

No: 6/83

Ref: EW/C830/U1

Aircraft: AJEP/Wittman Tailwind G-BALR (Light single engined fixed wing aircraft)

Year of manufacture: 1976

Date and time (GMT): 3 June 1983 at 1345 hrs

Location: Steeple, Ennerdale, Cumria

Type of flight: Private

Persons on board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - 1 (fatal) Passengers - 1 (fatal)

Nature of damage: Aircraft destroyed

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 43 years

Commander's total flying experience: Not known. He had held a full licence for 8 years and had owned the aircraft for 5 years

The aircraft took off from Carlisle on runway 07 at 1317 hrs to fly to Little Snoring in Norfolk. At 1332 hrs the pilot reported to London FIS that his position was Maryport and that he was flying VMC at 3500 feet. One and a half minutes later he reported that he would be routeing via Whitehaven to Lancaster and then over Preston and down to Blackpool. At approximately 1345 hrs, three eye witnesses saw a light aircraft flying in and out of cloud in an easterly direction near the head of Ennerdale Water and heard a crash. The aircraft had flown into a near vertical rock face close to Steeple at a height of 2000 feet above sea level and 680 feet below the summit. The cloud base at the time was reported as 2000 feet with some cloud hanging below the main base in occasional showers. Visibility away from cloud varied between 2 and 7 kms.

The pilot's flight log was recovered and shows that he had originally intended to route round the Lake District via Aspatria, Whitehaven and Broughton-in-Furness to Lancaster. His planned flight time from Carlisle to Aspatria was 15 minutes at a ground speed of 94 kts. However, 15 minutes after take-off he reported Maryport, some 7 miles further along the track. If this report was correct, he would have had to achieve a ground speed of 120 kts following his turn onto track after take-off. The required track shown on the log from Whitehaven to Broughton-in-Furness was 135° T. The accident occurred close to the 135° radial from Workington, which lies 7 miles north of Whitehaven. Therefore, a possible hypothesis which fits the known facts is that the pilot mistook Workington for Whitehaven, turned onto a track of 135°, and flew along Ennerdale.

There is no evidence that any medical factor contributed to the accident, nor evidence of structural or mechanical failure.