

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-28-180 Cherokee, G-LFSG	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-360-A4A piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1970 (Serial no: 28-5799)	
Date & Time (UTC):	26 October 2018 at 1120 hrs	
Location:	Eshott Airfield, Northumberland	
Type of Flight:	Training	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Left wing damaged	
Commander's Licence:	Student	
Commander's Age:	19 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	32 hours (of which 3 were on type) Last 90 days - 8 hours Last 28 days - 4 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and information supplied by the flying school	

Synopsis

The early solo student touched down long, with slightly excessive speed. Firm braking then caused the aircraft to skid off the runway and strike a fence post.

History of the flight

The flying school at Eshott reported that the student had recently transferred from another training provider. He had then flown a number of times at Eshott and was considered to be familiar with the circuit patterns and procedures there. On the day before the accident, he had carried out a dual training detail before going solo. The instructor had assessed the student to be "quite capable and reasonably competent in consideration of his age and experience and that he was of a standard for solo flying".

The training detail on the day was to be a completion of student solo circuit time, including overhead joins. This followed a comprehensive briefing and general discussion.

The school assessed the weather conditions and deemed them acceptable for this exercise. Although the wind was forecast to increase later in the afternoon, conditions at the time of the flight were judged suitable for a student with this level of experience. The wind, according to an observation made immediately after the accident, was from 300° at 8 kt and the asphalt surface was subsequently reported as being dry.

The student reported that during the final approach (on Runway 26), he experienced some buffeting. He judged that he was slightly to the left of the centreline and slightly fast (75 to 77 kt). He touched down later than normal and “in a panic to stop” he “slammed” the footbrakes, which veered the aircraft to the left, causing it to depart the runway. The left wing struck a fence post and the aircraft rotated through 180°, coming to rest on the grass Runway 01/19, approximately 30 m from the post, facing approximately east. The pilot radioed the airfield frequency for assistance and a school staff member arrived within 30 seconds. The pilot shut the aircraft down and vacated.

The total runway length available was 550 m. Subsequent examination of the Runway 26/08 surface showed a series of fairly long skid marks positioned approximately half-way along the available length; these were attributed to G-LFSG.

On subsequent debrief with the school, the student reported that he had felt some turbulence on the first approach, but he considered it more severe during the second approach and therefore chose to make a full-stop landing.

The student reported that the event had taught him the importance of discontinuing the approach and carrying out a go-around if he was not happy with any of the flight parameters.

AAIB comment

The 550 m length available on Runway 26 at Eshott is shorter than runways typically used for ab-initio training. Landing on such a runway could be considered as challenging for an early soloist.