

No: 1/92

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Category: 1c

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** Jodel DR1051, G-BPLH

**No & Type of Engines:** 1 Potez 4 E20A piston engine

**Year of Manufacture:** 1963

**Date & Time (UTC):** 22 October 1991 at 0935 hrs

**Location:** Haven Pastures Farm, Warwickshire

**Type of Flight:** Private

**Persons on Board:** Crew - 1 Passengers - None

**Injuries:** Crew - Minor Passengers - N/A

**Nature of Damage:** Extensive airframe damage, including collapsed landing gear and failed wing spar

**Commander's Licence:** Private Pilot's Licence with IMC, Night and Instructor ratings

**Commander's Age:** 32 years

**Commander's Flying Experience:** 2,017 hours (of which 51 were on type)

**Information Source:** Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft was flown from a private airstrip to Dunkeswell and was there refuelled for a flight to another private airstrip, this one being in the vicinity of Nottingham. The pilot states that the fuel quantity was sufficient for an endurance of four hours and that he again checked the oil quantity and took satisfactory fuel samples from both tanks.

After departing from Dunkeswell the aircraft climbed to 4500 feet and maintained this altitude in good VMC 'on top' of a stratus layer until Brize Norton, where the pilot was requested to climb to FL45. After about ten minutes at this level the engine began to run roughly so the pilot turned on the electric fuel pump and switched back to the forward fuel tank. The engine continued to run roughly and lose power so the pilot made a MAYDAY call to Birmingham ATC. He then trimmed the aircraft for the glide and made further attempts to rectify the power problem which included trying the ignition switches. The engine did not respond to any of these changes, however, and the pilot noted that the oil pressure and temperature were still normal.

At this point a descent through cloud became inevitable and at about 3500 feet the pilot entered a layer of cloud some 500 to 600 feet thick. On becoming visual again he was confronted with a complete blanket of fog beneath him and Birmingham ATC gave him a heading for a nearby airfield. On turning to this heading, however, the pilot spotted a patch of green through the fog and he informed Birmingham ATC that he would be staying in that locality as the airfield was too far away to glide to. He then started a gliding turn to the right and carried out his crash checks before entering the fog.

The pilot maintained a steady right-hand descending turn into the fog, on instruments and at about 55 knots: in this way he hoped to stay close to the patch of green he had previously seen and thus avoid any built-up areas. At 600 feet he made his last radio call to Birmingham ATC and then turned the Master switch to OFF. He finally got visual contact with the ground at approximately 50 feet with a hedge and electric power lines ahead of him: he turned to the right, selected full flap and lowered the nose so as to land diagonally across a field. The aircraft touched down some 43 yards into the field and the landing gear collapsed shortly afterwards. The aircraft slid for some 45 yards before coming to rest, about 60 yards from the far hedge. The pilot vacated the aircraft within approximately 10 seconds and there was no fire.

Examination of the engine did not show any apparent reason for the loss of power. The pilot considers that carburettor icing was the most likely cause as the temperature and dew point were within the susceptible range and the aircraft had been operating at altitude for some time. He notes that in this installation of this model of engine (Potez 4 E20) the induction air is drawn from within the cowling itself and there is no provision for direct heating of the carburettor or the induction air.

The pilot regards himself as being very lucky to have escaped such an incident with only minor bruising and a stiff neck.