

SERIOUS INCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Grob G115B, G-BYDB	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-320-D3G piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1988 (Serial no: 8025)	
Date & Time (UTC):	17 April 2022 at 1450 hrs	
Location:	Clacton Airfield, Essex	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to the leading edge of the wing and shock loading of the engine	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	52 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	189 hours (of which 10 were on type) Last 90 days - 4 hours Last 28 days - 2 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The pilot judged he was high on the approach and increased the aircraft's rate of descent to compensate, which probably also increased its airspeed. The aircraft touched down but, despite the use of maximum braking, overran the runway and came to an abrupt halt in the airfield's boundary hedge.

The pilot considered that it might have been better to go around when he realised he was high on the approach, especially given the short landing distance (505 m).

History of the flight

This serious incident occurred on a cross-country flight from Fowlmere Airfield to Clacton Airfield (Clacton) in Essex. On the day of the incident, Clacton was using Runway 18 (Figure 1), which the pilot had previously landed on in a Cessna 172. On that earlier occasion he was advised, "if you do not land before the footpath, perform a go-around".

When he arrived in the Clacton overhead on the incident flight, the pilot saw from the windsock that the surface wind was calm and he positioned for Runway 18. On final the pilot judged that he was "a little high" and increased the rate of descent to compensate, achieving a touchdown "just" before the footpath. Despite applying full braking, he was

unable to stop the aircraft in the remaining distance. G-BYDB overran the runway before coming to an abrupt halt in the airfield's boundary hedge (Figure 2). Uninjured, the pilot unfastened his harness and exited the aircraft without external assistance.

The aircraft suffered damage to the wing leading edge and shock loading of the engine. During a pre-takeoff test at Fowlmere Airfield G-BYDB's brakes had worked normally, and a post-incident technical investigation found the brakes to be "fully functioning".



Figure 1

Overview of Runway 18/36 at Clacton Airport
(Imagery ©2022 Bluesky.CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky.Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data 2022)



Figure 2

G-BYDB in the boundary hedge after the runway overrun

Pilot's observations

The pilot reported that, having previously landed at Clacton in a Cessna 172, he had assumed that the, smaller, Grob 115 would “comfortably have enough runway to land safely.” Under this assumption he did not check landing performance against the Pilots Operating Handbook or speak with one of the operator’s instructors beforehand to “determine the suitability of flying into Clacton in the Grob”.

While managing to touch down before the footpath, the pilot surmised that increasing the rate of descent to achieve it resulted in a higher-than-normal touchdown speed, making a runway overrun more likely. He reflected that a wiser course of action would have been to perform a go-around rather than continuing with a high approach, especially given the relatively short maximum landing distance available (505 m) and lack of appreciable headwind.

AAIB comment

While previous experience is generally beneficial, making assumptions based on it can engender risk. On-the-day factors, such as aircraft performance, local weather conditions and achieved flight parameters, are key considerations in any pilot’s decision-making process, both before and during flight.