

Reims Aviation SA Cessna F172M, G-BEBI

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/2002	Ref: EW/G2002/08/02	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Reims Aviation SA Cessna F172M, G-BEBI	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-320-E2D piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1976	
Date & Time (UTC):	4 August 2002 at 1633 hrs	
Location:	West Road, Clacton, Essex	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 3
Injuries:	Crew Nil	Passengers 3 Minor
Nature of Damage:	Aircraft damaged beyond economic repair	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilots Licence (Aeroplanes)	
Commander's Age:	54 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	902 hours (of which 333 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 54 hours	
	Last 28 days - 18 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The pilot, who was part owner of the aircraft, and three friends planned a landaway flight from Elstree, Hertfordshire to Clacton, Essex. The weather was fine, and the pilot had flown into Clacton previously and was therefore familiar with the airfield's local features and noise sensitive areas.

On arrival at Clacton the wind was a light easterly with Runway 18 in use. Runway 18 has a 610 metre grass surface, but the landing threshold is displaced and the landing distance available is 502 metres. The final third of the runway has a slight down slope.

In an attempt to reduce noise disturbance, the pilot set the aircraft up on a steep, glide approach, but he found s-turns were required to achieve a satisfactory approach path, and he therefore carried out a go around. The second approach was also steep, but the aiming point appeared to be just short of the displaced threshold and although the speed was some 10-15 kt fast, the pilot decided to continue and "decelerate in the flare and hold-off".

During the extended flare the pilot lost sight of the airfield boundary and was not aware of how much runway remained (eyewitnesses estimated that the initial touchdown was beyond the midpoint of the runway). Once he lowered the nosewheel, the pilot immediately appreciated the close proximity of the airfield boundary hedge and initially attempted to steer to the right to avoid impact, but he changed his mind and applied power to carry out a go around.

The aircraft struck the boundary hedge and a lamp post, crossed a road and came to rest in a hedge on the far side of the road having suffered extensive damage. The pilot turned off the fuel and electrics and with two of the passengers vacated the aircraft. There were no signs of fire, and the elderly third passenger remained in the aircraft until medical assistance became available. He was eventually assisted to vacate the aircraft and taken to hospital for overnight observation.

In a very frank and helpful report the pilot felt that the following factors contributed to the accident:

- Too much concern about noise abatement.
- Continuing a steep, glide approach.
- Loss of sight of the airfield boundary hedge during the flare.
- Late attempt at a go-around.