

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** Cessna 182M Skylane, G-AXEC  
**No & Type of Engines:** 1 Continental O-470-R piston engine  
**Year of Manufacture:** 1969  
**Date & Time (UTC):** 28 January 1993 at 1720 hrs  
**Location:** 4 nm north east of Belfast City Airport  
**Type of Flight:** Private  
**Persons on Board:** Crew - 1 Passengers - None  
**Injuries:** Crew - Fatal Passengers - N/A  
**Nature of Damage:** Aircraft not recovered  
**Commander's Licence:** Private Pilot's Licence with Night rating  
**Commander's Age:** 53 years  
**Commander's Flying Experience:** Approximately 1,000 hours  
**Information Source:** AAIB Field Investigation

### History of the flight

On 6 January 1993, G-AXEC ('EC') had been flown from its normal base at Newtownards to Movenis for some minor rectification. The work was completed a few days before the accident flight but the aircraft was not immediately collected because of poor weather and pilot availability. Eventually it was arranged between the present owner and the previous owner, who had flown the aircraft to Movenis, that the previous owner would fly 'EC' back to Newtownards.

At approximately 1420 hrs on 28 January the pilot (the previous owner) was collected from the car park at Newtownards Airport by a friend who had arranged to drive him to Movenis. During the drive the pilot commented on the poor weather, but after seeing another light aircraft flying overhead he remarked that the weather looked "OK". They arrived at Movenis at approximately 1545 hrs and immediately brought 'EC' out of the hangar and checked it for flight. The aircraft had not been refuelled during its time at Movenis and the friend asked the pilot if he needed any fuel; he received no reply and assumed that the pilot would check the fuel gauges in the cockpit. The pilot normally carried maps and flight documents with him and on this occasion he put two small cases in the aircraft. Prior to entering the cockpit the pilot showed his map to his friend and told him that, if the weather was poor

he intended to fly to the east of Bangor, over the sea, descend and follow the coastline south before flying up Strangford Lough to Newtownards.

The aircraft was started at approximately 1610 hrs, and after some power checks, took-off at 1620 hrs. The first radio contact with 'EC' was at 1706 hrs when the pilot called Belfast City Airport on the approach control frequency. He reported that he was circling to the east of Newtownards, was unable to get in there because of the weather and requested a diversion to Belfast City. The radar controller instructed the pilot to maintain VMC until a possible conflict with another aircraft was resolved, and then instructed him to take up a heading of 290° and to climb to 3,000 feet amsl on the QNH 1005mb. 'EC' was then identified and subsequently given headings to fly for an ILS approach for runway 22 at Belfast. Initially he was descended to 2,000 feet amsl and then, as he passed Bangor, was cleared to 1,500 feet on the QFE 1005mb. The radar controller then vectored the aircraft to a final closing heading of 255° towards the ILS Localiser. At approximately 7 nm from touchdown the pilot of 'EC' asked for the ILS frequency and this was given to him. The aircraft then passed through the extended centre-line and the pilot was instructed to turn left onto 200° and cleared to descend to 1,000 feet. The pilot reported contact with the localiser when he was between 4 and 4.5 nm range but stated that he had no glideslope. He was instructed to commence descent for a 3° glideslope and was given an advisory height of 1,250 feet at 4 nm; this was acknowledged by the pilot. Shortly afterwards the pilot of G-KEYS, who was flying from Prestwick to Newtownards, started talking to the Belfast controller on the approach frequency. During this communication, which lasted approximately 15 seconds, the controller noted an intermittent radar paint between 3 and 4 nm and, when he had finished speaking with the pilot of G-KEYS, advised 'EC' at 1719 hrs that he should be passing 950 feet at 3 nm range. There was no reply and the controller could no longer see any radar evidence of 'EC'. After repeated unsuccessful radio calls to 'EC', emergency action was initiated at 1722 hrs.

### **Meteorological Conditions**

An aftercast of the weather in the area at the time was obtained from The Meteorological Office at Bracknell and showed light winds with a visibility of 5,000 metres or less with local fog patches and cloud between 600 feet and 14,000 feet; the air was saturated between 1,500 feet and 8,000 feet providing the potential for severe carburettor icing. The current weather was passed to 'EC' by the Belfast controller and included a visibility of 3,500 metres, 5 okta of cloud at 800 feet and 7 okta at 1,100 feet.

### **Search and Rescue**

The search and rescue operation was co-ordinated by the Coastguard Control Centre at Bangor. The

initial search was concentrated around the last known radar position of 'EC' which was above Belfast Lough, but with no success was expanded to overland. The only aircraft wreckage to be recovered was found on the morning of 31 January 1993 when a nose wheel and a main wheel were located independently by a lifeboat and another vessel; these finds were just outside Belfast Lough and, considering the tidal flow, were consistent with the crash occurring near where radar contact had been lost. Nothing else was found until the afternoon of 31 January 1993 when a body was sighted in the sea just off the southern entrance to Belfast Lough; this was later positively identified as the pilot of 'EC'.

### **Pilot information**

The pilot obtained a Private Pilot's Licence in 1976 and was issued with a night rating and an Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC) rating in 1977. Additionally he received an Assistant Flying Instructor rating in 1978, and in 1986 was issued with an Instrument Rating (IR). In July 1991 both his IR and IMC ratings were notified as being expired. Current endorsements and flying hours could not be ascertained as the pilot's log book and licence have not been found.

Post mortem examination revealed no pre-existing medical condition which could have contributed to the accident.