

**Aircraft type and registration:** Auster D6 Series 180 G-ARDJ

**No & Type of engines:** 1 Lycoming O-360-A1A piston engine

**Year of Manufacture:** 1960

**Date and time (UTC):** 30 May 1986 at 1100 hrs

**Location:** 1½ miles South East of Leicester Airfield

**Type of flight:** Banner towing

**Persons on board:** Crew — 1 Passengers — None

**Injuries:** Crew — 1 (minor) Passengers — N/A

**Nature of damage:** Damage to fuselage, wing tip and rudder

**Commander's Licence:** Private Pilot's Licence

**Commander's Age:** 33 years

**Commander's Total Flying Experience:** 631 hours (of which 109 were on type)

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

The intention of the flight was to tow an advertising banner which had been prepared for pick up on the grass to the east of runway 34 at Leicester airport. The towing bridle was suspended between two poles at a height of about 20 feet. The normal method of pick up is for the aircraft to make a low pass over the poles and collect the tow rope on a specially mounted hook at the rear of the aircraft.

In this instance the towing loop was collected by the aircraft's left landing gear, resulting in a pronounced yaw to the left. The pilot turned his aircraft to the left and flew over the airfield at about 500 feet but he found great difficulty in turning to the right. Since it was not possible for him to disentangle the left landing gear and since the pilot considered the aircraft was becoming unstable he elected to land in a field to the south east of the airport. Despite the application of right rudder and brake during the landing roll the aircraft could not be prevented from swinging to the left and running into a hedge. It came to rest inverted across a small road. The pilot, who had been restrained by his lap and diagonal harness, was able to crawl from the cabin having sustained cuts to his left leg.

The pilot attributes the initial misplacement of the tow rope to the fact that the aircraft was too low in approaching the pick up poles. The subsequent swerve on landing he attributes to the dragging of the advertising banner on the left landing gear.