

AAIB Bulletin No: 11/95

Ref: EW/G95/08/25

Category: 1.2

Aircraft Type and Registration: Spitfire IX, G-HVDM

No & Type of Engines: 1 Packard Merlin 224 piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1943

Date & Time (UTC): 26 August 1995 at 1230 hrs

Location: Rochester and Manston Airfields, Kent

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Substantial to landing gear and left wing

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 49 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 803 hours (of which 42 were on type)
Last 90 days - 7 hours
Last 28 days - 4 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

While crossing the threshold of Runway 20 at Rochester Airport, a sudden gust of wind lifted the right wing causing the left wing and landing gear to strike the runway with a significant lateral component. The forecast wind for the landing was 220°/06 kt but the actual wind at the time was 280°/12 to 14 kt. The pilot initiated a go-around during which he noticed a smell of hydraulic fluid. Inspection from the ground confirmed that the left landing gear was misaligned and, having cycled the landing gear several times without obtaining a safe indication, the pilot decided to divert to RAF Manston where there was better emergency cover. Having informed ATC of his intentions, the pilot completed the crash landing checks, switched off all electrical systems and stopped the engine on short finals. The landing was made without flaps due to the non availability of electrical power. The landing was made on the right wheel and after a short ground roll the left wing settled onto the runway causing the aircraft to ground loop. As the aircraft rotated to the left, the right landing gear collapsed and the aircraft slid to a halt on the runway. There was no fire and the pilot was able to vacate the aircraft uninjured. Subsequent examination of the landing gear revealed that the bolts securing the left landing gear pintle had sheered during the initial landing at Rochester.