

Cassutt Speed One, G-AXDZ, 6 September 1998 at 1205 hrs

AAIB Bulletin No: 4/99 Ref: EW/G98/09/04 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Cassutt Speed One, G-AXDZ

No & Type of Engines: 1 Continental C90-14F piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1969

Date & Time (UTC): 6 September 1998 at 1205 hrs

Location: Leicester Airport

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - Serious - Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Aircraft destroyed

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 56 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 500 hours (of which 200 were on type)

Last 90 days - 6 hours

Last 28 days - 3 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The Cassutt Speed One is a small single engine aircraft designed specifically for air racing. On the day of the accident, the weather was fine with a surface wind of 080°/10 kt and no reported turbulence. The course for the race was an oval based on the active runway 10 and was approximately 4,000 metres in length. The race proceeded without incident until, as G-AXDZ approached the finish line at high speed and at about 100 feet AGL, it passed close to a slower aircraft as it overtook it. At this point, the pilot experienced a violent force accompanied by a sudden rearward movement of the control column which was snatched from his hand. The aircraft then entered a divergent pitch oscillation for about four cycles before it struck the runway and disintegrated. The rubber and foam fuel tank survived the impact, but the fuel filler cap was dislodged and the escaping fuel ignited. The fire was quickly extinguished but not before the pilot had suffered extensive burns to his right hand. The pilot considered that the construction of the aircraft which included a roll bar and flexible fuel tank together with his flame proof flying coverall and gloves, prevented more serious injury.

The pilot considered that the probable cause of the accident was a divergent pitch oscillation initiated by the slipstream of the aircraft that he passed as he approached the finish line of the race.

