

No: 1/84

Ref: EW/C857

Aircraft type and registration: Cessna 500 Citation 1 G-UJESS (light twin-jet aircraft)

Year of manufacture: 1976

Date and time (GMT): 8 December 1983 at 1746 hrs

Location: 10 nm SE of Stornoway

Type of flight: Private

Persons on board: Crew — 2 Passengers — 6 adults and 2 infants

Injuries: Crew — 2 (fatal) Passengers — 8 (fatal)

Nature of damage: Destroyed. Wreckage not recovered

Commander's Licence: Commercial Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 33 years

Commander's total flying experience: Approximately 4000 hours (of which approximately 400 were on type)

The aircraft left Liverpool at 1632 hrs to fly IFR to Stornoway. A second aircraft of similar type, registration N40GS, flying from Biggin Hill to Stornoway, established visual contact with G-UJESS at 1654 hrs, north of the Dean Cross VOR. G-UJESS commenced its descent from FL330 at 1723 hrs and was overtaken by N40GS, also in a descent, but with track separation, at approximately 1730 hrs. At this time G-UJESS reported to Scottish Air Traffic Control that he had the other aircraft in sight.

At 1734 hrs, when control of both aircraft was transferred to Stornoway, the Stornoway controller passed to them the current weather observation, which was a surface wind of 290° at 5 knots, visibility 20 kms, one okta of cloud at 1200 ft, surface temperature 7°C and QNH 1001 mbs. At 1738 hrs, N40GS reported 25 nm DME from Stornoway and immediately afterwards G-UJESS reported 30 nm DME, with the aircraft ahead in sight. At that time N40GS was descending through FL65 and G-UJESS was descending through FL70.

The commander of N40GS recollected entering a solid layer of cloud at 3000 to 4000 ft and breaking cloud at about 1100 ft with the lights of Stornoway in sight. Radar recordings show that G-UJESS passed 1100 ft in descent approximately 12 nm south-east of Stornoway and continued to descend at approximately 1200 fpm until its response disappeared from radar at 10 nm.

An air and sea search was made for the missing aircraft through the night of 8 December and on 9 December. Four bodies and a few small pieces of aircraft wreckage were recovered from the sea during this search. A subsequent search recovered 3 more bodies but failed to recover the main bulk of the aircraft wreckage.

The Chief Inspector of Accidents has ordered an Inspector's Investigation into this accident.