

No. 16

Lancashire Aircraft Corp., Ltd., Halifax C8 aircraft, AJZY,
crashed near Bovington Airport on 8 March 1951.
MCA Civil Aircraft Accident Report MCAP 94

Circumstances

The aircraft was en route from Torslanda airport, Gothenburg, to Bovington Airport, with a crew of 4 and carrying 174 frozen reindeer carcasses. On entering the Bovington area the Captain elected to use SBA for the let-down. The last instruction given to the aircraft by the Bovington controller was to descend to 2,000 feet and to report when over the SBA main beacon; no such report was made. The aircraft was seen 6 miles SW of Bovington flying at a low altitude, and a few seconds later it struck the ground. The crew were killed instantly, fire broke out and the aircraft was totally destroyed.

Investigation and Evidence

The weather situation at Bovington Airport at the time in question was wind - 060°, 20 kts; visibility - 3,000 yards; intermittent slight rain; clouds - 7/8 + at 500 feet, 8/8 stratus and strato-cumulus, base 700 to 1,000 feet above M.S.L.; tops 3,500 to 5,000 feet above M.S.L.; QNH - 999.1 mbs; QFE 980.5 mbs; the surface air temperature was approximately 39°F. and the freezing level 1,500 to 2,000 feet above M.S.L. From this height up to the cloud top, temperatures were between freezing point and about 27°F. Conditions were, therefore, favourable for ice formation, and the cloud formation was such that slight rime would have been expected generally, with moderate clear ice at times.

An inspection of the wreckage in situ showed that the aircraft had struck the ground while descending in what was probably the commencement of a steep right-hand spiral. Examination revealed nothing to suggest that any pre-crash failure or malfunctioning had occurred. The condition of the propellers indicated that they were turning under some degree of power at the moment of impact. It was ascertained that no de-icing equipment was installed on the propellers.

Probable Cause

There was insufficient evidence to determine the probable cause of the accident, however the possibility that ice formation was a contributory factor cannot be entirely dismissed.