

No: 10/92

Ref: EW/G92/07/26

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Beagle Auster D5 Series 180 Husky, G-AVOD

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-360-A2A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1967

Date & Time (UTC): 31 July 1992 at 1535 hrs

Location: Crosland Moor Airfield, Huddersfield, Yorkshire

Type of Flight: Aerial Work (Banner Towing)

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - Minor Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Aircraft damaged beyond economic repair

Commander's Licence: Commercial Pilot's Licence with Instructor rating

Commander's Age: 38 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 803 hours (of which 22 were on type)
Last 90 days - 22 hours
Last 28 days - 2 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot,
and subsequent enquiries by AAIB

The aircraft departed from Runway 25 at Huddersfield Crosland Moor in order to pick up an advertising banner which had previously been laid out on the aerodrome by the commander. The surface wind was reported as being from the south at approximately 5 kt. A left hand circuit was flown, during which the grapple hook was released from its stowed position. The banner pick-up point was just to the south of the runway, approximately two thirds of the way along its length, and consisted of two vertical poles supporting the banner tow rope. The aircraft approached at 75 kt towards the banner pick-up point, crossing the runway in a south westerly direction, in order to reduce the crosswind component slightly. The hook engaged the banner tow rope and the aircraft was put into a steep climb. At this time, the commander reported that he looked back to check the banner was streaming correctly. He gained the impression that the trailing end was snagged on the western boundary wall of the aerodrome. He claimed that the aircraft lurched and pitched up, despite a forward movement of the control column, and that the left wing also dropped. An attempt was made to operate the banner release mechanism, which was located slightly behind and above the pilot. After a short delay in locating the release, he was successful in jettisoning the banner, but it was too late to prevent the aircraft from hitting the ground a few moments later. The commander commented that he did not

think that the engine was developing full power at the time, possibly because lack of friction on the throttle had allowed it to move back from the fully forward position while his right hand was reaching for the banner release.

An eyewitness reported that the aircraft veered sharply to the right after the banner pick up, and adopted a very steep nose up attitude. It was then reported to have dropped the left wing initially and descended almost vertically to the ground.

A 1000 lb weak link was fitted between the aircraft and the banner, but this had not broken. No damage was apparent to the component parts of the banner, and photographs taken at the scene show that the trailing end of the banner was not snagged on any wall or fence. It was also evident from the photographs that the aircraft had impacted the ground with a high rate of descent in a fairly level attitude, with little forward speed.