

Aircraft type and registration: Piper Navajo Chieftain PA31-350 G-BMBC

No & Type of engines: Two Avco Lycoming TIO-540-J2BD piston engines

Year of Manufacture: 1979

Date and time (GMT): 8 March 1986 at 2358 hrs

Location: Glasgow Airport

Type of flight: Public Transport

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — None

Injuries: Crew — None Passengers — N/A

Nature of damage: Flaps & rear fuselage damaged

Commander's Licence: Commercial Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 43 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 6450 hours (of which 1250 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident report Form submitted by the pilot and AIB discussions with the aircraft maintenance organisation.

On selecting landing gear down prior to landing at Belfast Airport, cockpit indications showed that only the nose landing gear had lowered. Re-selection had the same result. The Fire Service viewed the aircraft search-lights and confirmed the main landing gear legs were not extended. The pilot then operated the manual emergency lowering system but the main landing gear legs still failed to extend.

The aircraft returned to Glasgow where further attempts to lower the main gear were unsuccessful, and a full flap landing was made with the nose landing gear only extended. The aircraft came to rest on the runway and the pilot evacuated without difficulty. The aircraft's rear fuselage and flaps were damaged.

The maintenance organisation repairing the aircraft has reported finding faults on the weight switch for the left main landing gear leg, and on the landing gear selector lever safety solenoid. After rectification of these two faults the landing gear functioned normally. However, the maintenance organisation was unable to ascertain why these faults should have prevented the main landing gear legs from extending.