

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-28-161 Warrior, G-ELZN	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-320-D3G piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1984	
Date & Time (UTC):	13 June 2007 at 2015 hrs	
Location:	Near Fosdyke, Lincolnshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 3
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Damage to propeller, right wing, right main landing gear and nose landing gear	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	32 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	80 hours (of which 8 were on type) Last 90 days - 14 hours Last 28 days - 3 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The aircraft flew into bad weather, and the pilot decided to land in a field. During the landing the aircraft hit a ditch and was extensively damaged.

History of the flight

The weather forecast for the day was good, with a risk of showers and thunderstorms during the afternoon. In the morning, the pilot flew from Peterborough (Sibson) to East Kirkby Airfield, Lincolnshire, with three passengers. At the planned time for departure for the return flight to Peterborough a thunderstorm was passing through the area of East Kirkby and the takeoff was delayed. The pilot telephoned the meteorological office of the nearby RAF station at Coningsby, who

advised him that there was only a 50% chance of the weather improving sufficiently for the pilot to be able to fly back to Peterborough that evening. At around 1900 hrs, as the pilot was making preparations to remain at East Kirkby, the weather improved. The pilot telephoned Sibson Airfield, who confirmed that they considered the Peterborough weather was suitable for his return.

The aircraft was airborne at 1945 hrs and the pilot flew a circuit at 500 ft to check the weather. He assessed the conditions as suitable and set a course for Peterborough. On passing Boston, almost half-way along the planned track, the weather conditions started to deteriorate, with

low cloud, heavy rain and poor visibility. In order to remain in VMC the pilot descended. He then attempted to turn back towards East Kirkby, but was having difficulties in maintaining VMC and became alarmed by several flashes of lightning.

The pilot made a radio call to the Distress and Diversion cell, using the distress frequency of 121.5 MHz, and requested vectors to Peterborough (Sibson). The heading for Peterborough took the pilot into worse weather, with lower cloud, and more lightning. The aircraft was now at 300 ft in poor visibility with heavy rain and lightning all around, so the pilot decided to make a forced landing.

He declared a 'MAYDAY' and turned towards a field which appeared suitable.

The pilot landed in a field near Fosdyke. During the landing roll the aircraft hit a ditch and came to a standstill. The pilot and his passengers were uninjured and vacated the aircraft normally.

Comment

The pilot reported that "the lightning, heavy rain and low cloud gave me no choice but to land immediately". However, an early decision to turn back in the deteriorating weather may have prevented the accident.