

Pitts S-1S, G-REAP

AAIB Bulletin No: 12/2002	Ref: EW/G2002/07/13	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Pitts S-1S, G-REAP	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-360-A4A piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1991	
Date & Time (UTC):	7 July 2002 at 1745 hrs	
Location:	Netherthorpe Airfield, Notts	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to propeller, landing gear and engine shock loaded.	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilots Licence	
Commander's Age:	65 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	474 hours (of which 189 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 3 hours	
	Last 28 days - 2 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The aircraft was landing on the grass Runway 24 at Netherthorpe, which has a declared Landing Distance Available of 370 metres. The pilot reported that the surface wind was from 180° at 10 kt, resulting in only a minimal headwind component.

The pilot stated that his normal technique was to conduct a fairly shallow sideslipping approach to the runway, using a significant amount of power to control the aircraft's attitude, airspeed and rate of descent. Usually, at the appropriate height, the pilot would remove the sideslip, thus arresting the rate of descent, followed by a gentle closure of the throttle before easing the aircraft into the flare to complete a three point touchdown.

In this case, the pilot had allowed the aircraft to become high on the approach. In order to achieve his aim of touching down as close as possible to the runway threshold, he therefore applied

additional sideslip, which resulted in a higher than normal rate of descent. The pilot considered that he may have removed the sideslip a little later than normal and also reduced the power a little sooner than normal. This combination of factors resulted in a very heavy touchdown in the three point attitude, but with the aircraft just in the undershoot area of the runway. During the touchdown, the main landing gear flexed sufficiently that the propeller struck the ground.

Subsequently, the pilot noted that the aircraft's g meter had recorded a vertical acceleration of five g during the landing. This was largely absorbed by the landing gear, which was displaced far enough to snap the safety retaining wires.

In a frank report, the pilot concluded that this accident could have been avoided if he had discontinued the approach when it became unstable. He also cited the low number of hours he had flown in the current year as a possible factor, although he had completed five satisfactory landings during the course of two flights that had taken place during the week prior to this accident.