

Piper PA-28-140, G-SCPL

AAIB Bulletin No: 5/2000 Ref: EW/G99/12/14 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-28-140, G-SCPL

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-320-E3D piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1977

Date & Time (UTC): 18 December 1999 at 1432 hrs

Location: Gloucester Airport

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew 1 - Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew None - Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Nose leg broken off; propeller destroyed and engine shockloaded; both wingtips damaged

Commander's Licence: Private Pilots Licence

Commander's Age: 55 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 128 hours (All on type)

Last 90 days - 7 hours

Last 28 days - 1 hours

Information Source: Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and telephone enquiries by the AAIB

The pilot arrived earlier for his planned local flight and completed a comprehensive pre-flight check on G-SCPL; no unserviceabilities were detected. The weather was good with a surface wind of 100°/5 kt and no cloud below 3,000 feet agl.

After an uneventful take off and general handling in the local area, the pilot noted a gradual deterioration in visibility and decided to return to the airport. With ATC clearance, he joined through the 'overhead' for Runway 09. There were no other aircraft in the circuit and the pilot selected full flap as he turned finals. He recalled that his airspeed was indicating 65 kt and that the PAPIs were showing two reds and two whites as he made his "finals" call. His approach remained stable up to the threshold, where he reduced power to idle and flared the aircraft. On contact with

the ground, the nose seemed to pitch down and the pilot was aware of the aircraft veering to the left and then of the right wingtip hitting the ground. During this time, the pilot considered that the controls did not feel positive and that he had no apparent directional control. The aircraft went off the runway to the left and came to rest with the nosewheel collapsed.

Subsequent to the accident, nosewheel scuff marks and propeller strikes were detected on the runway. Additionally, the repair agency detected no obvious signs of any pre-existing damage within the nose leg assembly. Finally, neither the pilot nor his passenger, who is a student pilot, considered that the landing was particularly hard and both were certain that the stall warning 'buzzer' did not activate during the flare or landing.

Despite considerable reflection, the pilot could not identify any single action which resulted in the accident. Nevertheless, he has since flown with a QFI, to review and practice his landing technique, and has now renewed his self-confidence.