

No: 1/89

Ref: EW/G88/09/10

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: DH82A Tiger Moth, G-ANEF

No & Type of Engines: 1 De Havilland Gipsy Major 1F piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1940

Date and Time (UTC): 17 September 1988 at 1300 hrs

Location: RAF Cranwell, Lincs

Type of Flight: Private (pleasure)

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - 1 (minor) Passengers - 1

Nature of Damage: Aircraft damaged beyond economic repair

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 48 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 314 hours (of which 58 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the Pilot

After performing normal power checks, the pilot taxied the aircraft and prepared to take-off. Surface wind was 270°/10kt with a 10km visibility. The pilot took off parallel and to the left of the runway markers laid out on a heading of 250°. The area to the right of the markers was designated for glider operations, and, at a height of about 300 feet and a speed of 55-60 kt, the pilot reports that he felt the aircraft was drifting towards this area and therefore banked left.

At this point he sensed a drop in power, the nature of which is unclear since engine RPM was normal and there was no vibration evident. He lowered the nose slightly and checked the position of the fuel cock by moving it roughly half-way towards "closed". The aircraft appeared to be losing height, and because of the left turn it was now heading towards some trees. Feeling that a descent into the trees was inevitable, the pilot closed the throttle, switched off the rear magnetos and attempted to stall the aircraft into them. Contact between the starboard wings and a large branch turned the aircraft through 90° and it dropped nose-first onto the ground. The pilot evacuated the rear cockpit and assisted his passenger, who was suffering from back, knee and facial injuries, to evacuate the front cockpit. There was no fire, despite a badly damaged fuel tank.

Eyewitnesses, including an instructor with considerable experience of the Tiger Moth commented on an unusually nose-high attitude after lift off and that the turn to the left was unnecessary since the aircraft's ground track prior to the turn appeared normal. No explanation was offered concerning the partial closure of the fuel cock as a means of checking that it was fully open.