

No: 12/90 **Ref: EW/G90/09/13** **Category: 1c**

Aircraft Type and Registration: Socata Morane Saulnier Rallye 150ST, G-BDCA

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-360-A4A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1955

Date and Time (UTC): 19 September 1990 at 0955 hrs

Location: Hele Payne Farm, Bradninch, Devon

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 2

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Substantial to major airframe components

Commander's Licence: Commercial Pilot's Licence with Instructor rating

Commander's Age: 64 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 15,945 hours (of which over 7,000 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and additional telephone inquiries

The pilot of G-BDCA had arranged to fly a passenger from a farm strip for the purpose of making a video recording of the farm. This flight could only take place on 19 September 1990. On the evening of 18 September the pilot went to the field and selected a take-off path that would avoid obstruction and built-up areas. The selected path was on a heading of 105° and gave a take-off run available of about 640 metres with a steadily increasing down slope. The pilot drove his car over the first 320 metres of established grass and then viewed the rest of the take-off path but did not drive or walk over it. This portion of the take-off path consisted of newly sown grass which had just started to show. The pilot assessed that his chosen path was suitable for the intended flight. A meteorological forecast obtained by the pilot on 18 September indicated that a cold front would pass through the area overnight and that the weather would be clear for the planned flight.

When the pilot arrived at the strip on the morning of 19 September, the ground was wet from overnight rain and, following the passage of the front, the wind had gone round to the North West with a mean speed of about 15 kt. The pilot estimated that this would give him a downwind component of about 7 kt. When the passengers arrived there were three rather than the one that the pilot had planned on. He said that he was unable to take three but agreed to take two. With two passengers the aircraft was well below the authorised maximum take-off weight.

Having completed his pre-flight preparation including a power check, the pilot started his take-off run. The first part of the run was over substantially level grass and although the pilot noted slower than normal acceleration he was not unduly concerned. The pilot raised the nosewheel just clear of the ground and the aircraft reached the newly seeded portion of the field having travelled about 500 metres. At this point, the pilot felt that he was on soft ground and decided to get airborne as quickly as possible. However the aircraft was now entering an area that had been badly affected by the overnight rain and the aircraft failed to leave the ground. The pilot states that the maximum airspeed achieved was 40-45 kt. When the pilot realised that the aircraft was not going to get airborne he maintained a high nose attitude to minimise the effect of impact with a fence and hedge at the boundary of the field. The aircraft went through the hedge and fence in a high nose attitude and came to rest on a road. Although the aircraft was severely damaged, the occupants were able to evacuate the cabin uninjured. A small fire had started in the aircraft engine but this was extinguished by the pilot with the aid of motorists on the road.