

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Pitts S-1C, G-BOZS	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-320-A2B piston engine	
Category:	1.3	
Year of Manufacture:	1976	
Date & Time (UTC):	2 September 2005 at 1440 hrs	
Location:	Bellarena Airfield, Northern Ireland	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Right main gear leg collapsed, propeller damaged and engine shockloaded	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	44 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,024 hours (of which 250 were on type) Last 90 days - 21 hours Last 28 days - 8 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further enquiries by the AAIB	

Following a local flight the pilot had returned to the airfield for a landing on Runway 31 (grass). The pilot estimated the wind to be approximately 5 to 6 kt from 040°. During the landing, as he initiated the flare, the aircraft ballooned and then descended rapidly resulting in a heavy touchdown. The suspension bungee attachment of the right main gear leg broke causing the right gear leg to collapse and the propeller to strike the ground. The aircraft rolled on its wheels for a further 23 m while veering to the right before coming to rest. The pilot was able to exit the aircraft unassisted.

The Pitts S-1C is an aerobatic bi-plane with a tailwheel landing gear configuration. The aircraft's configuration results in very poor over-the-nose visibility during the flare leading to pilots needing to rely on their view to the side of the aircraft to judge height before touchdown. The pilot stated that he probably misjudged his height during the flare because his perception of height was based on his view of a fence approximately 300 m to his left. Runway 31 sloped downwards and to the right in the direction of landing and the runway surface beneath the aircraft was lower than the base of this fence. The pilot stated that he felt he should have looked both left and right during the flare, better to judge his height above the ground.