

Aircraft Crash - London Heathrow Airport

17th January 2008 at 12.42 pm

Boeing 777-236 G-YMMM

Speedbird 038 PEK - LHR

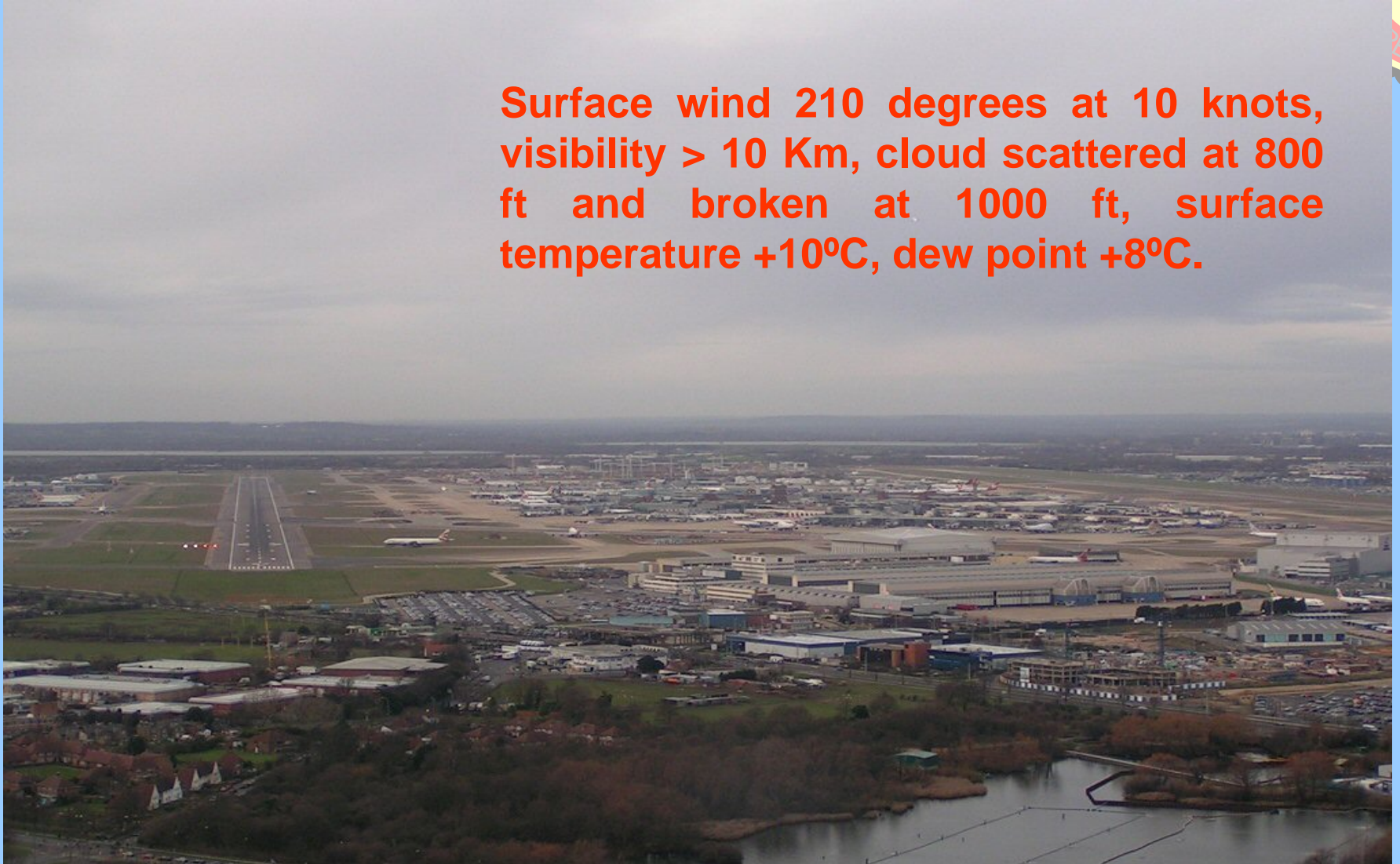


Following an uneventful flight from Beijing, China, the aircraft was established on an ILS approach to Runway 27L at London Heathrow.



Initially the approach progressed normally, with the autopilot and auto throttle engaged, the auto throttles commanded an increase in thrust from both engines.

Surface wind 210 degrees at 10 knots, visibility > 10 Km, cloud scattered at 800 ft and broken at 1000 ft, surface temperature +10°C, dew point +8°C.



