to make a precautionary landing on a grass airstrip at Moreton-in-Marsh due to a storm. The storm took some 2 hours to pass and, for the last 20 minutes of the period, the engine was kept running in order to keep the cockpit at a comfortable temperature. When the weather was judged suitable for the flight to continue, the engine was shut down so that the wings could be wiped with a chamois leather in order to ensure the best performance from the aircraft on take-off.

The airstrip was 500 yards long with a rough but firm surface, and the due East take-off direction was slightly downhill. Prior to take-off, the aircraft commander had determined a point along the strip beyond which he intended to abandon should the aircraft not have become airborne. After an unremarkable engine start the beginning of the take-off was normal with the aircraft becoming airborne at about 45 knots (kt), well before the "abandon point".

The aircraft was held in a horizontal attitude, to allow the air speed to build to a climb-out value of 52 kt when the engine speed suddenly reduced. The aircraft sank back onto the runway with insufficient distance remaining to stop. At this point the commander became aware of a wide ditch across the end of the runway with a field of short crop beyond. He attempted to fly the aircraft across the ditch using what little power was still available from the engine, but as it just became airborne, the right wing began to drop and the right undercarriage hit the far side of the ditch. The fixed undercarriage collapsed and the aircraft sank to the ground and slewed to the right, coming to rest in the field. Both occupants were wearing full harness and suffered no injuries.

No obvious reason was discovered for the power loss following a subsequent external inspection of the engine.

At the time of writing the aircraft was undergoing repairs and the engine had not been test run. However, the pilot believes that carburettor icing may have been a factor in the accident although the aircraft is fitted with a carburettor heat system, which was operated prior to take-off.

The weather at the time was described as being dull and cold with a NE wind at 10/15 kt with the runway surface wet from the recent storm.