

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Skyranger 912(2), G-CCDH	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912-UL DCDI piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2003 (Serial no: BMAA/HB/233)	
Date & Time (UTC):	5 July 2017 at 1716 hrs	
Location:	Filey, North Yorkshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Nosewheel, propeller, wing	
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	51 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	110 hours (of which 85 were on type) Last 90 days - 26 hours Last 28 days - 26 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The aircraft was returning to its home airfield in unfavourable weather conditions. While performing a precautionary landing, the pilot identified what he thought was a field of stubble which turned out to be a standing crop. On landing, the aircraft flipped inverted but both occupants escaped uninjured.

History of the flight

The aircraft was one of two on a flight from Eshott to Little Gransden, near Cambridge, which was its home airfield; a flight of over 200 nm. Just prior to takeoff, the METAR recorded by Durham Tees Valley Airport (EGNV), which is approximately 50 nm south of Eshott, was visibility of 10 km or more but broken cloud at 1,100 ft. The EGNV TAF issued at 1357 hrs was 10 km visibility with broken cloud at 1,200 ft but occasionally between 1500 hrs and midnight, visibility 6,000 m, light rain and drizzle with broken cloud at 700 ft. In addition, between 1500 hrs and midnight there was a 40% chance of 3,000 m visibility with light drizzle, mist and broken cloud at 300 ft.

The aircraft took off from Eshott at 1527 hrs, and followed the coastline south. After flying for approximately 90 nm, the aircraft arrived abeam Filey on the east coast. The formation had discussed making a stop at Bridlington to assess the weather conditions which was a further 6 nm from Filey. At the time the aircraft was flying at a GPS altitude of approximately 850 ft and the pilot reported seeing cloud ahead almost down to sea level.

The pilot decided to turn around and head towards Durham but the cloud to the north had also descended. At this stage he decided to divert immediately but the available airfields were not appropriate due to their elevation and the cloud base. He decided to perform a precautionary landing in a field and after considering all options chose what he perceived to be a stubble field. This was in fact a standing crop and, on landing, the aircraft sank into the crop, causing it to roll over. Both occupants were suspended by their full harnesses but then escaped uninjured.



Figure 1

G-CCDH after impact

Prior to takeoff, the pilot considered that the weather forecast for the coming two days was unfavourable and this influenced his decision to get back to his home airfield. He considered the weather as “not ideal” but also thought that it would clear during the flight. In addition, he considered that the lower light levels and different appearance of the field from the air may have influenced the mis-identification of a suitable field for a precautionary landing.

AAIB comment

This accident highlights the need for careful weather and diversion planning when undertaking a cross-country flight. CAA Safety Sense Leaflet No 23, *‘Pilots – It’s Your Decision’* provides useful information on factors which may affect pilot decision making.