

Grob G109, G-BJZX

AAIB Bulletin No: 9/98 Ref: EW/G98/05/12 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Grob G109, G-BJZX

No & Type of Engines: 1 Limbach L 2000-EBIA piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1982

Date & Time (UTC): 15 May 1998 at 1053 hrs

Location: Turweston Airfield, Northamptonshire

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None - Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Heavy damage to fuselage in nose and cockpit areas, wings holed; beyond economic repair

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 55 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 79 hours (of which 68 were on type)
Last 90 days - 5 hours
Last 28 days - 3 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

On departure following a brief visit to Turweston, the pilot carried out the full checks in accordance with the checklist mounted on the instrument panel. After engine start he taxied the aircraft to the holding point and, while waiting for take off, again went through the checks. On take off, as the aircraft left the ground, the canopy opened. The pilot immediately moved his right hand from the throttle to the canopy handle to hold it down. He turned the aircraft downwind at about 400 feet to carry out a low level circuit and land, making several unsuccessful attempts to close the canopy. Initially he was not prepared to release the canopy so, downwind, he released the control column and reduced power for the approach with his left hand to fly the final approach at between 60 and 65 kt. On finals he had been taught the procedure to close the throttle, move his right hand to the control column and the left hand to the airbrake lever for the flare and landing but, having experienced the effect of releasing the stick when downwind, he elected to release the canopy in order to close the throttle. As he did this the aircraft dropped heavily onto the runway from a height

of about 15 feet. The right landing gear collapsed and the propeller hit the runway. The aircraft slid down the runway and then veered to the right onto the grass. When it came to rest the pilot switched off the electrical equipment and climbed out.

The canopy is hinged at the front and locked by a single latch on the aircraft centre line above and behind the pilot's head, which is engaged by its handle being rotated through 90°. No fault was found in this mechanism after the accident. The club CFI reported that pilots are taught to check that the canopy is secure by pushing upwards on its central beam. It is possible to rotate the handle to the closed position with the canopy not fully seated and with the latch outside the cockpit frame. It is also a possibility in this case that in carrying out his checks for a second time before take off the pilot unlocked the canopy latch which he had previously closed.

A previous, similar occurrence was reported in AAIB Bulletin 12/96.