

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Aeroprakt A22 Foxbat, G-CDDW	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912 ULS piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2004	
Date & Time (UTC):	17 November 2005 at 1600 hrs	
Location:	Private airfield near Draperstown (30 miles NW of Belfast), Northern Ireland	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Bent nose leg and minor damage to firewall and cockpit floor	
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	44 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	50 hours (all on type) Last 90 days - 5 hours Last 28 days - 3 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

Due to fog at his home airfield the pilot elected to land at an alternative strip. The ground at the alternative strip was soft and the available landing distance was reduced due to livestock at one end; hence the pilot applied the brakes firmly, resulting in the nose wheel digging into the soft ground causing damage to the aircraft.

History of flight

The pilot's home strip is located 20 miles west of the south west corner of Loch Neagh in Northern Ireland and he planned to depart from there at around 0900 hrs. He was forced to delay his departure until after some fog had cleared and he took off at around

1230 hrs, later reporting good visibility and no fog in the Belfast area en route to Newtownards, which is to the east of Belfast. He departed Newtownards at 1430 hrs for his return leg and, as he flew towards his home strip, he noticed fog which obscured the ground and reported that he could see only the top 10 ft or so of the large chimney at Cookstown protruding above the fog. This chimney is part of a cement factory and is approximately 300 ft high.

The pilot, conscious of his level of experience and VFR only rating, elected to turn through 180° in the knowledge that he had not encountered fog en route.

He was aware of a private airfield near Draperstown that was likely to be free from fog and, having subsequently visually checked the absence of fog for his approach, he decided to land there.

There were sheep grazing at the far end of the strip at Draperstown, which effectively reduced the available field length by about a third. After touch down, when the pilot applied the brakes, the nose wheel dug into an area of soft ground causing the nose gear leg to bend and some minor damage to the firewall and cockpit floor. Neither the pilot nor the passenger sustained any injuries.

Meteorological conditions

The pilot later learned that the fog had only cleared for about an hour at his home strip, which allowed him to depart, but precluded his landing later that day.

The Met Office were contacted and provided an aftercast for the area. This stated:

‘Meteorological surface visibility: 15 – 20 kilometres but 100 metres in local fog patches. (Air to ground visibility not known)’, ‘Cloud: Nil below 10000FT’ and ‘Weather: Generally nil but with a risk of localised fog patches having persisted in sheltered valleys’.