

No: 5/83

Ref: EW/C823

Aircraft: Piel Emeraude CP 301A G-BHSJ (light single engine fixed wing aircraft)

Year of manufacture: 1959

Date and time (GMT) 15 April 1983 at 1245 hrs

Location: Redhill Aerodrome, Surrey

Type of flight: Private - instruction

Persons on board: Crew - 2 Passengers - Nil

Injuries: Crew - 2 (serious) Passengers - N/A

Nature of damage: Aircraft destroyed

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's age: 50 years

Commander's total flying experience: 8500 hours (of which 100 hours were on type)

G-BHSJ was being flown dual by a qualified pilot (PPL) converting to tailwheel type aircraft. Following a rolling take-off, the aircraft climbed to a height of approximately 200 feet where the engine coughed once and stopped. In this aircraft the forward fuel tank is invariably used for circuit work, so the instructor immediately selected the rear tank, took control of the aircraft and turned to the left to avoid the trees ahead. The aircraft banked sharply, the nose dropped and the aircraft fell to the ground, striking port wing and nose first and then cartwheeling so as to come to rest 180° from its original direction of travel. There was no fire.

Subsequent examination of the wreckage showed that the forward fuel tank had been empty, that the engine had stopped before it could draw fuel from the rear tank, and that the forward fuel tank gauge repeatedly stuck at a ½ full indication as the tank contents were reduced below that level.