

Piper PA-28 Cherokee, EI-BDR

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/2003	Ref: EW/G2003/08/14	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-28 Cherokee, EI-BDR	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-360-A4A piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1967	
Date & Time (UTC):	9 August 2003 at 0950 hrs	
Location:	Ballyedmond Castle Farm, Rostrevor, County Down	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Nose gear destroyed, propeller damaged and engine shockloaded	
Commander's Licence:	Irish Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	51 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	406 hours (all on type)	
	Last 90 days - 16 hours	
	Last 28 days - 10 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and enquiries by the AAIB	

The pilot took off from Prestwick Airport at 0830 hrs with a full fuel load for a planned flight to Kerry Airport in Southern Ireland; ETA at Kerry was 1130 hrs. Prior to takeoff, the pilot had checked the weather for his route. The forecast weather was as follows: Light and variable surface wind, cloud FEW at 1,500 feet amsl and visibility 7 km in haze. The initial part of the flight at 1,600 feet amsl was uneventful as the pilot followed the coastline to the south. He then flew across the Irish Sea and coasted in at Groomsport VRP. As he did so, he was aware of reducing visibility and, with some patches of cloud below his current altitude, descended to 800 feet amsl.

As the pilot continued his south-westerly heading, the visibility continued to decrease and the pilot decided to alter his course to follow the coastline to the south rather than his original plan of going across country. Accordingly, he set course to the south-east and then followed the coast. Shortly after, he was transferred from Belfast to Dublin ATC and was informed that the visibility at Dublin Airport was 3,500 metres. The pilot considered that the visibility in his location was deteriorating and requested a diversion to Gormanston Airfield, north of Dublin. This was approved and the pilot continued south along the coast at altitudes between 500 and 800 feet. Then, as he flew past Carlingford Lough, he noticed what appeared to be a small airstrip, with a windsock and helipad, located on the north coast. The visibility was still deteriorating and the pilot decided to fly towards

Piper PA-28 Cherokee, EI-BDR

this airstrip, land and wait for better visibility. Using full flap, he established his approach on a northerly heading and landed 45 metres beyond a perimeter wall; the indicated wind was light and variable. He commenced progressive braking but an upslope resulted in EI-BDR becoming airborne again for a short time before landing nose gear first. The nose gear collapsed and the aircraft came to rest after turning through 180°. The pilot switched everything off and vacated the aircraft. He then used his mobile telephone to advise ATC of his landing and that he was safe. Subsequent measurement of the landing area showed that the aircraft came to rest 140 metres from the point of touchdown. The apparent airstrip was actually a field adjacent to the helipad. The field looked level from the air but there was a small valley starting where the aircraft had become airborne and ending where the second touchdown had occurred.