

Piper PA-34-200T, G-CHEM

AAIB Bulletin No: 7/98 Ref: EW/G98/04/05 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-34-200T, G-CHEM

No & Type of Engines: 2 Continental LTSIO-360-EB1 piston engines

Year of Manufacture: 1981

Date & Time (UTC): 11 April 1998 at 1550 hrs

Location: Stapleford Tawney Aerodrome, Essex

Type of Flight: Public Transport (Positioning)

Persons on Board: Crew - 2 - Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None - Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Damage to nose landing gear and both propellers

Commander's Licence: Airline Transport Pilot's Licence with Flying Instructor Rating

Commander's Age: 33 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 2,200 hours (of which 650 were on type)
Last 90 days - 107 hours
Last 28 days - 24 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The handling pilot, seated in the left seat, held a Commercial Pilot's Licence with Instrument Rating and had a total of 569 hours flying experience (of which 58 hours were on type). The handling pilot had successfully completed his final line check on the aircraft during the previous sector, under the supervision of the commander. The aircraft was then being positioned from London Gatwick to Stapleford Tawney.

The aircraft made a normal approach to the grass Runway 04L, during which both pilots were certain that the landing gear had been correctly selected down and that three green light indications had been obtained. The runway was wet and muddy and has a down slope of almost 2%, so the pilot's intention was to keep the landing reasonably short. Some unexpected sink was experienced

on short final approach which lead to a slightly premature landing in a somewhat flatter than usual attitude. The nose landing gear retracted and the aircraft pitched down onto its nose bringing the propellers into contact with the ground. The aircraft slid to a halt and the aircraft was made safe before the pilots vacated by the normal exit.

Subsequent engineering inspection has not, to date, found any abnormality which could explain the failure of the nose landing gear downlock mechanism.

The pilot indicated that the surface wind on landing was from 360° at 20 kt. An aftercast from the Meteorological Office indicated that the surface wind was from 360° at 15 kt, with gusts of 25 to 30 kt.