

No: 2/83

Ref: EW/G82/12/02

Aircraft: Piper PA23 Aztec 'D' G-AWXW

Year of Manufacture: 1969

Date and time (GMT): 8 December 1982 at 1730 hrs

Location: Leeds Airport

Type of flight: Non-scheduled passenger

Persons on board: Crew - 2 Passengers - 4

Injuries: Crew - Nil Passengers - Nil

Nature of damage: Nose undercarriage doors, underside of nose section and tips of both propellers

Commander's Licence: ATPL

Commander's Age: 58 years

Commander's total flying experience: 6282 hours

During the landing approach after a flight from Gatwick, the green indicator light for the nose-wheel failed to illuminate after the undercarriage was selected down.

The pilot then re-cycled the undercarriage and although he detected some movement of the rudder pedals suggesting that the nose undercarriage was down, the indicator light remained out.

The pilot noted that the undercarriage selection lever was cancelling from the down position in the normal way, which clearly indicated that the engine driven pump was developing normal pressure within the hydraulic system. He therefore concluded that there was no point in using the hand-pump or the emergency CO<sub>2</sub> system. He also changed the nose undercarriage warning-light bulb for a known serviceable bulb. The light, however, still remained out.

The pilot therefore informed the ATC unit of the situation and carried out two low approaches and overshoots during which ground observers with the aid of a searchlight, confirmed that the nosewheel appeared normal.

It was therefore decided to land with the emergency services standing by. The landing was made with particular attention to keeping the nosewheel clear of the ground for as long as possible, but nonetheless the nose undercarriage collapsed as the nose of the aircraft was lowered.

After the aircraft came to rest all occupants made a normal exit through the main door.

Subsequent examination of the nose undercarriage assembly showed the operation of the spring-loaded locking device was being affected by the presence of grit. The extension sequence completed correctly when the lock was tapped with a spanner and the nosewheel indicator light then illuminated.