

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/94

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Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Bellanca 8KCAB Decathlon, G-BPAG

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming AEIO-320-E1B piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1979

Date & Time (UTC): 16 July 1994 at 1705 hrs

Location: Kearsley Farm, Matfen, Northumberland

Type of Flight: Private (Pilot conversion)

Persons on Board: Crew - 2 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Damaged beyond economic repair

Commander's Licence: Airline Transport Pilot's Licence with Instructor Rating

Commander's Age: 30 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 3,204 hours (of which 2 were on type)
Last 90 days - 115 hours
Last 28 days - 49 hours

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

The aircraft is a tailwheel aircraft with two seats in tandem; the rear seat is equipped with a control column and throttle but no dedicated flight instruments. The weather forecast for the day of the accident indicated a light surface wind, good visibility and broken cloud between 2,500 and 8,000 feet.

For the initial flight of the conversion, from Kearsley to Carlisle, the converting pilot occupied the rear seat but was the handling pilot; he had been briefed by the aircraft owner on approach speeds and attitudes. The front seat was occupied by a PPL/IMC holder who had a total flying experience of 250 hours of which 13 hours were on type. Following this initial flight, which was uneventful, the pilots changed seats for the return flight to Kearsley via Charterhall Airstrip. The takeoff from Carlisle and the landing at Charterhall were carried out by the new pilot and were normal, although the pilots experienced some difficulty communicating with each other because of poor intercom quality. After the landing at Charterhall, with an estimated surface wind of 070°/2 to 3 kt, the aircraft was backtracked along the strip and a normal take-off was again made by the front seat pilot. Subsequently, as G-BPAG approached Kearsley, the crew looked for some indication of the surface

wind. As there is no windsock, the crew noted a smoke trail just to the west of the landing area; this indicated a light surface wind of 2 to 3 kt from the east. The landing strip at Kearsley is orientated 10/28, the westerly third of the strip is undulating and there is then a downhill gradient towards the east. Considering the light surface wind and the favoured landing direction of west, the crew decided to land on Runway 28.

On the first approach, the handling pilot in the front seat considered that his speed was too high and initiated a go-around; he stated that the aircraft touched down momentarily during this go-around. On the second approach he again thought that his speed was too high and was considering a go-around when, at about 200 feet agl, he felt the throttle being closed; he stated that he thought the rear seat pilot had closed the throttle and, as this made him feel that the rear seat pilot considered that a safe landing could be made, he continued his approach. Subsequently, the rear seat pilot stated that he had not touched the throttle. Both pilots agreed that the aircraft touched down approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ along the strip. The front seat pilot realised that G-BPAG was not going to stop in the available distance and applied right rudder to steer the aircraft into an adjacent barley crop. The aircraft continued through the crop, and then through a stone wall before coming to rest.

The front seat pilot stated that the accident was caused by landing with a tailwind too far down the strip. He also considered that a contributing factor was that control of the throttle was taken away from him during the approach; as noted above, the rear seat pilot stated that he did not touch the throttle.