

**ACCIDENT**

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|--|--|-------------------|
| <b>Aircraft Type and Registration:</b> | Pitts S-1 Pitts Special, G-BXAU  |                   |
| <b>No &amp; Type of Engines:</b>       | 1 Lycoming O-320-D2B piston engine   |                   |
| <b>Year of Manufacture:</b>            | 1978   |                   |
| <b>Date &amp; Time (UTC):</b>          | 15 March 2009 at 1405 hrs  |                   |
| <b>Location:</b>                       | Little Rissington Airfield, Gloucestershire  |                   |
| <b>Type of Flight:</b>                 | Private  |                   |
| <b>Persons on Board:</b>               | Crew - 1   | Passengers - None |
| <b>Injuries:</b>                       | Crew - None  | Passengers - N/A  |
| <b>Nature of Damage:</b>               | Left landing gear leg buckled, left lower wing and propeller tips damaged                |                   |
| <b>Commander's Licence:</b>            | Private Pilot's Licence  |                   |
| <b>Commander's Age:</b>                | 46 years   |                   |
| <b>Commander's Flying Experience:</b>  | 472 hours (of which 43 were on type)<br>Last 90 days - 7 hours<br>Last 28 days - 3 hours |                   |
| <b>Information Source:</b>             | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and subsequent AAIB investigation   |                   |

**Synopsis**

The pilot lost control of the aircraft while landing on a tarmac runway with a crosswind of approximately 8 kt.

**History of the flight**

Tarmac Runway 22 was being used by the Venture Gliding Squadron based at the airfield but Runways 27/09, 32/14 were also available for takeoff. The pilot took off from Runway 22 at 1345 hrs. The surface wind, measured by a Met Office automatic weather station on the airfield, was 310/8 kt at 1300 hrs, and 320/8 kt at 1400 hrs.

Having completed a local flight, the pilot made an approach and go-around to Runway 22 followed by a visual circuit. The aircraft touched down from this second approach and yawed into wind. This caused the left main landing gear to collapse and allowed the left wingtip to contact the ground. The aircraft subsequently slid to a halt and the pilot, who was unharmed, was able to vacate the cockpit. There was no fire.

The pilot was involved in a similar landing accident, in the same aircraft, in July 2008 (AAIB Report EW/G2008/07/13); control was lost and the aircraft suffered similar damage whilst landing in a crosswind

from the right on a tarmac runway. In this case the pilot reported that the wind had been calm at takeoff but during the flight the wind speed had increased to become approximately 10 kt, from a direction around 40° off the runway heading. Following that accident the pilot flew with an experienced Pitts pilot in a two-seat variant of the aircraft. He had advised the pilot not to fly in crosswind conditions.

Although no flight manual is published for the Pitts SIC, it is generally acknowledged by experienced Pitts pilots that the aircraft handles normally in crosswinds up to 17 kt.

### **Analysis**

Three runways were available for takeoff at Little Rissington, and observation of the windsock should have shown that Runway 22 was not the most into-wind runway available. Although the Venture Gliding Squadron aircraft were using Runway 22, the pilot of G-BXAU was at liberty to choose a different runway. A landing on Runway 32 would have reduced or even eliminated any cross-wind component and would have allowed the pilot to adhere to the advice given by the mentor during his period of two-seater training.