

Aircraft type and registration: Sirocco 3776B G-MMLL

No & Type of engines: 1 Rotax 377 2 stroke 2 cylinder piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1984

Date and time (UTC): 16 August 1986 at 1740 hrs

Location: Weston Park, Weston Under Lizard, Staffs

Type of flight: Private (pleasure)

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — None

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

Nature of damage: Initially slight to moderate becoming substantial during recovery from a tree

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence with Night and IMC Ratings

Commander's Age: 53 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 554 hours fixed wing — 75 hours microlight

Information Source: BMAA Accident Report — Pilot Report — AIB telephone enquiries

Prior to the pilot's first flight in the single seat aircraft he was briefed by the owner on its characteristics, including suggested elevator trim positions and recommended airspeeds.

The aircraft took off towards the south west with the wind light and variable generally from the north west at 5 knots. The aircraft was seen to turn to the right, against the circuit direction, and was thought by observers to be low and slow. After two circuits the aircraft made an approach to the runway, but was high crossing the field boundary and appeared to carry out an overshoot without the sound of a significant increase in power. At the far end of the field the aircraft was seen to settle into the tops of a densely wooded area.

The pilot has stated that significant forward stick was required to maintain level flight even with the elevator trim fully forward. He was unhappy with the effect of the elevator, particularly with the initial effect of power changes, and decided to land at an early opportunity. The pilot also stated that it was difficult to achieve a satisfactory rate of descent, and having crossed the field boundary too high, elected to try and land in an adjacent field. The aircraft was still too high and heading towards trees; the pilot was still having problems with elevator, pitch, and power control and the aircraft sank into the tree tops, abruptly coming to rest against a large oak, hanging vertically tail down. The pilot was wearing full harness and suffered only minor injuries, managing to leave the aircraft and climb part way down the tree.

The aircraft received moderate damage and was examined by a BMAA Area Safety Officer (also a witness to the accident flight) who could find no fault with the elevator control

system. After recovery from the tree, the aircraft damage was reassessed as substantial. The pilot on the accident flight considered that the arrangement of the throttle and steering controls made it difficult to restrain the stick while taxiing, and this could allow the stick and elevator to whip through full travel while manoeuvring on bumpy ground. Two pilots who flew the aircraft prior to the accident flight reported the control system to be working normally.