

No: 11/91

Ref: EW/G91/08/02

Category: 1b

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-23-250 Aztec, G-KEYS

No & Type of Engines: 2 Lycoming IO-540-C4B5 piston engines

Year of Manufacture: 1978

Date & Time (UTC): 3 August 1991 at 1731 hrs

Location: Gigha Airstrip, Hebridean Isles

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 5

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Damage to both propellers and front of the undercarriage doors; dented port wing leading edge and a tear and distortion to panels by the landing light

Commander's Licence: Commercial Pilot's Licence with Instructor rating

Commander's Age: 32 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 2,381 hours (of which 36 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft departed from Glasgow at 1703 hrs for a flight to Gigha. There were five passengers on board and the aircraft contained just under 75 imperial gallons of fuel of which about 14½ gallons were used in transit. There was no cloud at Gigha, the visibility was in excess of 5 km, the temperature 15°C and the wind was almost calm being 1 - 2 kt from the north west. The strip at Gigha runs to just south of west and is 720 metres in length. On arrival overhead the airfield the pilot positioned for a left hand circuit onto Runway 25. He selected the undercarriage DOWN but the left-hand mainwheel gear light gave a flickering indication only. The pilot completed the approach followed by a 'Go-Around' to enable one of his flying club instructors, who was already on the ground at Gigha, to make a visual inspection of the undercarriage position. The instructor confirmed that the undercarriage appeared to be in the down locked position.

The pilot attempted to change over the indicator bulbs but was unable to do so as the relevant fitting was broken. Retarding both throttles did not cause the undercarriage warning horn to sound, reinforcing the pilot's opinion that the flickering light was an indication fault only. He therefore elected to land at Gigha and made another approach to Runway 25 with the intention of holding off in

the flare to make as gentle a touch-down as possible. The approach was flown as planned and the last approach speed noted was 75 kt decreasing to his target of 70 kt. The pilot estimated that in "holding off" to achieve a gentle touch-down he used up about 200 metres of runway. He did not think that the brakes were as effective as normal and briefly considered going around again but decided that he still had sufficient distance remaining to stop. The braking action improved but it became apparent that the aircraft would not stop before the end of the runway. Because the overrun was rocky with a 70 foot drop to the sea the pilot aimed for the corner of the strip. He selected both mixture controls to the idle cut-off position. The aircraft made contact with a wire fence, on the right hand side of the strip, which brought it to a stop.

The pilot completed the shut down drills and then followed the passengers who had vacated the aircraft. It was reported that there were no difficulties with the evacuation and no injuries.

The aircraft sustained damage to both propellers, a dent in the leading edge of the port wing and a tear and panel distortion adjacent to the landing light caused by a fence post. There was some damage to the front of the undercarriage doors. The fence was the only third party property to be damaged.

At the time of the landing the strip was reported by the pilot to be wet. Applying the CAA corrections the landing distance required for a normal approach and touch-down without deliberately holding off was 643 metres. The strip length is given as 720 metres.