

SERIOUS INCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-28R-201, G-WAMS	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming IO-360-C1C6 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2001 (Serial no: 2844050)	
Date & Time (UTC):	10 August 2023 at 1525 hrs	
Location:	Stapleford Aerodrome, Essex	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Right wingtip underside damaged and flap bent	
Commander's Licence:	Commercial Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	23 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,420 hours (of which 50 were on type) Last 90 days - 120 hours Last 28 days - 40 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

During the landing run the main right landing gear collapsed and the aircraft slewed off the runway. The landing gear collapsed because the landing gear selector had been inadvertently knocked towards the GEAR UP position during touchdown.

History of the flight

The aircraft was returning to Stapleford Aerodrome after a cross channel flight. The pilot landed the aircraft and as it slowed to approximately 30 kt, the aircraft tilted to the right. The pilot initially thought the right tyre was flat. However, the wingtip suddenly dropped and contacted the runway, causing the aircraft to slew to the right and off the paved surface.

The pilot made the aircraft safe and vacated the aircraft along with his passenger.

Cause

The pilot had configured the aircraft for landing and confirmed that the landing gear was down and locked. However, during touchdown his passenger, also a qualified pilot occupying the left seat¹, dropped a tablet device into the footwell. The passenger was

Footnote

¹ The aircraft commander in this case was flying the aircraft from the right seat stated that as an instructor, he finds it more comfortable to do so when pleasure flying with a passenger.

concerned the device would interfere with the rudder pedals during the landing, so hastily retrieved it. During its retrieval he inadvertently knocked the landing gear selector out of its guard towards the GEAR UP position. Despite immediately repositioning the selector, the gear had unlocked.

Pilot's comments

To mitigate the risk of a similar occurrence in the future, the pilot will undertake the following actions:

- For general pleasure flights in complex aircraft, his passengers will occupy the right seat.
- Brief passengers to stow and secure loose or unnecessary items prior to critical phases of a flight.
- Brief the passengers to ensure that they inform him if they interact with any of the aircraft controls at any stage of the flight.