

Aircraft type and registration: D H 82A Tiger Moth (light single engine biplane). G—AXBW

Year of Manufacture: 1940

Date and time (GMT): 2 July 1983 1736 hrs

Location: Leys Farm near Cranfield, Bedfordshire

Type of flight: Private

Persons on board: Crew — 2 Passengers — Nil

Injuries: Crew — 1 Fatal Passengers — N/A
1 Serious

Nature of damage: The aircraft was destroyed forward of the rear cockpit

Owner and Commander:

Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Age: 54 years

Total flying experience: 402 hours (of which 156 were on type)

Co-pilot:

Licence: Airline Transport Pilot's Licence

Age: 49 years

Total flying experience: 14600 hours (of which 6 hours were on type)

The rear cockpit of the Tiger Moth was occupied by the owner, a PPL holder, while the front cockpit was occupied by a professional pilot who was himself the owner of a light aircraft. The intention of the flight was that the co-pilot should take some air-to-air photographs of three Aeronca Sedan aircraft flying in formation to the southwest of Cranfield.

The Tiger Moth took off from Cranfield at 1732 hrs piloted by the owner and closely followed by three Aeroncas. After climb power had been selected, the co-pilot requested control of the aircraft and then started a level left hand turn at about 800 ft above aerodrome level. The pilot of the leading Aeronca Sedan reports that the Tiger Moth flicked into a left hand spin from which it did not recover before hitting the ground in a cornfield. There was no fire although fuel spilled from the ruptured fuel tank. The co-pilot was killed instantly and the pilot received serious injuries. It was noted that the transverse wire, to which the pilot's shoulder harness had been attached, had failed.

The pathological examination revealed no evidence of any pre-existing medical condition that might account for the accident. The aircraft wreckage was examined but there was no evidence of failure that might have led to the loss of control.

However, the attention of the Airworthiness Division of the CAA was drawn to the degree of corrosion on the airframe, in particular, the wing attachment bolts, as the aircraft had recently passed an inspection for the issue of the Certificate of Airworthiness.