

AAIB Bulletin No: 1/96

Ref: EW/G95/11/14

Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Auster 5J4 Archer, G-AIJR

No & Type of Engines: 1 Blackburn Cirrus Minor 1 piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1946

Date & Time (UTC): 18 November 1995 at 1425 hrs

Location: Spanhoe Airfield, near Corby, Northants

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Main landing gear and propeller broken

Commander's Licence: Basic Commercial Pilot's Licence with Night and Instructor Ratings

Commander's Age: 46 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 468 hours (of which 80 were on type)
Last 90 days - 3 hours
Last 28 days - 3 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The wind at Spanhoe was westerly, at 5 to 7 kt, and Runway 27 was in use. A hedge, which lies parallel to the first two thirds of the runway on the north side then bends through 90° and continues almost to the edge of the runway.

The pilot was flying the final approach for a 'short field' landing and states that he was maintaining a steady 55 mph IAS all the way down the flightpath until reaching about 20 feet agl. At that point the nose of the aircraft suddenly dropped and the application of full power failed to prevent the landing gear from striking the grass strip firmly, some 20 metres short of the paved runway surface and collapsing.

The safety harnesses of the pilot and passenger withstood the impact forces and there was no fire. Both occupants left the aircraft through the cockpit doors.

The pilot states that he considers that this event resulted from windshear caused by the adjacent hedge. He also states that two weeks previously, following some reported erratic airspeed indications, the engineering company had cleaned and purged the pitot system and had stated it to be then satisfactory.