

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199802584**

**Beagle Aircraft Ltd
A61**

05 July 1998

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

Occurrence Number: 199802584 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Coldstream, (ALA)
State: VIC **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Sunday 05 July 1998
Time: 1530 hours **Time Zone** EST
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Beagle Aircraft Ltd
Aircraft Model: A61
Aircraft Registration: VH-WFM **Serial Number:** B628
Type of Operation: Non-commercial Pleasure/Travel
Damage to Aircraft: Substantial
Departure Point: Coldstream Vic.
Departure Time: 1500 EST
Destination: Coldstream Vic.

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on	
		Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	Private	243.0	416

Approved for Release: Thursday, December 17, 1998

The owner/pilot of the Beagle Terrier aircraft, having successfully completed a biennial flight review, departed for a local flight involving formation and scenic flying. The forecast and actual wind at the time was from the north at 15 to 20 kts, gusting to 35 kts. The pilot reported that flight conditions were "quite rough".

At the completion of local flying, the pilot manoeuvred the aircraft for a landing, configuring it with full flap and an approach speed of 50 kt. A witness to the approach observed that the aircraft was being flown very slowly when it was about 400 ft above the strip. When about 50 ft above the strip the aircraft developed a high rate of sink that the pilot was unable to arrest. The aircraft landed heavily, right wing low, breaking the right main landing gear and causing substantial damage to the engine, propeller and lower fuselage.

It was subsequently determined that the aircraft was not set up properly for an approach under the prevailing weather conditions. The pilot had not adequately considered of the effects of the gusting wind, or the low level wind shear, even though he was aware of the forecast winds and prevailing conditions.

The Beagle Terrier was a development of the Auster series of aircraft which had a reputation for being able to be flown slowly. Over the years, there have been many accidents, some fatal, as a result of pilots losing control while flying too slowly, at too low an altitude, to effect a safe recovery.



With the Beagle Terrier version of the Auster, the danger of flying too slowly is magnified because the aircraft is heavier than other Auster models. When flying speed is lost the Beagle Terrier abruptly achieves a very high rate of descent, as was experienced on the day of the accident. Because of the unexpected abrupt increase in the rate of descent, the pilot did not have enough time to assess the problem and apply power to recover before the aircraft landed heavily.

Local safety action

As a result of this and other similar occurrences the Antique Aeroplane Association of Australia prepared a "Safety Alert" to warn its members of the inherent problems with low and slow flight, particularly in Auster and Beagle Terrier aircraft. The "Safety Alert" was published in the association's magazine "Rag and Tube".

