

No: 11/84

Ref: EW/C878

Aircraft type and registration: Pitts S2A G-BADY (light single engine fixed wing aircraft G-BECM

Year of Manufacture: G-BADY 1972
G-BECM 1976

Date and time (GMT): 29 June 1984 1820 hrs

Location: Preesall Sands near Fleetwood

Type of flight: Formation Aerobatics

Persons on board: Crew — G-BADY — 1 Passengers — Nil
G-BECM — 1

Injuries: Crew — G-BADY — 1 Fatal Passengers — Nil
G-BECM — 1 Fatal

Nature of damage: Both aircraft destroyed

Commander's Licence: G-BADY — Commercial Pilot's Licence
G-BECM — Airline Transport Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: G-BADY — 32 years
G-BECM — 43 years

Commander's total flying experience: G-BADY 1940 hours (of which 410 hours were on type)
G-BECM 5300 hours (of which 1050 hours were on type)

Information Source: Field Investigation.

A flight of three Pitts S2A's, consisting of two regular and one occasional members, were engaged in practice for a formation aerobatic display at Blackpool. During the previous three days the team had worked up their display by two days of practising individual manoeuvres with two aircraft only followed by one day of practising the complete display routine with the full formation of three aircraft.

On the day of the accident, after a press presentation, the formation took off for a final rehearsal. It flew to the established practice area over Preesall Sands and began the routine. This was executed without incident up to the point when an opposition manoeuvre was attempted in which G-BADY intended to pass between the other two aircraft which were flying towards him in line abreast with G-BECM on the left. As G-BADY passed through the gap he was to have rolled about 80° to the left. During the passing manoeuvre G-BADY and G-BECM collided and both sustained sufficient damage to cause them to crash, G-BECM catching fire as it struck the ground.

Examination of the two aircraft revealed that G-BADY had struck the left mainplane of G-BECM in the region of the interplane strut when rolled about 70° to the left. As a result both the left mainplane of G-BECM were fragmented and the upper mainplane of G-BADY was structurally destroyed. No evidence of any pre-existing defects were found in either aircraft.