

No: 9/84

Ref: EW/G84/08/08

Aircraft type and registration: Piper PA18 —150 Super Cub G-BEUA (Light single engined fixed wing aircraft)

Year of manufacture: 1964

Date and time (GMT): 21 August 1984 at 1212 hrs

Location: 500 yards south of Dunstable airfield, Bedfordshire

Type of flight: Glider towing

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — Nil

Injuries: Crew — Nil Passengers — N/A

Nature of damage: Minor — to propeller, cowlings and tail springs.

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 28 years

Commander's total flying experience: 781 hours (of which 630 hours were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report pro-forma submitted by the pilot.

The aircraft was engaged in glider towing and had taken off behind a similar aircraft (G-BHUF), which was also towing a glider. At approximately 200 feet agl, and having completed a 90° turn to the right, the pilot of G-BEUA saw a fire below him which he identified as the wreckage of G-BHUF. He ensured the safety of his tow and released it. The pilot then throttled back and entered a descending turn to the right through 180° back towards the crashed aircraft. He was aware that the field he would be obliged to land in contained standing corn, and of the possibility of nosing over, but decided that rapid intervention at the scene of the accident was of paramount importance.

The aircraft was flared at the top of the corn and stalled onto the ground. It decelerated rapidly, without the use of brakes, and just before coming to rest, nosed over then bounced back onto the tailwheel. The pilot's upper-torso restraint held, and he was uninjured. He evacuated his aircraft with the fire extinguisher and attempted to contain the fire in G-BHUF, but was unsuccessful with his limited resources. G-BEUA received minor damage to the propeller, cowlings, engine bearers and tail springs.

The accident to G-BHUF is to be the subject of a later AIB Bulletin.