

No: 4/92

Ref: EW/G92/01/14

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Grob G109B, G-BLUV
No & Type of Engines: 1 Grob 2500-E1 piston engine
Year of Manufacture: 1985
Date & Time (UTC): 26 January 1992 at 1530 hrs
Location: Stapleford Tawney Airfield, Essex
Type of Flight: Private
Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 1
Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None
Nature of Damage: Splayed landing gear and propeller tip damage
Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age: 48 years
Commander's Flying Experience: 85 hours (of which 26 were on type)
Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot plus telephone enquiries to the Met Office.

The pilot obtained a weather forecast in a flying club premises which he interpreted as CAVOK conditions and a light wind from the north-east. He and his passenger departed for a short local flight which was constrained by a cloud base of 1700 feet. On their return to Stapleford some 30 minutes later, wisps of cloud were forming in the circuit area at about 700 feet agl. The pilot flew a low-level circuit beneath this cloud but on arrival at the threshold for runway 04 the aircraft floated for a long time, partly because the runway slopes downwards and partly because the airspeed was too high. The airbrakes were retracted and the pilot went around for a second attempt to land. This time the cloud base had apparently lowered to 450 feet agl and the pilot reduced the circuit height to remain beneath it. During the subsequent 'flat' final approach the airspeed decayed un-noticed by the pilot until he perceived that the point of touchdown would be in the undershoot. He retracted the airbrakes and applied full throttle but the aircraft sank, semi-stalled for about 10 feet and landed heavily, tail first, just before the perimeter track. The landing did not seem unduly hard to the pilot and so he taxied back to the normal parking spot. On vacating the aircraft he noticed the damage to the landing gear and to both propeller tips.

The TAF for nearby Stansted issued at 0900 hrs and valid for the period 1000-1900 hrs included a 30% probability of low stratus and 500 m visibility between 1000 and 1100 hrs with a gradual improvement to over 10 km visibility by 1300 hrs. A later amendment to this TAF and an amendment to the area forecast indicated the possibility of isolated but more persistent patches of fog and/or low stratus in the area. The pilot could not recall whether he had studied a Stansted TAF during his pre-flight briefing but by 1600 hrs the cloud over the airfield had dispersed.