

Aerotechnik EV-97 Eurostar, G-NIDG

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| AAIB Bulletin No: 9/2002 | Ref: EW/G2002/06/07 | Category: 1.3 |
| Aircraft Type and Registration: | Aerotechnik EV-97 Eurostar, G-NIDG | |
| No & Type of Engines: | 1 Rotax 912-UL piston engine | |
| Year of Manufacture: | 2000 | |
| Date & Time (UTC): | 7 June 2002 at 0820 hrs | |
| Location: | Near Lecht Ski Area | |
| Type of Flight: | Private | |
| Persons on Board: | Crew - 2 | Passengers - None |
| Injuries: | Crew 2 (Serious) | Passengers - N/A |
| Nature of Damage: | Extensive to fuselage, wings, landing gear and propeller | |
| Commander's Licence: | Private Pilots Licence | |
| Commander's Age: | 42 years | |
| Commander's Flying Experience: | 860 hours (of which 18 were on type) | |
| | Last 90 days - 30 hours | |
| | Last 28 days - 14 hours | |
| Information Source: | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot | |

The crew, who were both qualified pilots, departed Inch airfield in Scotland intending to fly over mountainous terrain on a direct track to Feshiebridge near Aviemore. The weather conditions however deteriorated en-route forcing the crew to turn the aircraft into a valley. It soon became apparent that there was no obvious exit below the low cloud therefore the crew attempted a 180° turn but inadvertently entered intermittent IMC and became disorientated. Seeing ground very close beneath them, and 'not knowing what might be ahead', they decided to attempt a landing. The aircraft, already at low speed, was stalled from approximately 15 feet above the ground and landed in a level attitude with a high sink rate into the heather and peat covered surface.

Fortunately there was minimum disruption to the cockpit area and both occupants were able to vacate the aircraft and call for assistance using a mobile telephone. An hour and a half later they were rescued by helicopter and treated in hospital for back injuries. The aircraft, although largely intact, suffered substantial damage and was written off.

The pilots reported that they were tempted to continue their flight in deteriorating conditions knowing that at a reduced airspeed they could turn, with a reduced radius, away from any problems. They believed this technique, often used by microlight operators caught in poor weather, could be used in their ultralight aircraft. They admitted that this was inappropriate and that they 'had learned their lesson the hard way'. The loss of visual reference in the turn combined with viewing the ground beneath sloping at an unknown angle led to their disorientation which created in them an irresistible desire to land even in an unsuitable location.