

No: 1/91

Ref: EW/G90/12/01

Category: 1c

**Aircraft Type
and Registration:**

Piper PA-28-180, G-GRUB

No & Type of Engines:

1 Lycoming O-360-A4A piston engine

Year of Manufacture:

1970

Date and Time (UTC):

2 December 1990 at 1250 hrs

Location:

St Merryn Parachute Centre, Padstow, Cornwall

Type of Flight:

Private

Persons on Board:

Crew - 1

Passengers - None

Injuries:

Crew - None

Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage:

Outer port wing and nosewheel detached, fuselage, propeller and engine damaged

Commander's Licence:

Private Pilot's Licence with IMC rating

Commander's Age:

47 years

**Commander's Total
Flying Experience:**

282 hours (of which 64 were on type)

Information Source:

Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

St Merryn airfield is privately owned and is used as a parachute jumping centre. In order to restrict the movement of his cattle, the farmer positions a 2 mm diameter single wire electric fence across runway 15, about 100 metres in from the threshold. When aircraft require to use the runway, this fence is habitually removed and, on several occasions over the previous five years, the pilot of the accident aircraft had helped with its removal and subsequent replacement.

Although the pilot had standing permission to use the airfield, he had not informed the club or the field owner of his intended arrival on the day of the accident but he did attempt, unsuccessfully, to make radio contact with the club on their air/ground frequency as he flew into the area. However, seeing the parachute club aircraft parked and refuelling at the threshold of runway 33, and knowing there to be an autogyro operating from the field, he reasoned that the runway was already open for flying and that the fence would therefore have been cleared away. As the wind was 080°/4-8 kt, he made two passes over runway 15 and proceeded to land at the threshold.

Immediately after touchdown, the pilot saw a block of wood with a metal rod sticking up out of it in the middle of the runway and, although the wire was not visible to him, realised that this was the fence which was still erected. With less than 60 kt airspeed, he applied full engine power in an attempt to

'skip' over it, but was unable to prevent the aircraft's left wheel from catching on the wire. Although the wire snapped, it caused the left wing to dip and the aircraft to cartwheel, breaking off the outer section of the port wing against a fence post and snapping off the nosewheel.

There was no fire and the pilot's diagonal and lapstrap safety harness withstood the impact.