

No: 7/91 Ref: EW/G91/04/03 Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: (1) Oldfield Baby Great Lakes, G-BK CJ  
(2) Oldfield Baby Great Lakes, G-BK HD

No & Type of Engines: (1) 1 Continental O-200-A piston engine  
(2) 1 Continental O-200-A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: (1) 1984  
(2) 1985

Date & Time (UTC): 14 April 1991 at 1350 hrs

Location: Hansacre, Staffordshire

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - (1) 1 Passengers - (1) None  
(2) 1 (2) None

Injuries: Crew - (1) Minor Passengers - N/A  
(2) None

Nature of Damage: (1) Rudder and one elevator destroyed in the air plus extensive damage to wings, fin and fuselage during forced landing  
(2) Leading edges of both starboard wings, underside of starboard lower wing and underside of fuselage

Commander's Licence: (1) Private Pilot's Licence  
(2) Private Pilot's Licence with Night rating

Commander's Age: (1) 34 years  
(2) 31 years

Commander's Flying Experience: (1) 453 hours (of which 323 were on type)  
(2) 425 hours (of which 256 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Forms submitted by the pilots

Both aircraft took off independently from Sleaf airfield bound for a farm strip at Overseal in Leicestershire. After take-off they joined up in loose formation and set course for Rugeley power station, a leg which was familiar to both pilots. The weather was fine although the wind was gusty and some turbulence was encountered en-route at 1500 ft amsl. Neither aircraft was radio equipped. The leg began with HD in the lead and CJ approximately 100 metres to its left. At the power station CJ took the lead and, now over less familiar territory, both pilots commenced map reading. Before consulting his map, the pilot of HD checked his position relative to the lead aircraft and estimated that it was 100 metres on his left side; this estimate was later confirmed by CJ's pilot who noted that HD was also slightly behind him. The pilot of CJ satisfied himself that he was on track by comparing

ground features on his left side with the map and then looked to his right to check on the position of HD. He saw the aircraft about 3 metres away from him, at the same height and approaching fast. He pushed the stick forward but was unable to avoid a collision. HD's pilot was unaware of the impending collision; he was still looking at his map.

After the collision, CJ rapidly rolled to the right and entered a spin. Its pilot immediately applied full forward stick and the spin stopped after about 450° of rotation. He realised that his aircraft had lost its rudder but he was unsure of the full extent of the damage and so he decided to carry out an immediate forced landing in a nearby field. To retain control, the into-wind approach was flown faster than normal and touchdown in a field of wheat occurred at about 70 mph. During the ground roll the aircraft yawed which, lacking a rudder, the pilot was unable to correct. The left gear leg collapsed in soft soil and the aircraft cartwheeled coming to rest inverted. The pilot was uninjured in the landing but cut his wrist whilst smashing the canopy to effect his escape.

HD's pilot was alerted to the mid-air collision by the sounds of impact and looked up to see CJ on his right side in a roll to the right before it disappeared out of sight beneath his right wing. Without undue difficulty, he regained control of his aircraft which was in a descending turn to the right. After levelling at about 1000 ft, HD's pilot saw CJ upside down in a field with its pilot walking away from the aircraft and waving to him. He then set course for the Rugeley power station to assess the damage to his aircraft. He was able to see damage to both wing leading edges and that he had retained both gear legs intact. Sufficient power was available for a climb if necessary and turns to left or right were possible although turns to the right were more difficult because almost full right roll control was required to keep the wings level. He decided to return to Sleaford where he landed without incurring further damage on his second attempt.

At Rugeley power station the lead aircraft would have turned approximately 5° right to track towards Overseal; the turn was also towards HD. The field where CJ crash landed was less than 2 miles beyond the turning point.