

Aircraft type and registration: Britten-Norman BN2A-26 Islander G-BMDT

No & Type of engines: 2 Lycoming 0540 E4C5 piston engines

Year of Manufacture: 1985

Date and time (UTC): 13 June 1986 at 0415 hrs

Location: Walney Island aerodrome, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria

Type of flight: Positioning

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — None

Injuries: Crew — 1 (serious) Passengers — N/A

Nature of damage: Aircraft destroyed

Commander's Licence: Commercial Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 47 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 2658 hours (of which 936 were on type)

Information Source: AIB Field Investigation.

The aircraft took off from Glasgow at 0317 hrs to fly to Barrow-in-Furness via Dean Cross. It left Dean Cross at flight level 50 on track for Walney Island aerodrome using radar advisory service from Manchester Control. When 12 miles north of his destination, the pilot began a slow descent over a layer of stratus cloud. On reaching Walney Island, he was still above cloud so, using positional advice from radar, he turned out to sea to continue his descent. He turned back to the airfield, still in cloud at 1500 feet and, shortly after fading from radar at approximately 1200 feet over the sea, he advised Manchester Control that he was overhead the airfield.

Air traffic control at Walney Island was not manned at the time and no formal record of local weather exists. Witnesses close to the airfield reported that the wind was calm and visibility was reduced by patchy, low-lying, sea fog. One witness, some 600 metres south-west of the touchdown zone of runway 06, saw the aircraft flying due north at a height he estimated to be between 50 and 100 feet but heard nothing unusual. Another witness, also near the south-west corner of the airfield, heard the aircraft pass overhead travelling north and then heard a cessation of engine noise followed immediately by a dull thud. Both witnesses estimated the surface visibility to be no more than 200 metres at the time.

The aircraft struck the ground on the centreline but some 30 metres short of the beginning of runway 06 in a steep nose-down, left wing low attitude, and came to rest within 10 metres of the initial impact. Ground marks showed the first impact to have been by the port wingtip followed immediately by the nose of the aircraft, which was crushed. The aircraft appeared then to have pivoted to the right about the nose and starboard wingtip, and to have bounced laterally to the right of the centreline before coming to rest with its tail toward the runway. The flaps were set to 25°. The main undercarriage was relatively undamaged and showed no evidence of having

struck the ground during the initial impact sequence.

The pilot has not, up to this time, been able to recollect accurately the flight path of the aircraft immediately prior to the accident. His preceding flying activity had complied broadly with the guidelines for crew duty time, even though he had operated the aircraft on the route Barrow-Manchester-Glasgow-Barrow on each of the preceding 4 nights. Before that he had had 2 nights off following another sequence of 4 similar night flights.

The accident occurred approximately 35 minutes after sunrise, and the approach to runway 06 would have been towards the rising sun. Touchdown elevation on runway 06 at Walney Island is 47 feet and the undershoot area slopes up from the sea. Examination of the wreckage revealed no pre-existing defects on the aircraft that could have had any bearing on the accident.