

## ACCIDENT

<b>Aircraft Type and Registration:</b>	Cessna 182P, G-BTHA	
<b>No &amp; type of Engines:</b>	1 Continental O-470-R piston engine	
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	1979	
<b>Date &amp; Time (UTC):</b>	24 October 2006 at 1645 hrs	
<b>Location:</b>	Approach to Runway 27 at Liverpool Airport	
<b>Type of Flight:</b>	Private	
<b>Persons on Board:</b>	Crew - 1	Passenger - 1
<b>Injuries:</b>	Crew - 1 (Serious)	Passenger - 1 (Serious)
<b>Nature of Damage:</b>	Right wing detached, aircraft and engine extensively damaged	
<b>Commander's Licence:</b>	Private Pilot's Licence	
<b>Commander's Age:</b>	71 years	
<b>Commander's Flying Experience:</b>	534 hours (of which 335 were on type) Last 90 days - 9 hours Last 28 days - 2 hours	
<b>Information Source:</b>	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and AAIB inquiries	

## Synopsis

The pilot, who was blinded by the winter sun, flew into an approach light stanchion that was sited approximately ½ mile from the runway threshold.

approach to Runway 27. The pilot was then transferred to the Tower frequency and, once on finals, was given clearance to land.

## History of the flight

On the day of the accident the pilot planned to fly from Liverpool to Wolverhampton, then on to Shobdon and back to Liverpool. The pilot reported that the first two legs, and landings, were uneventful and on returning to Liverpool Airport he received a VFR clearance from the Approach Controller to enter the Liverpool zone. After holding for approximately 10 minutes at Helsby Hill he was cleared to join the circuit on base leg for an

The pilot states that as he flew the approach he was blinded by the sun and had difficulty seeing the runway and, therefore, attempted to fly the aircraft along the path of the approach lights. He also found that the visibility was better by flying lower than normal. The pilot considered going around, but approximately half way down the approach he sighted the 'piano keys' and decided to continue the approach using them as his reference point. However, it was not until a late stage on the approach that he was able to see the lights on

the PAPIS, which were all red. The pilot, realising that he was very low, applied full power and attempted to climb away. Despite his efforts the aircraft struck and uprooted a 30 foot high wooden stanchion on which one of the approach lights was mounted. Ground marks indicated that the aircraft then struck the ground before hitting and uprooting a second stanchion. During the impacts the right wing was detached and the aircraft came to rest facing back up the approach. The aircraft was extensively damaged and both the pilot and passenger sustained serious injuries.

### **Report from ATCO**

The ATCO on duty reported that he could not see G-BTHA when he cleared the pilot to land, but did establish from the air traffic monitor that the aircraft was three miles out on the final approach. When the ATCO next checked the position of G-BTHA he noted that whilst the aircraft was low the approach appeared to be stable. This did not cause the controller any concern as he was used to seeing training aircraft flying a variety of landing profiles. The controller attended to other aircraft on the airfield and when he looked back towards the approach, G-BTHA was less than half a mile from the threshold and still very low. The controller continued to monitor the progress of the aircraft and when it descended to what he considered was a dangerous height (tree level) he activated the crash alarm; the controller stated that

he did not try and contact the pilot as he did not wish to distract him at this late stage of the flight. The aircraft then disappeared from sight and at the same time the captain of a commercial aircraft, which was at hold Golf waiting for takeoff clearance, informed the controller that the aircraft had crashed. The controller immediately instructed a second aircraft which had been following G-BTHA on the approach, to go-around. With depleted fire cover all aircraft movements were halted and the airfield was closed until 1740 hrs. The airfield emergency services were quickly on the scene of the accident and confirmed that the aircraft had crashed and there were two casualties with serious injuries.

### **Comment**

The pilot had a valid medical certificate that had been issued six weeks before the accident and his revalidation check flight was valid until 28 August 2007. He stated that he did not appreciate how poor the visibility towards the sun was until he turned on to finals. He had set the airfield QFE on his altimeter, but deliberately flew the aircraft lower than normal without reference to the altimeter because he believed that the visibility was better and the 'piano keys' would give him a suitable visual reference by which to fly the approach. In retrospect, the pilot believes that he should have gone around and held off until the sun had settled below the horizon.