

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Quad City Challenger II, G-MZHO	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 503 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1997	
Date & Time (UTC):	9 November 2005 at 1546 hrs	
Location:	Barling Magna, near Southend-on-Sea, Essex	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Nature of Damage:	Substantial	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	73 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	537 hours (of which 445 were on type) Last 90 days - 17 hours Last 28 days - 5 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

History of the flight

The pilot and his wife took off from their private airstrip at 1400 hrs for a local flight lasting approximately one hour and 40 minutes, in what the pilot described as excellent flying conditions. He estimated that visibility was in excess of 25 km and that the surface wind was from 285° at approximately 5 kt. Local sunset was at 1615 hrs. The pilot reported that he had an unrestricted view of the airstrip as he approached for landing in a westerly direction but, as he reduced speed for landing, the low sun obscured his view completely.

At approximately 100 ft agl and only 100 m from the landing threshold, he was unable to see anything outside the cockpit or to distinguish the cockpit instruments and became disorientated. Very shortly afterwards, at

approximately 40 ft agl, the left wing of his aircraft struck the topmost branches of a tree. The impact, though slight, caused the aircraft to stall and fall to the ground, where it came to rest inverted in a ditch. The pilot and passenger were suspended in their harnesses but, using her mobile telephone, the passenger was able to alert a neighbour who assisted them shortly afterwards. The passenger had sustained bruising to her head, body and legs. The pilot, however, had sustained a more serious head injury and, upon the arrival of the emergency services, was taken to hospital by air ambulance.

Discussion

The pilot commented that the strength of construction of the aircraft had protected the occupants from more serious

injury. The engine, for example, remained attached to its mountings and the cabin area was substantially intact. The pilot stated, however, that he had not tightened his lap restraint sufficiently to prevent his head from striking a structural member in the cabin roof when the aircraft came to rest inverted. Furthermore, the occupants were not in the habit of wearing helmets whilst flying and

were not doing so at the time of the accident. The pilot conceded that he might consider doing so in future. In a telephone conversation with the AAIB, he mentioned that on previous occasions he had taken the precaution of diverting to alternative airfields which did not require a landing into the setting sun.