

No: 5/88

Ref: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Cessna 150A, G-ARRF

No & Type of Engines: 1 Rolls Royce Continental O-200-A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1961

Date and Time (UTC): 11 March 1988 1230 hrs

Location: Henscott Airstrip, Bradford Holsworthy, Devon

Type of Flight: Private (Pleasure)

Persons on Board: Crew -1 Passengers -1

Injuries: Crew -None Passengers -None

Nature of Damage: Damage to landing gear, wing tips and fuselage

Commander's Licence: Private pilot's licence

Commander's Age: 58 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 265 hours (of which 63 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft, which had earlier performed a normal take-off from Bodmin airfield, was making an approach to the 420 metre westerly runway at a private airstrip. The wind was generally from the west, at 25 kt.

The airfield is the highest point in the local area, is "dome-shaped", and slopes up relatively steeply from east to west. The final approach from the east is over a river valley with a steep slope up to the airfield boundary. The boundary itself is a cattleproof earth mound some 4 feet high on the airfield side and 6 feet on the approach side.

The pilot reported that normal downwind and base legs were flown for a left hand circuit but that perhaps, with the benefit of hindsight, the final turn was made a little too low. As the approach appeared normal, full flap (40°) was lowered in stages and the speed set at 55 miles per hour. However, as it became apparent that the aircraft was likely to undershoot, full power was applied but the aircraft failed to climb. The pilot raised the nose of the aircraft, in an attempt to clear the earth bank, but struck the latter approximately 6 inches from the top with the nose landing gear, followed by the right main landing gear. The aircraft came to rest some 10 metres past the airfield boundary, resting on its nose.

Neither occupant was injured and there was no fire.

The pilot considered that two factors were significant in the accident. Firstly, the rising ground on the approach gave him the impression that the approach was being flown at a safe height, whereas he was too low. Secondly, in the prevailing wind conditions, it was highly likely that turbulent downdraught conditions existed for the last part of the approach.

As this was the pilot's first landing at this particular airstrip, he also considered that it would have been prudent to have conducted a precautionary approach, to assess the conditions, before committing himself to a landing.

The pilot has since suggested to the airfield owner that the earth banks be replaced with a frangible fence.