

Piper PA-28-161 Cherokee Warrior II, G-BGPL

AAIB Bulletin No: 7/2003	Ref: EW/G2003/04/08	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-28-161 Cherokee Warrior II, G-BGPL	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-320-D3G piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1979	
Date & Time (UTC):	11 April 2003 at 1650 hrs	
Location:	Newbury Race Course, Berkshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 3
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Left wing damaged and associated fuel tank ruptured.	
	Further airframe damage	
Commander's Licence:	Basic Commercial Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	46 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	710 hours (of which 274 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 204 hours	
	Last 28 days - 67 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The pilot intended to take off from Runway 11 at the Newbury Race Course. This runway has a published take-off run of 830 metres, is 30 metres wide and its short grass surface was dry. The visibility was greater than 10 km, there was no significant cloud or weather and the surface wind was calm.

During his pre-flight checks the pilot had confirmed that the fuel was evenly balanced between the two tanks. The engine start and taxi were uneventful and the pilot selected 10° of flap prior to takeoff. The aircraft took off normally but as it became airborne it stopped accelerating, veered to the right and, with the pilot unable to control the heading, the left wing struck a small conifer tree. As a result the aircraft then slewed to the left and brushed a second tree. The pilot however, managed to land the aircraft on the remaining runway. During the landing the flight controls appeared to operate normally and during the subsequent shut down the pilot noted that the flaps behaved correctly. Furthermore the pilot was certain that his front seat passenger had not interfered with the flight controls.

Subsequent inspection revealed that the impact with the first tree caused considerable damage to the leading edge of the left wing, rupturing the left fuel tank.