

AAIB Bulletin No: 11/95

Ref: EW/G95/08/31

Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Cessna 172H Skyhawk, G-BHCM

No & Type of Engines: 1 Continental O-300-D piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1967

Date & Time (UTC): 27 August 1995 at 1530 hrs

Location: Denham Aerodrome, Middlesex

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Right main landing gear support casting cracked; firewall slightly buckled

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 54 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 655 hours (of which 569 were on type)
Last 90 days - 22 hours
Last 28 days - 16 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Prior to departure from Stancombe Farm, Dorset, the pilot phoned ATC at Denham; he was told that the wind was strong, from 330°, but aircraft were using Runway 24. The aircraft was based at Denham and he was confident in his ability to land on Runway 24 in the crosswind, however, if necessary he planned to use grass Runway 30.

On arrival at Denham the AFISO cleared the aircraft to final approach and passed the surface wind as 330°/18 kt with gusts to more than 25 kt. The pilot continued the approach and carried out a go-around. He reported that he asked the AFISO if he could land on Runway 30 but was told that it was "unavailable"; he then positioned for a further approach to Runway 24.

The approach, using a crab technique with 20° flap, went well until the flare. The pilot had just applied rudder to align the aircraft with the runway when it encountered a strong gust. The aircraft bounced about three times as it moved to the left and eventually settled on the grass to the south of the paved surface. The pilot was not aware that the aircraft had suffered any damage and subsequently taxied to the normal parking area. The damage was discovered at a later date.

The aerodrome managing director reported that she spoke to the AFISO on duty and he said that when the pilot of 'CM' called downwind on Runway 24 he added words to the effect "30 looks tempting - - -". The AFISO did not offer Runway 30 because other aircraft were using Runway 24 and they would have had to orbit while 'CM' did a circuit and landing; he was also not in the position to categorically refuse the use of Runway 30.

Year of Manufacture:	1960
Date & Time (UTC):	14 September 1997 at 1330 hrs
Location:	Clifgate Farm, Denton, Kent
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Left undercarriage leg broken
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	54 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	129 hours (of which 23 were on type) Last 90 days - 18 hours Last 28 days - 9 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

On Thursday 14 September, the weather was good and the wind was 190°/10 to 12 kt. The pilot had flown to Lydd where he carried out two landings, following the second of which he refuelled 25 litres of fuel, before returning and landing uneventfully on the grass Runway 10 at Clifgate Farm. The meteorological forecast suggested worsening weather for the Friday and so the pilot decided to spend another 30 minutes practising circuits at Clifgate. After the fourth touch-and-go landing, it became overcast and began to rain heavily, so he decided to cancel the exercise with the next landing.

The landing was a little firmer than the previous ones, which had all been smooth, and during the roll out the left undercarriage leg collapsed. The pilot had time to hold the wing up whilst stopping the engine and the aircraft came to rest with no further damage.

Subsequent investigation showed that the fracture had occurred as a consequence of a pre-existing crack, which showed clear evidence of rust and corrosion. Because of the age of the aircraft and the discovered presence of other such cracks, the entire undercarriage suspension unit is being replaced.