

Piper PA-38-112, G-BRHS

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Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-38-112, G-BRHS
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-235-L2C piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1979
Date & Time (UTC):	28 April 1997 at 1440 hrs
Location:	Liverpool Airport, Speke, Merseyside
Type of Flight:	Private (Training)
Persons on Board:	Crew - 2 - Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None - Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damaged beyond economic repair
Commander's Licence:	Commercial Pilot's Licence with Instrument Rating and FI Rating
Commander's Age:	37 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,890 hours (of which 1,150 on type) Last 90 days - 135 hours Last 28 days - 64 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and telephone enquiries by AAIB

The aircraft was engaged on a General Flying Test revision exercise with an Instructor and Student on board. During a standard stall recovery demonstration by the Instructor, he noticed that the engine took a few seconds to pick-up as power was re-applied after the recovery. He decided to curtail the sortie and headed back to Speke airfield.

Believing that the cause of the hesitation may have been carburettor icing, the Instructor ensured that carburettor heat was applied for several minutes at cruise power during the transit. However, no change was noted in the engine performance which might have been expected had any ice which had accumulated in the carburettor been cleared. With the engine running normally, an approach was made to Runway 27 with carburettor heat being applied again on base leg and stage 2 flap selected. As the aircraft was somewhat high on finals, a low power setting was used (about 1400 RPM) but, at about 200 feet, as power was re-applied to arrest the rate of descent there was no response from the engine.

The Instructor initially thought they would be able to reach the runway undershoot in a glide but then judged that there was a risk of hitting a lane running across the approach path and elected to turn the aircraft through about 90° to the right and land in a field. However, as he started to flare the nose wheel and right wingtip struck the ground. The field comprised rough, long grass and all three landing gears collapsed. The aircraft slid for about 25 metres before coming to rest and the occupants evacuated the aircraft normally and without injury.

Upon recovery of the aircraft, the maintenance organisation were able to re-start the engine, which appeared to run normally. They confirmed that there was adequate fuel in both tanks and took samples. As the engine had run relatively few hours since overhaul, it was removed for shock-load inspection and testing at an overhaul facility. Any significant findings will be reported in a future issue of the AAIB Bulletin.