

No: 10/91

Ref: EW/G91/08/03

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-28RT-201, G-BSLD

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming IO-360-CIC6 piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1979

Date & Time (UTC): 4 August 1991 at 1055 hrs

Location: Manchester (Barton) airfield, Eccles, Manchester

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 3

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Nose leg

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 43years

Commander's Flying Experience: 1,760 hours (of which 92 hours were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and inspection by AAIB

On landing gear retraction after take-off the 'Gear Unsafe' light would not go out and the nose leg green light stayed on. Two low passes confirmed that the nose wheel was turned through 90° and that the nose leg had jammed. Attempts to free the leg were unsuccessful, so the pilot decided to land with the main legs down and a shut-down engine.

After one practice approach, the passengers were briefed, the door unlatched, and a landing was made on the main wheels; the nose was held up as long as possible and the aircraft came quickly to a halt. As the propeller had stopped in a horizontal position the only item damaged was the nose leg.

The nose leg upper torque link was found to have fractured, and although it had been correctly assembled at the time of failure, the torque link bore witness marks showing that it had been incorrectly fitted at some time in the past, allowing it to foul the adjacent lower link. The aircraft had been imported from the USA 135 flying hours previously.

The component and failure mode were identical to the mainwheel torque link failure on a Piper PA-30 described on page 38 of AAIB Bulletin 7/91.