

**Aircraft type and registration:** Ultraspot Puma, G-MMEO (single engined microlight)

**Year of manufacture:** 1983

**Date and time (GMT):** 26 October 1983 at 1223 hrs

**Location:** Leigh Park Farm, Sevenoaks, Kent

**Type of flight:** Private (Pleasure)

**Persons on board:** Crew — 1                      Passengers — Nil

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

**Nature of damage:** Aircraft destroyed

**Commander's Licence:** None (held BMAA Certificate 'A')

**Commander's Age:** 45 years

**Commander's total flying experience:** Approximately 30 hours (none on type)

The pilot had for some time owned and flown an Eagle microlight aircraft. He had also recently bought a new Puma aircraft, but had not yet flown it. The Puma differs from the Eagle in that it has a foot throttle and that control in the rolling plane is achieved by weight-shift. The pilot's regular instructor, however, owned a two seat weight-shift controlled microlight and had used it to familiarise the pilot with this form of control.

The Puma had been rigged and airtested during the morning on the day of the accident. The instructor who flew it reported no malfunctions and was satisfied that the subject pilot, following the previous dual instruction, was fit to carry out his first flight in the new machine.

The pilot first taxied up and down the field in order to acquaint himself with the feel of the Puma and then, following a discussion during which the instructor reminded him of the differences between this and his other microlight, he took off. The wind was 280°/3—5 kt and there was no turbulence.

After a very unstable initial climb, which the instructor ascribes to over controlling, the flight smoothed out and was continued to about 1,000 ft. The pilot then flew the aircraft, apparently very smoothly, in a wide circuit of the field ending on the extended approach path still at around 1,000 ft. The aircraft was then seen to enter a fairly tight spiral descent which continued for approximately 6—10 turns before hitting the ground. The pilot, although fatally injured, survived the impact and, during the short while it took for the ambulance to arrive, spoke in a very incoherent manner of cramp. He died in hospital a few hours later.

Subsequent examination of the wreckage revealed no pre-impact damage to the airframe, and the engine was successfully run for approximately ¼ hr under test conditions. A post-mortem examination of the pilot revealed no abnormalities thought to have contributed to the accident although one witness stated that the pilot was prone to bouts of cramp. It is not known if this occurred during the flight.