

Pitts S-1E, G-BVFN

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/97 Ref: EW/G97/07/06 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Pitts S-1E, G-BVFN
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-360-A3A piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1976
Date & Time (UTC):	5 July 1997 at 0700 hrs
Location:	Near Little Gransden Airfield, Bedfordshire
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 - Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None - Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Substantial to tail, right upper wing tip, main landing gear and shock loading to engine
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence with IMC and Night Rating
Commander's Age:	24 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	2,200 hours (of which 45 were on type) Last 90 days - 160 hours Last 28 days - 50 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot departed from Cranfield at 0650 hrs, as the early morning mist was clearing, for his planned flight to Cambridge. The forecast weather conditions predicted a surface wind of 280°/04 kt with a visibility of 3,500 metres and scattered cloud at 1,000 feet.

Midway between Cranfield and Cambridge the cloud thickened and lowered requiring the pilot to descend to maintain VMC. He had hoped that the deterioration was localised but with ever thickening and lowering cloud he decided to divert to Gransden. Within 2nm of the airfield the weather deteriorated rapidly. The pilot, fearing a collision with the ground or unseen obstacle, decided to carry out a 'forced landing with power' in a nearby field. The aircraft landed normally in the three point attitude but the dense standing crop of 'Rape' caused it to pitch inverted. The pilot, who was wearing a full harness, vacated the aircraft without injury.

The pilot assessed the accident as being caused by his misjudgement in 'pressing on' in unsuitable weather conditions.

