

No: 6/89 **Ref: EW/G89/04/20** **Category: 1c**

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-24-260, G-ATIA

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming IO-540-D4A5 piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1964

Date and Time (UTC): 5 January 1989 at 1610 hrs

Location: Leicester Airport

Type of Flight: Training

Persons on Board: Crew - 2 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Wheels up landing - propeller damaged beyond repair, minor damage to two fuselage frames and bottom skin panels

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence with IMC and Night Ratings

Commander's Age: 50 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 11,000 hours (of which 6 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

On 5 January 1989, G-ATIA was damaged in a wheels up landing at Leicester Airport. The Pilot-in-Command completed a detailed account of the circumstances leading up to the accident and included pertinent prevention action. His report is published verbatim.

"The detail was to practise instrument flight with new screens. The cloudbase had been reported at East Midlands to be 2 octas at 2500 feet one hour previously. A pilot who had just landed from circuit flying said that there were patches of cloud down to 800 feet AGL. It was decided to commence the detail subject to termination should conditions deteriorate further.

We remained in the circuit at 800 feet and the aircraft was navigated by the safety pilot giving headings to steer. After several approaches had been made to Runway 28 the cloudbase was lowering and it was decided to terminate the detail. Since the wind had increased and also backed somewhat, it was felt prudent to make the landing on 24 which although short, had been used without problem in the past with a 15-20 knot headwind component. The Safety Pilot requested that he do the landing and the aircraft was positioned by him for an approach to Runway 24.

As light was failing, the panel and navigation lights were switched on and as with most single engined Piper aircraft, this caused the undercarriage indicator lights to be dimmed. The handling pilot requested that the Captain call out the speeds as he was not able to read the ASI clearly from the right hand seat in the ambient light. He selected 'undercarriage down', full flap and made the landing checks. The captain called the speeds at five mph intervals, no undercarriage warning horn was heard by either pilot and they were not aware of a problem until the propeller struck the ground at 60 mph and a wheels-up landing was made. No injuries were sustained by either pilot.

The undercarriage switch was subsequently found to be in the neutral position indicating that although it had been moved from the 'up' position, it had not passed through neutral into the 'down' position. It was concluded that any undercarriage indication seen by the handling pilot from the right-hand seat must have been a reflection from other lights and not a dimmed green light as he thought.

After discussion with the repairers it has been decided to modify the wiring to the undercarriage down lock indicator light such that only the up lock light is dimmed when the panel lights are switched on, thus eliminating the possibility of a similar mistake being made in future."

Approval for this modification, the intention of which is supported by AAIB, is currently being sought from the CAA.