

No: 9/89

Ref: EW/G89/07/19

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-28-161, G-BGPL

No & Type of Engines: 1 Avco Lycoming O-320-D3G piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1979

Date and Time (UTC): 2 July 1989 at 1530 hrs

Location: Headcorn aerodrome, Kent

Type of Flight: Private (pleasure)

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Engine mounting frames collapsed and nosewheel axle damaged

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 41 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 51 hours (of which 7 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft took off from Manston aerodrome at 1510 hrs and flew to Headcorn, where a normal final approach to land was made for the grass runway 29. There was a light crosswind. The pilot began the flare at about 70 kt and, just before the mainwheels touched, the stall warning horn sounded. The aircraft ballooned, landed very hard on the nosewheel and bounced, so the pilot, being unaware of any damage to the aircraft, applied full throttle and climbed away to perform another circuit. During a left turn at 500 feet, he discovered that the rudder was jammed just to the left of neutral and also heard a following aircraft report debris on the runway (subsequently identified as a small section of the nosewheel cowling). He then accepted a suggestion by ATC that he should return to Manston.

On arrival at Manston, the pilot informed them of the problem and requested a visual airborne inspection by the operator. This was performed by the Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) who informed him that the nosewheel was damaged and bent backwards and was unlikely to support the aircraft on landing. The CFI also advised the pilot to land on runway 06 and to cut the engine and all electrical services as soon as he crossed the threshold. During the approach the pilot had difficulty in maintaining the centreline, but a successful and uneventful landing was made although the aircraft slewed to the left at the end of the roll-out.