ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Cessna 310R, G-BGTT
No & Type of Engines:	2 Continental Motors Corp IO-520-MB piston engines
Year of Manufacture:	1979
Date & Time (UTC):	1 February 2011 at 1243 hrs
Location:	Jersey Airport
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Left engine, left flap, left aileron and left main fuel tank
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	68 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	2,116 hours (of which 2 were on type) Last 90 days - 29 hours Last 28 days - 5 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot; information and reports provided by Jersey ATC; photographs supplied by third party

Synopsis

The pilot experienced difficulties with radio communications during the flight and was forced to divert to Jersey due to poor weather at his intended destination of Guernsey. The left landing gear collapsed during the landing at Jersey. It was determined that the aircraft had been unused for an extended period prior to the flight and that the landing gear pivot bearings were lacking in lubrication.

History of the flight

The aircraft was on a positioning flight from Exeter to Guernsey. Exeter ATC lost radio contact with the aircraft whilst it was en route. The pilot subsequently contacted Jersey Zone. No transponder signal was being received from the aircraft and so it was identified using the turn method. As the weather at Guernsey was below the minima for Special VFR (SVFR) flight within that zone and for an ILS approach by the aircraft, Guernsey ATC gave the pilot weather information for Jersey and Alderney. A very recent TAF for Jersey, indicating deteriorating weather, was also provided. The pilot then requested a diversion to Jersey.

The pilot was given a SVFR clearance into the Channel Islands Control Zone and asked to confirm that he could operate IFR if required. He confirmed that

he could. Control was handed to Jersey Approach when the aircraft was some 20 nm east north-east of Guernsey. The pilot was given vectors to remain clear of traffic on ILS approaches into Guernsey. He was asked to either advise when he had the island (Jersey) in sight, or to request vectors for an ILS approach. The pilot requested vectors when approximately 20 nm north north-east of Jersey. Thereafter, continuing problems occurred with radio communication and with the aircraft failing to track as expected when given headings by ATC. Jersey Approach then resorted to use of their emergency handset and improved two-way communication was established.

The pilot was instructed to fly at an altitude of 2,000 ft and to report when level. Following a further request by Jersey Approach, he confirmed that he was level at that altitude. Approach Control then co-ordinated with Tower Control to identify the aircraft on radar whilst it was positioning for the ILS at Jersey. Approach Control advised Tower Control that the pilot was having difficulty complying with heading instructions and with radio communications.

The aircraft became established on the ILS at 9 nm DME and at 8 nm the pilot was given the visibility and cloud base of 6,000 m and broken cloud at 1,400 ft respectively. He was then instructed to contact the Jersey Tower frequency. When the aircraft was at 6 nm, Approach Control called Tower Control to confirm that the pilot had successfully changed frequency. The aircraft was found to be still tuned to the Approach frequency and was again requested to change. The tower controller then reported that the aircraft transmissions could be heard, but no responses were being received. When Tower Control resorted to their emergency handset, successful communication was achieved.

The aircraft was cleared to land with a reported cloud base of 900 ft and horizontal visibility in excess of 1,500 m.

Both the pilot and observers in the control tower considered the subsequent touchdown to be smooth. The pilot reported, however, that as the weight settled onto the landing gear, the left gear green light extinguished, the red gear unsafe warning light came on and the gear warning horn sounded. The left gear then collapsed and the left propeller contacted the runway.

The pilot further reported that he closed the throttles and pulled back the mixture and propeller levers as the aircraft departed the left side of the runway. He then moved the fuel selectors to the 'OFF' position, selected all switches off and vacated the aircraft. Although a transmission was made to Jersey Tower, no response was received.

Subsequent analysis of RT recordings from the Jersey Tower confirmed that the final radio transmission was audible but that the tower controller was fully engaged in alerting the airport fire service of the incident and so did not hear the pilot's call.

It is understood that the normal transmission and receipt of signals on both Approach and Tower frequencies is from pairs of antennae positioned at different locations on the island. The emergency handsets both communicate only via antennae positioned on the control tower.

Engineering information

Examination of the damaged aircraft by a third party determined that extensive corrosion of landing gear components was present and there was no evidence of any recent lubrication of the pivot bearings within the landing gear mechanism.

The Airworthiness Review Certificate for the aircraft had expired on 14 June 2009. Following a period of idleness, the aircraft was issued with an EASA Permit to Fly, by the CAA, on 7 January 2011. The Permit was valid until 6 February 2011 and was for the purpose of positioning for major servicing.