

Denney Kitfox, G-BSNO

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/97 Ref: EW/G97/07/09 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Denney Kitfox, G-BSNO

No & Type of Engines: 1 Rotax 582 piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1991

Date & Time (UTC): 9 July 1997 at 1745 hrs

Location: South-west of Sweethope Farm, Kelso

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - Serious - Passengers - Serious

Nature of Damage: Severe damage to the wings and the fuselage structure forward of the wing trailing edge attachment points

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence with Night Rating

Commander's Age: 36 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 619 hours (of which 367 were on type)

Last 90 days - 7 hours

Last 28 days - 5 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The accident occurred during take off from a farm strip in benign weather conditions. The strip was part of a large field of grass in which livestock were grazing. The longest take-off run available was along the north-west edge of the field which rose in altitude from 490 to 560 feet along the 500 metre strip. The pilot had flown from this strip several times before and had previously taken off in the same direction. He was aware of a large tree at the upwind and uphill end of the slope which he intended to avoid by keeping it on his left side. Just beyond the end of the strip and to the left of the tree was Sweethope Farm which rose steeply to 850 feet amsl within 200 metres of the end of the strip.

Before take off the pilot moved the livestock to a clear area. The aircraft became airborne after a normal 200 metre ground roll but at a height of between 30 to 40 feet agl it overflowed the sheep which began to run across the field. In order to avoid alarming the sheep too much, the pilot turned gently to his left but almost immediately he realised that he was now heading towards Sweethope Hill with no hope of out climbing the upslope. He reversed the direction of turn but then found the tall tree

directly ahead of him and at the same height. To avoid the tree he increased the bank to the right but as he did so the left wing stalled and the aircraft entered an incipient spin to the left. It struck the ground in a 45° nose-down attitude a few metres beyond the end of the strip beside the tree.

Both occupants were injured but they remained conscious. The pilot suffered a shattered left forearm and the passenger a broken right knee. Despite their injuries they were able to escape from the wreckage unaided and retire to a safe distance. There was no fire and the occupants were spared more serious injuries by the four-point seat harnesses which held during the heavy ground impact.