The engines initially responded but, at a height of approximately 720 feet, the thrust of the right engine reduced. Some seven seconds later, the thrust reduced on the left engine to a similar level.



The engines did not shut down and both engines continued to produce thrust at an engine speed above flight idle, but less than that commanded. Neither engine responded to input from the crew.



With the airspeed decaying, the aircraft descended rapidly and struck the ground, some 1,000 ft short of the paved runway surface, just inside the airfield boundary fence.



During the impact and short ground roll the nose gear collapsed.



The right main landing gear separated from the aircraft breaking into two main pieces, one part of which struck the fuselage & horizontal stabiliser.



The left main landing gear was pushed up through the wing.



The aircraft came to rest on the paved surface in the undershoot area of Runway 27L facing North West.



Aircraft stopped here

A significant amount of fuel leaked from the aircraft after it came to rest, but there was no fire.



The cabin crew began an emergency evacuation where all one hundred and thirty six passengers and sixteen crew members left the aircraft via the emergency slides.

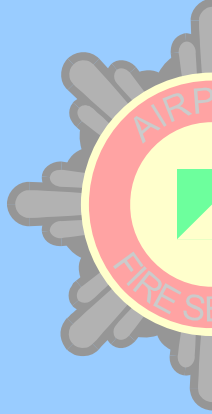


All slides deployed correctly; eight passengers received minor injuries, one suffered a broken leg. Four crew sustained minor injuries.





Passengers evacuated to
either side of aircraft



The Airport Fire Service were quickly on scene supported by Airfield Operations and Police who instigated survivor reception procedures.



The Airport Fire Service maintained readiness due to the ruptured rear right wall of the centre fuel tank caused when the right main landing gear separated from the aircraft.



The aircraft's engines were of primary concern for the investigation and had sustained significant damage in the crash with the weight of the aircraft supported on them. The right had obvious damage.



There was a significant debris field that would require professional examination and recovery.



The Police deployed a Forward Support Vehicle at the Joint Emergency Services Control Centre (J.E.S.C.C.) to provide conference facilities and technical support.



As night fell on the first day, the Air Accident Investigation Branch were present along with the British Airways Aircraft Recovery team. The scene was illuminated for preservation and safety.



The interior of the aircraft revealed little apparent damage throughout. In world traveller;



In world traveller plus;



And also on the flight deck;



The only visible compromise in the cabins integrity was by Row 29 and Row 30 adjacent to seat K.



The decision was taken to introduce an inner cordon with cones to provide immediate security of the hazard area, to protect the **evidential scene and to prevent unauthorised access.**



The baggage in the rear hold was removed and jacks placed to stabilise the aircraft for recovery.



Runway 27 Left was using a reduced length which permitted aircraft to continue to take off.



Just after last light on the second day, two large cranes were positioned to support the front of the aircraft whilst work to remove damaged parts continued.



The morning of day three, the nose wheel had been removed through the night and the aircraft jacked up in preparation for the recovery phase.



The Royal Air Force Aircraft Recovery and Transportation Flight from St Athan, Wales recovered the evidence from the debris field.



As dawn broke on the fourth day the aircraft has been elevated sufficiently and the debris removed to allow the aircraft to be recovered and moved by specialist equipment.



As full light was achieved final preparations for the recovery were being made with the specialised equipment being readied.



The RAF Aircraft and Transportation Flight were working hard to complete the recovery of the debris field in preparation for the restoration of normality .



The transporters were then positioned, one under the tail followed by one under each engine under the close supervision of the A.A.I.B.



With all three transporters in place, the jacks were removed and remaining personnel moved back.

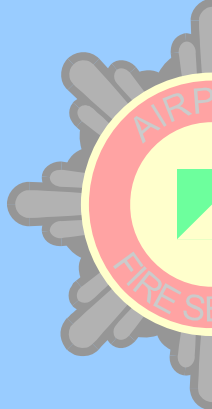


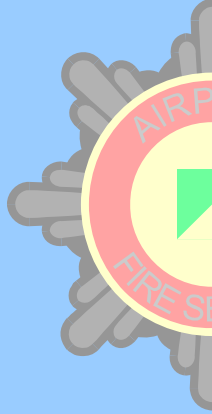
At 4.07 pm the aircraft was carefully manoeuvred from its crash location to the British Airways maintenance facility nearby with the whole process being completed in just 33 minutes.



“ Be careful not to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory “







Airport Fire Manager
John Trew
Heathrow Airport

