

AAIB Bulletin No: 5/94

Ref: EW/G94/01/02

Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-46-310P Malibu, G-BPZF

No & Type of Engines: 1 Continental TSIO-520-BE1 piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1984

Date & Time (UTC): 7 January 1994 at 1503 hrs

Location: Blackbushe Airport, Surrey

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Propeller, nose landing gear doors and engine mounting frame damaged

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence with Instrument Rating

Commander's Age: 47 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 1,650 hours (of which 180 were on type)
Last 90 days - 11 hours
Last 28 days - 6 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and engineering examination by a maintenance organisation

After a normal approach and landing the pilot requested permission to backtrack along the runway, which was granted. The pilot retracted the flaps, carried out a 180° turn and backtracked along the runway for a short distance before exiting onto a taxiway. The aircraft was slowly taxied whilst the pilot switched off the aircraft's avionics that were no longer required. However, the nose of the aircraft then slowly dropped until the lower nose area contacted the tarmac. The pilot shut down the engine as soon as he was aware of what was occurring. He noted that the hydraulic low pressure warning light was illuminated and that the electric hydraulic power pack circuit breaker had tripped.

The aircraft was recovered after the tail had been lowered, the battery master switch selected 'ON' and the nose landing gear had dropped into the 'down-and-locked' position. It was noted that the hydraulic system reservoir was almost empty and that there was very good evidence of a long term hydraulic fluid leak in the area of the reservoir. Examination revealed that the leak was from a crack in the reservoir's body. The aircraft was recovered to an engineering facility and full landing gear retraction and extension tests were carried out satisfactorily. An engineering investigation is continuing, the findings of which will be reported in a future bulletin.

A very similar accident occurred to this aircraft whilst being handled by the same pilot in October 1990 (AAIB Bulletin No 12/90), but the cause was never positively established.