

ACCIDENT

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| Aircraft Type and Registration: | Acrosport 2, G-NEGG | |
| No & Type of Engines: | 1 Lycoming O-360-A4M piston engine | |
| Year of Manufacture: | 1992 | |
| Date & Time (UTC): | 14 June 2009 at 1410 hrs | |
| Location: | 1 km from Bidford Airfield, Warwickshire | |
| Type of Flight: | Private | |
| Persons on Board: | Crew - 1 | Passengers - None |
| Injuries: | Crew - 1 (Serious) | Passengers - N/A |
| Nature of Damage: | Damage to propeller, landing gear, wings and fuselage structure, possibly beyond economic repair | |
| Commander's Licence: | Private Pilot's Licence | |
| Commander's Age: | 60 years | |
| Commander's Flying Experience: | 469 hours (of which 8 were on type) Last 90 days - 3 hours Last 28 days - 0 hours | |
| Information Source: | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot | |

Synopsis

Following a normal takeoff, the engine began to lose power and the pilot had to make a forced landing in a field of barley. The aircraft was seriously damaged and the pilot suffered a head injury.

History of the flight

The pilot intended to undertake a local flight of about 30 minutes duration. After all pre-flight, pre-start and post-start checks had been performed from a printed checklist, with no abnormalities noted, he taxied approximately 250 yards to the normal run-up area for the power checks. Nothing unusual was noted during these checks so he taxied a further 50 yards to the threshold of grass Runway 24 and commenced the takeoff roll.

Using his normal procedure, the pilot opened the throttle smoothly to full power and raised the tail as speed built up. However, as the aircraft climbed away, he felt that it was not climbing at its usual rate. He checked that full throttle was applied and entered a shallow left turn with the intention of flying a truncated circuit to land back on Runway 24. He recalled that the power seemed to reduce further and that it appeared that a circuit would be unachievable, so he straightened up and attempted to climb straight ahead to gain what height he could. The power seemed to reduce further and he was left with no option but to lower the nose and look for a suitable field for a forced landing. This was made difficult by the combination of low height (estimated to be about

200-300 feet), poor visibility over the nose and a steep glide angle, but a field of barley about 1 metre high was selected.

The pilot remembers nothing about the subsequent forced landing or evacuation and only recalls knocking on a farmhouse door for assistance about 100 metres from the aircraft. From the pilot's statement and examination of photographs of the accident site, it appears that the aircraft struck the field at slow speed and came to rest rapidly, tearing off the main landing gear. However it remained upright and he struck his head on the windscreen or coaming due to the abrupt deceleration in the tall crop.

A video of the accident taxi-out and takeoff was taken by the pilot's wife. The audio track suggests that the engine was not developing full RPM during the takeoff

roll and confirms the pilot's account that the engine note gradually reduced but did not stop during the climb-out, which was noticeably shallow for an aircraft of this performance. The video ceases as the pilot straightened up from the left crosswind turn. He makes the observation that he was wearing a new active noise reduction headset which produced an unfamiliar sound of the engine to his ears and, had he been wearing his normal conventional headset, he might have been aware earlier that the engine was not producing full power.

Subsequent limited examination of the aircraft did not reveal any pre-impact damage but did show that the spark plugs associated with the left magneto were very sooty. The owner of the aircraft intends to salvage the engine and will report to the AAIB any problems discovered with the magneto or the engine during overhaul.