

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-28-181 Cherokee Archer III, G-JACS	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-360-A4M piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1997	
Date & Time (UTC):	23 June 2009 at 1310 hrs	
Location:	Runway 25, Fowlmere Aerodrome, Hertfordshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to propeller, landing gear and right wing	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	78 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	442 hours (of which 92 were on type) Last 90 days - 4 hours Last 28 days - 2 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

After flaring over the threshold of Runway 25 whilst landing at Fowlmere, the aircraft 'floated' and landed deep into the runway. Despite braking hard, the aircraft did not stop until it encountered a ditch across the far end of the runway. No reason was found for a failure of all the radio and navigational equipment reported by the pilot prior to the landing.

History of the flight

Earlier on the day of the accident, the aircraft had taken off from Fowlmere, an airstrip located approximately three miles to the west of Duxford, and landed at Wellesbourne Mountford. On the return flight, the pilot made a radio call to Duxford prior to joining

the Fowlmere circuit. There was no response, at which point he noted that all the communication and navigational equipment had ceased to operate, although it had operated normally earlier during the flight. The pilot checked that no circuit breakers had tripped and that the alternator switch was ON.

In the absence of information as to the runway in use, the pilot decided to land on Runway 25, which was the one from which he had taken off some three hours earlier. At that time, he had listened to an automated weather information service, which had given the wind at Luton Airport as 160°/5 kt, variable between 110° and 210°. Although he flared over the threshold,

the aircraft 'floated' and landed deep into the runway. Despite braking hard, the aircraft did not stop until it ran into a small ditch across the end of the runway. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that the runway has a downward slope on its latter half. After the aircraft had come to rest, the pilot switched the battery master off and exited the aircraft without injury.

Duxford subsequently confirmed that they had received the radio call from G-JACS and advised that the runway in use was Runway 24 which, had he heard the message, would have confirmed the pilot's choice of Runway 25 at Fowlmere. The light and variable wind conditions had not altered significantly during the day.

An examination of the aircraft revealed no obvious reason for the electrical problem. In fact, shortly after the accident a successful radio call was made to Duxford, indicating that the battery, if it had been discharged, had recovered.

The pilot later reflected that despite the distraction posed by his concern over the loss of the electrical services, it was his decision to continue with the landing following the late touchdown, rather than to go-around, that resulted in the accident.