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| Aircraft Type and Registration: | Bolkow BO 208C Junior, G-ATXZ | |
| No & Type of Engines: | 1 Continental Motors Corp O-200-A piston engine | |
| Year of Manufacture: | 1966 | |
| Date & Time (UTC): | 16 February 2005 at 1330 hrs | |
| Location: | Tatenhill Aerodrome, Staffordshire | |
| Type of Flight: | Private | |
| Persons on Board: | Crew - 1 | Passengers - 1 |
| Injuries: | Crew - None | Passengers - None |
| Nature of Damage: | Nose landing gear collapsed, propeller destroyed, and possible shock damage to engine | |
| Commander's Licence: | Private Pilot's Licence | |
| Commander's Age: | 61 years | |
| Commander's Flying Experience: | 223 hours (of which 0.5 were on type) Last 90 days - 0.5 hours Last 28 days - 0.5 hours | |
| Information Source: | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot | |

Synopsis

The pilot, occupying the left seat, was carrying out a series landings in order to familiarise himself with the aircraft. Accompanying him, on the insistence of the aircraft's insurance company, was a passenger who was also a pilot and experienced on type. On the fourth approach, described as being higher than previous approaches, the aircraft encountered sink and landed nose wheel first. The nose landing gear collapsed and, after a ground slide of approximately 100 metres, the aircraft came to a stop with no injuries to either occupant. It is possible that the pilot felt he was 'under supervision' and that a lack of comment from the passenger during the final approach was tacit approval to continue to land. In reality the passenger was not a qualified instructor, had never landed the aircraft from the right seat and therefore was not appropriately qualified to intervene.

History of the flight

The pilot had purchased a share in the aircraft, and was undertaking a familiarisation flight to satisfy the Insurer's requirement that he should accrue 10 hours flying on type with either another group member or a Flying Instructor before flying the aircraft 'solo'. The passenger held a Private Pilot's Licence and had 262 hours experience on type. The passenger briefed the pilot on the aircraft and its characteristics, and the two then departed to fly circuits on Tatenhill's Runway 26. Runway 26 is asphalt, 788 metres long, with a displaced landing threshold 58 metres from the beginning of the tarmac. A further 500 metres of unlicensed asphalt continues to the west of the end of the licensed area.

The pilot flew three satisfactory circuits and landings but on the fourth circuit the approach was high. The pilot reported that, although he might have gone around had he been flying solo, he felt content with the approach because of a lack of criticism from his experienced passenger. Just above the runway the aircraft encountered 'sink' and landed heavily, possibly nose wheel first, about 100 metres from the far end of the licensed runway. The nose landing gear leg collapsed and the propeller struck the runway. The aircraft yawed across the runway and came to rest after approximately 100 metres of ground run. The passenger reported that he was not able to react in time as the aircraft pitched nose down towards the runway.

The pilot's recent experience had been on Cessna and Piper light aircraft, which are flown with the pilot's left hand operating the control column and his right operating the throttle. The Bolkow Junior however, is operated in the opposite sense. The pilot reported that it is possible that lack of familiarity with this layout may have caused him to make an inappropriate control input during the landing.

Although the Insurer's requirement was intended to reduce risk, it created an environment in which the pilot felt that he was under supervision. The passenger was familiar with the aircraft but was not qualified or experienced as a flying instructor and had never carried out a takeoff or landing from the right hand seat. Flying Instructors are trained to fly from the right hand seat of an aircraft and to take control of aircraft when their students make errors in circumstances where rapid and effective action is necessary to ensure safety. Had a Flying Instructor been present on board, it is likely that a timely intervention could have prevented the accident. Final responsibility for the safe conduct of flight however, is always the responsibility of the Pilot in Command.

In a review of reportable accidents, the Civil Aviation Authority's General Aviation Safety Review Working Group identified 'Lack of training or experience' as the most common causal factor, present in 23% of accidents.