

No: 9/91

Ref: EW/G91/06/26

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Aerotek Pitts S-2A, G-PEAL

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming AE IO-360-A1A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1973

Date & Time (UTC): 28 June 1991 at 1920 hrs

Location: Clows Top, near Kidderminster, Worcs

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Substantial damage to upper and lower wings, landing gear, propeller and possible shock loading to engine

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 30 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 658 hours (of which 103 were on type)

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

The pilot had planned to fly from Bodmin, Cornwall to Sleaf, Shropshire, a distance of approximately 170 nm. He had flown this route at least twice in the previous year and estimated the flight duration to be 'just under 2 hours'. The only weather information obtained by the pilot, prior to departure, was the actual surface conditions at Sleaf, which were passed by telephone.

The aircraft departed Bodmin at 1700 hrs with full fuel tanks (19 gall imp) and routed via Weston-Super-Mare, Newport and Shobdon at 3000 feet amsl. The pilot contacted Cardiff Radar during the crossing of the Bristol Channel but radio contact with Shobdon was not possible due to the closure of the airfield. Navigation was carried out by visual means using a 1: 500,000 aeronautical chart.

Having fixed his position over Shobdon, the pilot continued en route towards Shrewsbury but did not see the city and became uncertain of his position. The pilot considered that 'as this was a difficult area to navigate visually the use of a 1: 250,000 aeronautical map would have been more help'. The pilot then decided to turn south and search for an identifiable landmark in order to regain track. After approximately 15 minutes he fixed his position over Ludlow but by this time the aircraft was low on

fuel. Concerned at flying over high ground to the southwest towards Shobdon, the pilot turned to the east and decided to make a precautionary landing. The choice of a suitable landing site was limited due to the number of fields under crop. The pilot states that he was not aware of Milson airfield, situated seven nm to the east of Ludlow.

The first attempt at landing was discontinued when it became obvious that there was insufficient landing distance available. A second field was chosen which, although slightly sloping, appeared to be of stubble and suitable for landing. In reality the field was of ripe standing corn approximately 3 feet high. On touchdown the aircraft pitched forward and somersaulted before coming to rest in an upright position on its fuselage. The aircraft sustained substantial damage to both upper and lower wings, main landing gear, engine and propeller. The pilot, who was wearing a full safety harness and protective helmet vacated the aircraft without injury.

At the time of the precautionary landing the weather was CAVOK, surface wind calm. The aircraft had been airborne for 2 hours and 20 minutes. Following the accident, the useable fuel remaining in tanks was estimated by the pilot to be one gallon.