

No: 10/90

Ref: EW/G90/05/12

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper J3C-65, G-TAFY
No & Type of Engines:	1 Continental A65 piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1940
Date and Time (UTC):	5 May 1990 at 1310 hrs
Location:	Near March, Cambridgeshire
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - 1 (serious)
Nature of Damage:	Aircraft damaged beyond economic repair
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	43 years
Commander's Total Flying Experience:	377 hours (of which 103 were on type)
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft was en route from Nayland to Fenland, cruising at 1500 feet, when the engine suddenly lost power. The pilot immediately applied carburettor heat but the engine would not develop more than 1800 rpm. A Mayday call was made on 121.5 MHz, but this was not acknowledged. The pilot tried another call on the RAF Honington frequency, which was answered immediately. A field northeast of March was chosen as the landing site. The pilot noted that this had ditches and power cables at each end. Being rather high on approach, the pilot turned the aircraft through 360° in order to lose height. However on approach the tail of the aircraft subsequently struck the cables, and this pitched the aircraft nose-down into the ground with the engine still running at approximately 1800 rpm. The aircraft cartwheeled before coming to rest substantially damaged and with fuel pouring from the ruptured fuel tanks. Fortunately there was no fire. The harnesses held during the impact although the passenger received injuries to her left hand and suffered bruising and shock.

No investigation has yet been conducted into the reason for the power loss. The pilot considered that a fuel vapour lock may have been a possibility, as the weather was hot at the time of the accident. Although the aircraft had previously run without problems on motor fuel, on the day in question the pilot had had to purchase fuel from a source other than that which he normally used.