

No: 11/92

Ref: EW/G92/09/07

Category: 1c

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** DH82A Tiger Moth, G-AMHF  
**No & Type of Engines:** 1 de Havilland Gipsy Major 1 piston engine  
**Year of Manufacture:** 1940  
**Date & Time (UTC):** 6 September 1992 at 1615 hrs  
**Location:** Crowdy Reservoir, Davidstow, Cornwall  
**Type of Flight:** Private  
**Persons on Board:** Crew - 1 Passengers - None  
**Injuries:** Crew - None Passengers - N/A  
**Nature of Damage:** Minor to landing gear, tyre and lower wing fabric  
**Commander's Licence:** Private Pilot's Licence  
**Commander's Age:** 31 years  
**Commander's Flying Experience:** 197 hours (of which 132 were on type)  
Last 90 days - 39 hours  
Last 28 days - 8 hours  
**Information Source:** Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot,  
and subsequent enquiries by AAIB

The pilot carried out a refuelling stop at Castle Cary, near Yeovil, Somerset, before departing on the final leg of his flight to Polzeath, Cornwall. He obtained an en-route weather briefing from RAF Lyneham prior to the flight which forecast a cruise wind of 240°/20 kt, visibility variable between 2 km and 8 km with a cloud base of 1,000 feet to 2,500 feet. The fuel state prior to departure was 19 gall/US which the pilot calculated to be sufficient for the 2 hour 10 minute flight.

En-route the pilot contacted the radar controller at Exeter for a Flight Information Service. The controller, who lived in Cornwall and had recently driven up from the west, advised the pilot that the weather in Cornwall was very poor with reduced visibility.

After 2 hours and 20 minutes the aircraft arrived overhead Polzeath but the landing strip was obscured by thick cloud and fog. The pilot decided to divert to RAF St Mawgan and climbed to 3,000 feet, above cloud, and contacted St Mawgan radar for vectors to the airfield. The radar controller had difficulty initially in identifying the aircraft as the pilot was unsure of his position, but eventually the controller vectored the aircraft onto a heading for St Mawgan. As the aircraft was heading into wind

and making slow progress the controller asked the pilot for the aircraft's endurance. The pilot replied that his estimated endurance was only 15 to 20 minutes. Realising that the aircraft was unlikely to reach St Mawgan in time the controller alerted the Distress and Diversion (D and D) cell at the London Air Traffic Control Centre (LATCC).

As the aircraft approached Davidstow on Bodmin Moor the controller noticed that it was turning away from the required heading. The controller was then informed by the pilot that the engine had stopped and that he was carrying out a forced landing. The controller tried to raise the aircraft on the radio several times during its descent but had no success. The D and D cell, who were informed that the controller had lost contact with the aircraft, launched the search and rescue (SAR) helicopter from RAF Culdrose.

The actual weather conditions at St Mawgan at the time of the accident were; surface wind: 190°/20 to 31 kt; visibility : 8,000 metres in drizzle; cloud: 2 octas at 200 feet, 8 octas at 400 feet; temperature of 17°C.

The aircraft landed successfully suffering only minor damage and the pilot, who was wearing a full harness, vacated the aircraft without injury.

Using his mobile telephone, the pilot was able to contact the Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RCC) at Plymouth and, through a communications link, talk direct to the rescue helicopter. The crew of the SAR helicopter reported that at the time of the accident, in the area of the landing site, the weather was sky obscured, visibility 20 metres in fog with a surface wind of 190°/19 kt. By listening for the helicopter the pilot was able to direct the crew towards his position although the helicopter had to land several times due to very poor visibility.

Investigation of the landing site the following day, when weather conditions had improved, revealed that the site was an area of flat land measuring approximately 500 metres square surrounded by trees and outcrops of rock.

The pilot reported that the cause of the accident was due to a miscalculation in fuel planning and he considered himself fortunate to have avoided injury as, during the descent, the ground only became visible at 50 feet which allowed him no opportunity to select a suitable landing site. He also stated that at no time was he concerned with his situation and therefore he did not transmit any distress message.