

No: 4/90

Ref: C1147/01

Category: 1c

**Aircraft Type  
and Registration:**

Beelee Aviation Christen Eagle II G-ZAPP

**No & Type of Engines:** One Lycoming AEIO-360-A1D piston engine

**Year of Manufacture:** 1985

**Date and Time (UTC):** 9 February 1990 at 1436 hrs

**Location:** Pleshey, near Chelmsford, Essex

**Type of Flight:** Private

**Persons on Board:** Crew - 1 Passengers - nil

**Injuries:** Crew - 1 (fatal) Passengers - N/A

**Nature of Damage:** Aircraft destroyed

**Commander's Licence:** Private Pilot's Licence with night rating and instrument rating

**Commander's Age:** 41 years

**Commander's Total  
Flying Experience:** 586 (of which 13 were on type)

**Information Source:** AAIB Field Investigation

Before flying from London/Stansted to Southend the aircraft was refuelled to full tanks. After 1 hour 8 minutes on the ground at Southend it took off at 1427 hrs to return on a VFR flight to Stansted. There was no significant cloud, visibility was good, and the wind at 2,000 feet was 250°/25 kt.

Two minutes after take-off the pilot reported that he was leaving the Southend Special Rules Zone to the north-west flying at 1,000 feet. At 1434 hrs he called Stansted to report that he was inbound from Southend and that his position was over Chelmsford at 1,500 feet. Stansted radar responded by instructing him to position the aircraft on a left hand base leg for runway 23. The pilot acknowledged this call at 1434:30 hrs, at which time the radar returns from the aircraft showed it to be 4 nm from the point where it later crashed. Two minutes later a witness whose attention was attracted to the aircraft by its engine noise saw it hit the ground in a steep dive. He saw the aircraft only during the last 20 to 30 feet of its descent and described its attitude as about 45 degrees nose down and banked to the right. He described the sound of the engine as a full-throated, healthy roar throughout.

A witness who saw the aircraft when it was still two miles from the point where it crashed described it as flying straight and level at about 1,000 feet and then pulling up to complete a loop before continuing in straight and level flight at its original height. Another witness, half a mile from the site of the accident, saw the aircraft pass just to the north of him on track for Stansted at a height he estimated to be between 500 and 700 feet. He had turned his back on the aircraft for about 6 seconds when his