

No: 9/90

Ref: EW/G90/05/20

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Pierre Robin DR400/180, G-BPOC

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-360-A3A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1973

Date and Time (UTC): 11 May 1990 at 1158 hrs

Location: Rochester Airport, Kent

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 3

Injuries: Crew - 1 (serious) Passengers - 3 (minor)

Nature of Damage: Aircraft damaged beyond economic repair

Commander's Licence: Private Pilots Licence with IMC rating

Commander's Age: 40 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 226 hours (of which 156 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft was taking-off from Rochester Airport bound for Old Warden. Having completed the normal pre-flight and power checks the pilot was cleared to take-off on relief runway 20L. He recalls that, after lift-off, the airspeed seemed a little low (approximately 60 kt) and that the aircraft did not seem to be accelerating in the climb as expected. Believing this to be due to over-rotation, he eased the control column forward a little. He then stated that the engine started to misfire badly at approximately 100 ft and, despite having levelled-off, the aircraft did not accelerate.

Since he judged that his impact point would be beyond the end of the runway he continued along it with the intention of turning right into the valley and performing a forced-landing in a field. He then closed and re-opened the throttle and checked the engine fuel and ignition controls but to no avail. On looking up again he saw that the right wing had dropped and the aircraft had a high rate of descent. Realising that impact was inevitable he managed to level the wings and pulled hard back on the stick as the aircraft struck the ground just off the end of the runway and rolled onto its back. The pilot and the rear seat passengers were able to exit the aircraft through a gap between the fuselage and the ground but it had to be lifted to extricate the front seat passenger. There was no fire despite the fact that fuel was flowing from a broken pipe between the front seats.

At least one eye-witness to the accident confirms a very steep attitude during the initial climb following a relatively short take-off roll.