

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Cessna 180K Skywagon, G-BKMM	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Continental O-470-U piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1977	
Date & Time (UTC):	3 November 1994 at 1216 hrs	
Location:	Carncormick, Ballymena, County Antrim	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passenger - 1
Injuries:	Crew - Fatal	Passenger - Serious
Nature of Damage:	Aircraft destroyed	
Commander's Licence:	Commercial Pilot's Licence with Instrument Rating	
Commander's Age:	54 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	Approximately 7,146 hours (of which 176 were on type) Last 90 days - 79 hours Last 28 days - 18 hours	
Information Source:	AAIB Field Investigation	

The pilot was the owner of the aircraft, which was kept in a hangar at his home and flown from the adjacent airstrip. Prior to this flight, the right-hand door and front right seat had been removed in order to facilitate the dropping of articles from the aircraft.

The pilot had first met the passenger at a grouse shoot on 12 August 1994. During conversation, the passenger indicated that he was able to supply a quantity of chicken grit for the grouse. The passenger was subsequently invited along for his first flight in a light aircraft. He brought some 15 to 20 bags of chicken grit, each weighing some 7 lb, to the airstrip and these were loaded into the aircraft. A large plastic open container filled with chicken and rabbit carcasses was placed in the front right location, and the bags of grit were distributed behind it, and behind the rear seat. The intention was to drop these, along with the carcasses, over the moor land used for the grouse shoot.

The passenger occupied the rear seat behind the pilot, but did not use the rear seat lap harness. He restrained the carcass container during takeoff, and was intending to pass the paper sacks to the pilot for dropping during the flight. The pilot was wearing a pair of industrial rubber gloves and wellington boots, and was restrained by a lap and diagonal shoulder harness.

A neighbour reported that the aircraft departed at around 1200 hrs, heading northwest. It made a wide sweep to the right around the town of Broughshane and then headed north-north-east. The aircraft was observed by eyewitnesses at around 1215 hrs flying at low level up the valley over gently rising ground towards the Quolie reservoirs. The cloudbase was reported as being low, and it was noted that the cloud was covering the tops of the surrounding hills, but the visibility below the cloud was reported as being good.

The passenger reported that the aircraft entered cloud about 5 minutes after takeoff. He stated that the pilot did not attempt to put the aircraft into a climb, but did go quiet. Suddenly, the aircraft came into the clear again. The hillside and a stone wall were seen to be very close and directly ahead. The wheels seemed to make contact with the stone wall and the passenger blacked out. When he recovered consciousness, he found that he had been thrown clear of the wreckage, but had sustained severe head and chest injuries. After recovering sufficiently to walk, he made his way up the hillside towards the wreckage to ascertain the condition of the pilot, and then went down the hill to a nearby farm house to seek assistance.

There was no fire, but the pilot sustained fatal injuries during the impact sequence. The post-mortem did not reveal any condition that could have resulted in pilot incapacitation prior to the accident.

No permission had been sought from or granted by the Civil Aviation Authority in order to exempt the flight from the provisions of the Air Navigation Order (1993) Article 43, Dropping of articles and animals.

An aftercast from the Met Office indicated that at the time of the accident, there was a fresh to strong moist southeasterly airstream over the area, with general visibility 8 to 10 km, occasional rain and drizzle, scattered or broken cloudbase 500 to 700 feet amsl, broken cloudbase 1,200 to 1,500 feet with tops at 2,500 feet, and an overcast layer base 4,000 feet. The surface wind was from 120°/15 to 20 kt, and the wind at 2,000 feet from 140°/35 to 40 kt. The surface temperature was 13°C.

From the eyewitness accounts, the aircraft was initially heading north-north-east up the valley, but the wreckage trail indicated that the final track after flying in cloud was 286°M. With the prevailing wind conditions, the aircraft had a tailwind component at the time of impact.

Examination of the accident site and aircraft wreckage

The aircraft impacted the ascending southeastern facing slope of Cloneytrace Hill, Carncormick at an elevation of around 920 feet amsl, with approximately 7 degrees of bank to the right and the nose pitched up approximately 15 degrees. The first impact was with a dry stone wall and the hillside. At this first impact the right-hand tailplane, both main landing gears and the propeller were removed from the aircraft. Following this initial impact the aircraft bounced, becoming airborne for about 75 feet prior to impacting the hillside a second time with the forward lower fuselage area. The aircraft bounced a second time before finally impacting the steep bank of a sunken farm track which caused it to become inverted.

Examination of the main wreckage on site showed that at the time of initial impact the aircraft was in a serviceable condition. A reasonable quantity of Mogas was found in both fuel tanks, and the fuel selector was selected to BOTH. The condition of the propeller and the cockpit engine controls indicated that the engine was producing a significant amount of power. There were no indications of a flying control restriction or any disconnection. The cockpit instrumentation and selections were found to be consistent with the flight being undertaken. The engine, propeller and GPS navigation unit were removed for further examination.

Examination of the engine, propeller and GPS navigation unit

The engine and its peripheral components were examined in detail and were found to be in a good and serviceable condition. Examination of the propeller revealed that at impact it had been rotating under high power.

The GPS navigation unit was taken to its European manufacturer's facility and was found to have been switched on and working correctly at impact. The final position data was retrieved from the unit's memory and this indicated that it was last updated at 1216 hrs UTC on the day of the accident. The normal update period is between 1.2 and 15 seconds. The last position recorded was adjacent to the accident site. Numerous waypoints were stored in the unit but none was relevant to this flight, except for the aircraft's operating base, which was bearing 199°M and 6.27 nm distant from the accident site.