

BIRD STRIKE COMMITTEE EUROPE

LONDON, 24-28 May 1976

Ref BSCE/11-WP/21

ACCIDENT TO HS 125 EXECUTIVE JET

J Thorpe - UK

SUMMARY

This Paper contains a brief description of the HS 125 Executive Jet accident at Dunsfold on 20th November 1975.

Accident at Dunsfold Aerodrome to Hawker Siddeley 125-600B  
Executive Jet, G-BCUX on 20th November 1975

1. Dunsfold Aerodrome

- 1.1 The aerodrome is situated in the County of Surrey approx 20 nautical miles South of Heathrow Airport. It is a private aerodrome owned by the Ministry of Defence, leased to and operated by Hawker Siddeley Aviation as a test centre for civil and military aircraft, and as such is not subject to Civil Aviation Authority Licensing procedures. It has a main runway 07/25 of 2127 metres.
- 1.2 The hazard of birds was appreciated at Dunsfold, which had areas of long grass as a deterrent, as well as regular use of gas cannon, shell crackers and broadcast bird distress calls.

2. Circumstances of Accident

- 2.1 There had been activity on the aerodrome by a Harrier jump-jet aircraft and a HS748 twin turboprop immediately prior to the HS125 taking off. Neither of the HS125 pilots nor the Control Tower staff had observed any birds likely to affect the 125, however as the aircraft started its take-off roll two witnesses at different points on the aerodrome observed flocks of birds rise from the ground in confused flight at different places likely to affect the aircraft. The aircraft took-off at 16.11 GMT (sunset 16.04) from runway 07 carrying 7 passengers and 2 crew, and lifted-off at approx the half-way point at 122 kts. At a height of between 50 and 100 ft, after undercarriage had been retracted, the aircraft passed through a flock of birds, which the pilot had seen just prior to impact, with no chance to take avoiding action. There were multiple strikes and both engines surged and completely lost power. The pilot (Commercial Pilot's Licence 11,848 hours and 1327 on HS125), landed straight ahead after selecting undercarriage and flaps down, and the aircraft touched down approx 180 metres before the runway end at a speed of approx 120 knots. The aircraft crossed the end of the runway and continued in a straight line across two grass fields and through three hedges before crossing the A281 main road which

runs North-South about 285 metres from the end of the runway. The aircraft crossed the road at 80 to 90 kts striking a car which was travelling south. The car was demolished and the 6 occupants killed instantly. The undercarrigage was torn off the aircraft which continued on its belly for a further 150 metres before coming to rest. Although fire had broken out on impact with the car, all nine occupants of the aircraft safely evacuated the aircraft before the fire spread. The aircraft was largely destroyed by fire.

### 3. Subsequent Findings

- 3.1 An inspection of the aerodrome revealed 11 dead lapwings (*vanellus vanellus*) in the area corresponding with the impact. The average weight of the birds was found to be 250 gms.
- 3.2 Examination of the engines revealed traces of bird debris in both engines, together with other debris from the hedges. The engines had not suffered any major internal damage.
- 3.3 During the take-off the landing lights and the High Intensity Strobe Anti-collision lights were ON.