

Aircraft type and registration: Cessna FRA 105L G-BCFR (Light single engine fixed wing aircraft)

Year of manufacture: 1974

Date and time (GMT): 21 July 1984 at 1115 hrs

Location: Orsett Airfield, Essex

Type of flight: Practice demonstration

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — Nil

Injuries: Crew — 1 (serious) Passengers — N/A

Nature of damage: Damaged beyond economic repair

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 47 years

Commander's total flying experience: 1650 hours (of which 300 hours were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report pro-forma completed by the pilot and other witness reports.

The pilot was practising a demonstration flight in preparation for his participation in an Air Show which was taking place later in the afternoon. He planned to demonstrate precision short field take-offs and landings and to include simulated engine failures after take-off. About a week before the show he had visited the airstrip in order to familiarise himself with it and had practised the routine he intended to perform.

On the morning that the accident occurred, the pilot flew the aircraft from Southend and on arrival at Orsett completed two circuits during which he followed his Show routine by making a steep approach to the runway followed by an overshoot which was marked by the pilot rocking the wings. The aircraft then pulled up into a steep climb from which it dived towards the ground power off before levelling out and continuing the flight. After two circuits it completed a normal landing.

Later in the morning the aircraft taxied out to grass runway 25 and made a normal take-off. After lift-off the wings rocked and then the aircraft climbed steeply to approximately 400 feet after which it nose-dived towards the ground. As it levelled out the wheels brushed through the top of a wheat crop which was growing in a neighbouring field causing the aircraft to decelerate and strike the ground nose wheel first. The aircraft somersaulted and came to rest on its back. There was no fire and the pilot, who was wearing a full shoulder harness, was able to extricate himself from the cabin. He later stated that when he initiated full power after the simulated engine failure, the engine faltered and spluttered for about 4 to 6 seconds before it started to develop full power at about 50 feet.