

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Pitts S-2B, G-III	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming AEIO-540-D4A5 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1983 (Serial no: 5010)	
Date & Time (UTC):	25 May 2013 at 1030 hrs	
Location:	Lashenden (Headcorn) Aerodrome, Kent	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 2	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Minor damage to left wing and aileron, left wheel fairing and left side of fuselage	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	52 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,333 hours (of which 104 were on type) Last 90 days - 10 hours Last 28 days - 9 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The aircraft hit a runway edge marker after it bounced and drifted left during a landing on the grass runway at Lashenden. The pilot, who was undertaking a refresher flight in this two-seat Pitts, reported that the drift was caused by a crosswind, combined with a lapse in his spatial awareness. He subsequently regained control and completed the landing safely.

History of the flight

The handling pilot had not flown a Pitts for around six months and was undertaking a refresher flight. The aircraft re-joined the circuit after some handling practice away from the airfield. On the third circuit, the aircraft touched down close to the unmarked centreline of grass Runway 29 but bounced up two or three feet. Due

to the restricted forward field of view in the landing attitude, the pilot was using the right hand runway edge markers as prime points of visual reference. The bounce coincided with a gap of around 40 m between two edge markers, so his spatial awareness was degraded and he did not notice that the aircraft was drifting left. The pilot reported that the initial cause of the drift was a crosswind from the right. The surface wind was reported as being from 340° at 15 kt.

The aircraft collided with one of the 45 cm high, left hand runway edge markers. The left wheel spat struck first, followed by the left aileron spade, which detached. The impact of the spade snatched the control column from the pilot's grasp and caused the aileron to initiate a left

wing down input. The handling pilot quickly regained control without any input by the other pilot. He was then able to manoeuvre back over the runway, complete the

landing and taxi back to the hangar area. The damage to the fuselage was believed to have been caused by debris from the broken marker board.