

No: 8/85

Ref: EW/G85/06/09

Aircraft type and registration: Piper PA28-161 G-BJBX (light single engined fixed wing aircraft)

Year of Manufacture: 1981

Date and time (GMT): 28 June 1985 at 1615 hrs

Location: 1 nautical mile east of Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire

Type of flight: Training

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — None

Injuries: Crew — None Passengers — None

Nature of damage: Nose landing gear collapsed; further damage to both underside engine cowlings, air filter and engine exhaust assembly

Commander's Licence: Student pilot

Commander's Age: 22 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 24 hours (all on type and of which 6 hours were as pilot in command)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the Flying School.

A student pilot was on his fourth solo general handling exercise away from the aerodrome circuit area. After completing steep turn and practice forced landing exercises he was preparing to return to Kidlington aerodrome, and had climbed to a height of 2,500 feet above mean sea level, when the engine began to misfire and then stopped. The pilot reported that he checked for the cause of the engine failure, and confirmed that the fuel was selected to the left wing tank. After selecting the electrical fuel pump on, the engine ran again intermittently and then stopped. The pilot selected a field, transmitted a MAYDAY call, and made a forced landing. During the landing run the aircraft's nose landing gear collapsed resulting in damage to the underside, engine assembly and cowlings. The pilot was uninjured.

Prior to dismantling the aircraft for recovery to Kidlington, it was levelled, the electrical system re-connected and the fuel contents and indications checked. The left hand fuel gauge indicated slightly below zero, and the right hand gauge indicated 8 US gallons. These indications were confirmed as accurate when the aircraft's fuel tanks were subsequently drained. The left tank was empty and the right tank contained 6½ Imperial gallons (7.83 gallons).