

No: 10/90

Ref: EW/G90/07/29

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Rollason Druine D.31 Turbulent, G-ARRZ

No & Type of Engines: 1 Ardem 4CO2 Mk 5 piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1962

Date and Time (UTC): 21 July 1990 at 1450 hrs

Location: Hooley, near Croydon, Surrey

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Broken main spar and damage to aircraft nose

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 49 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 757 hours (of which 97 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

When the pilot took the aircraft out of its hangar he found that the engine was warm, the aircraft having been flown previously that day. He checked that there were no defects recorded for the aircraft in the log and started the engine. Pre-flight checks and taxiing took about ten minutes and he then took off to the north, the downslope in this direction offering an advantage on a windless day. The climb rate was slow but not unexpected for such a warm day. At about 80 feet height with 55 kt airspeed the engine suffered a power failure. In executing a forced landing straight ahead the pilot managed to avoid and clear trees and rough ground at the airstrip boundary and land in a downsloping field beyond. The right wing touched first and the aircraft swung through 180 degrees and slid to a halt on its right side. The pilot got out uninjured.

To date the cause of the power failure has not been investigated but, given the conditions (air temperature over 20°C, heat soaked engine and aircraft) and the use of 4 star Mogas as fuel the pilot considers that the aircraft may have suffered a vapour lock condition.