

Christen Eagle II, G-OEGL

AAIB Bulletin No: 8/99 Ref: EW/G99/06/17 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Christen Eagle II, G-OEGL

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming IO-360-A1B6D piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1982

Date & Time (UTC): 18 June 1999 at 1140 hrs

Location: Popham Airfield, Hampshire

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None - Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Lower mainplanes leading edges crushed, damage to upper mainplane and fabric covering

Commander's Licence: Airline Transport Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 51 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 16,800 hours (of which 42 were on type)

Last 90 days - 188 hours

Last 28 days - 56 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft was inbound to Popham airfield where Runway 26 was in use. The final approach path for Runway 26 is offset by about 25° to the north of the extended centreline to avoid the overflight of a filling station at the eastern end of the runway. There is a white arrow marker close to the touchdown end of the runway to indicate the correct inbound track.

The pilot carried out a right hand circuit but was obliged to extend the downwind leg because of another aircraft ahead. Once he turned onto the final approach he followed what he believed to be the correct path and sideslipped the aircraft to the right to allow a good view of the runway. When established in this configuration the pilot could see most of the runway but was not able to see either the filling station or the white marker. At a late stage of the approach the pilot saw the top branches of a tree moments before hitting them. Finding that the aircraft was still flyable the pilot elected to go-around into another right hand circuit and this time completed a successful landing.

The pilot assessed the cause of the accident as a misjudgement of the final approach; he believed that he started the approach on the correct line but drifted south due to a slight northerly wind component and an illusion, caused by the sideslip, of approaching the runway at a greater angle than was in fact the case.