

AAIB Bulletin No: 5/94

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Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Cessna 177, HA-SJP

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

Year of Manufacture: 1977

Date & Time (UTC): 28 March 1994 at 1430 hrs

Location: Manston Airport, Kent

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 2 Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Propeller destroyed; dents and scraping on underside of fuselage

Commander's Licence: Hungarian Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 33 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 214 hours (of which 174 were on type)
Last 90 days - 12 hours
Last 28 days - 12 hours

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

The aircraft was on a VFR flight from Coventry Airport to Mönchengladbach, Germany. The pilot reports that, as the aircraft approached the English Channel, the weather deteriorated and the cloudbase lowered to an extent that maintaining VMC was no longer possible. He therefore decided to divert to Manston. A visual approach was flown to Runway 28 and the landing gear was selected 'DOWN'. Immediately on touchdown the aircraft continued to sink and the propeller and lower fuselage contacted the runway. After a ground run of about 150 metres it came to a halt on the northern edge of the runway and the occupants vacated the aircraft without injury.

An initial examination of the aircraft showed that the landing gear doors were open but the wheels were retained in the wheel wells. When the aircraft was lifted the wheels lowered and were manually locked down. An eyewitness who observed the approach and landing reported that the gear appeared to lower at a late stage in the approach. The maintenance company that recovered the aircraft from the runway has not found any faults or evidence of malfunction in the landing gear retraction and lowering mechanism.