

FINAL REPORT

AAIU Synoptic Report No: 2003-014

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In accordance with the provisions of SI 205 of 1997, the Chief Inspector of Accidents, on 21 July 2003, appointed Frank Russell as the Investigator-in-Charge to carry out a Field Investigation into this occurrence and prepare a Synoptic Report.

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Stinson 108-3, EI-CGC	
No. and Type of Engines:	1x Franklin 6A 165 B4	
Aircraft Serial Number:	108 - 5243	
Year of Manufacture:	1948	
Date and Time (UTC):	20 July 2003, @ 1535 hrs	
Location:	Kilrush airfield, Co. Kildare	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - One	Passengers - One
Injuries:	Crew - Minor	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Substantial to wing struts, propeller, tail fin, possible shock loading of engine	
Commander's Licence:	USA FAA, Private Pilot	
Commander's Age:	67 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1500 hours of which 100 were on type	
Information Source:	Station Manager, ATC Dublin. Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the Pilot	

History of the Flight

The pilot had earlier that day flown with his passenger in a different aircraft to Kilkenny Airfield and then returned to Kilrush. Here, they boarded the Stinson, a vintage “tail dragger” aircraft, with the intention, in the pilot’s words, of carrying out one circuit onto Runway 11. On very short finals, he recalled, an extremely

FINAL REPORT

strong downdraught forced his aircraft into the ground, just short of the runway. The ground in question was, in fact, a field of oats over three feet high. The mainwheels dug into the soft ground and the aircraft inverted. The aircraft was substantially damaged. The pilot and passengers exited the aircraft unaided. There was no fire.

The accident was coincidentally witnessed by the pilot of an Air Corps operated Garda Air Support Unit Defender aircraft. He observed the light aircraft making its approach to Runway 11 and crashing short of the runway in a cereal field. On impact, he witnessed the aircraft flipping over on its back. As he was circling, he did not observe anybody departing the aircraft so his crew called Newbridge Garda Station for a patrol car and an ambulance. Prior to landing on Runway 19 to render immediate assistance, the pilot informed ATC Dublin of what had occurred and of his intentions. However, on landing, it became clear to this witness that both persons from the crashed aircraft were clear of the aircraft and safe. The witness then approached the Stinson, saw that a cabin light was still on and so switched off the aircraft battery and withdrew. He noted that the Stinson pilot, who had a superficial head wound, and his passenger appeared to be in shock. Finally, the witness noted that, from observing the windsock and based on his landing, the wind was gentle from a steady Southeasterly direction.

Damage to Aircraft

There was external damage to both wings and suspected internal damage to the starboard wing and to the port wing lift struts. The propeller was bent in two directions, one blade forward and the other rearwards. The spinner had disintegrated and the propeller was misaligned with the aircraft centerline. Oil was leaking from the engine and a stripdown of the engine would be required.

There was extensive damage to the rudder and fin area as a result of the overturning of the aircraft on landing. There may also be damage to the frame of the aircraft which will only be revealed when the outer fabric has been removed. The firewall requires further examination when the engine has been removed. The engine frame was bent to port.

Flight Permit – Ireland

Under the Irish Aviation Authority (Airworthiness of Aircraft) Order 1996, Classic and Vintage Aircraft only, the IAA can issue a Flight Permit for classic or vintage aircraft to operate within the State without a Certificate of Airworthiness, subject to certain conditions and limitations. Stinson 108-3, EI-CGC, had such a Permit No. 9051 which, the investigation notes, was only valid until 9 January 2003.