

Jodel D120A, G-AVLY

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/97 Ref: EW/G97/07/22 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Jodel D120A, G-AVLY

No & Type of Engines: 1 Continental C90-14F piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1967

Date & Time (UTC): 25 July 1997 at 1130 hrs

Location: Harberton, Totnes, Devon

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - Minor - Passengers - Minor

Nature of Damage: Substantial to canopy, engine cowling and propeller with minor damage to rudder, upper fuselage and instrument panel

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 50 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 2,032 hours (of which 218 were on type)

Last 90 days - 12 hours

Last 28 days - 7 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft was en-route from a farm strip near Dorchester to RNAS Culdrose in good weather conditions. At 1125 hrs, in the vicinity of Newton Abbott, the pilot changed frequency to Plymouth Approach. As the aircraft approached the river Dart the engine note changed, the oil temperature increased and the oil pressure decreased. The pilot checked the magnetos and mixture etc. and selected the auxiliary fuel pump on. He then reduced power and attempted to 'nurse' the aircraft towards Plymouth airport, some 15 nm distant. As the aircraft reached Totnes there was a loud bang accompanied by heavy vibration. The pilot shut down the engine, transmitted a 'Mayday' on the Plymouth frequency and set the aircraft up for a forced landing into a field of standing barley.

The approach and touchdown were normal but the aircraft pitched inverted during the landing run crushing the canopy in the process. The pilot and passenger, who were wearing lap and diagonal seatbelts, vacated the aircraft with minor injuries. Their exit from the aircraft was through a small hole in the canopy as the normal escape hatches had become jammed in the accident.

Initial investigation of the engine has revealed a circumferential crack around the cylinder at the junction with the alloy cylinderhead which had allowed the head to detach from the cylinder and resulted in a loss of compression.