

**No: 5/89**

**Ref: EW/C1098**

**Category: 3**

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** Pegasus XL-R Microlight, G-MTLF

**No & Type of Engines:** 1 Rotax 447 air-cooled piston engine

**Year of Manufacture:** 1987

**Date and Time (UTC):** 8 February 1989 at 1400 hrs

**Location:** Near Penistone, S Yorks

**Type of Flight:** Private (pleasure)

**Persons on Board:** Crew - 1                      Passengers - None

**Injuries:** Crew - 1 (fatal)                      Passengers - N/A

**Nature of Damage:** Extensive

**Commander's Licence:** Student Pilot

**Commander's Age:** 55 years

**Commander's Total Flying Experience:** Approximately 6 hours (of which all were on type)

**Information Source:** AAIB Field Investigation

In November 1988, the pilot who had no significant previous flying experience, started an approved course with the aim of gaining a Private Pilot's Licence Group D. Initial dual flying amounting to 4 hours was carried out on the school's Pegasus microlight. In December 1988, the pilot bought his own Pegasus and a further 2 hours dual were flown on that. The pilot's progress on the course was slower than normal due to tension and a general lack of awareness of what was going on around him and his instructor considered that he would probably need up to 20 hours of dual flying prior to solo. The instructor considered that at the time of the accident the pilot was well short of the standard required for solo flight having only started his take-off and landing training on his last instructional flight.

During a period of poor weather during which the pilot was unable to fly for some weeks, he telephoned his flying instructor and intimated that he might take his aircraft to a local field and fly it himself from there. His instructor states that he strongly advised him against this and pointed out the possible consequences. However, the owner of the land at the accident site states that the pilot flew G-LF from the site for about one hour on 31 January 1989 and again planned to fly on 2 February 1989 but was prevented from doing so by the prevailing weather.

On the day of the accident, the pilot left home telling his wife that he was going to a field where he had permission to fly. His stated intention was to test his new windsock and practice rigging and de-rigging

his microlight. He was later observed taxiing G-LF to and fro in a field before shutting down the engine. Some minutes later, he restarted the engine and took-off into a light southerly breeze. G-LF was observed by witnesses in two different locations to climb steeply to a height of about 50 feet before rolling to the left and striking the ground in a steep nose down attitude. The witness nearest the accident reports that the engine was running with a steady note throughout the short flight.

The pilot was severely injured by the impact and was pronounced Dead on Arrival at the local hospital. Post mortem examination revealed no medical factors that could have contributed to the accident.

When interviewed subsequent to the accident, the pilot's flying instructor was of the opinion that the pilot may well have been alarmed by the high rate of climb achieved by the Pegasus when flown solo as opposed to dual.

The aircraft had crashed in the centre of a level, rough grass field, at the head of a valley. The nosewheel had impacted at an angle of approximately 40 degrees below the horizontal, and had broken off. The aircraft had then pitched forward onto the apex of the wing which, at impact, was yawed to the left and had a 30 degree bank to the left. The propeller blades had fragmented and the pieces distributed up to 100 feet from the crash site. This, together with the evidence of ear witnesses, indicated that the engine was running at high power at the time of the crash.

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the extensive structural damage sustained by the microlight had occurred before impact