

Piper PA-28-181, G-BDSB

AAIB Bulletin No: 2/99 Ref: EW/G98/12/06 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-28-181, G-BDSB

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-360-A4M piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1975

Date & Time (UTC): 12 December 1998 at 1350 hrs

Location: Field near A338, north of Hungerford, Berkshire

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None - Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Substantial to rear fuselage, tailplane and nose landing gear

Commander's Licence: Basic Commercial Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 65 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 1,700 hours (of which 900 were on type)
Last 90 days - 56 hours
Last 28 days - 14 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot had landed without incident on a grass strip and had assessed that the ground was firm and suitable for his planned take off. When he returned to the field some two hours later, he planned his take off using the data in the aircraft Flight Manual and applying the correction factors recommended in the General Aviation Safety Sense Leaflet 7B. This indicated that there would be adequate margins for the take off from the 1,650 foot (503 metres) strip. The aircraft was configured correctly for a short field take off and full power was obtained at the start of the roll. Acceleration was initially good and the aircraft reached the pilot's pre-planned acceleration point at 40 kt. However, the aircraft then failed to increase speed to the required rotation speed of 43 to 45 kt. As the far end of the strip approached, the pilot rotated the aircraft which became airborne but failed to clear the hedge on the field boundary. After going through the hedge, the aircraft landed in the adjacent field having sustained damage to the nose landing gear and rear end.

On inspecting the surface of the field used in the latter part of the take-off roll, the pilot found it to be softer than that at the start of the roll which may have been exacerbated by a shower that had occurred while the pilot had been away from the field.