

AAIB Bulletin No: 6/93

Ref: EW/G93/04/13

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Mooney M20, G-ODJH

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-360-A1D piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1969

Date & Time (UTC): 27 April 1993 at 2020 hrs

Location: Rochester Airfield, Kent

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 3

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: General damage to lower fuselage; engine shock loaded and damage to propeller and hub assembly

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence with IMC Ratings

Commander's Age: 40 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 196 hours (of which 6 hours were on type)
Last 90 days - 11 hours
Last 28 days - 2 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft approached Rochester Airfield from the north to join downwind for a left-hand circuit to Runway 02; the weather was CAVOK and there was no other traffic. The pilot reported that, as he approached the downwind position, the aircraft was about 260 feet too high and about 25 mph too fast. He made the downwind radio call and retarded the throttle to reduce the airspeed; the manifold pressure reduced to 12 inches and the landing gear warning horn sounded which caused him to increase the power to about 14 inches. As the airspeed was still about 5 mph above the landing gear limiting speed, the pilot decided to start the downwind checks and come back to the landing gear check once the airspeed had reduced. The flap was selected to about 25° and, slightly further downwind than ideal, the aircraft turned onto the base leg.

The pilot estimated that the wind on the final approach was about 15 kt; the power setting was slightly higher than normal and it was not until the throttles were retarded in the flare that the landing gear warning horn sounded. The aircraft landed with the gear retracted; the landing was smooth and the aircraft suffered relatively minor damage. When it had come to rest, on the runway, the pilot instructed his passengers to leave the aircraft which they did in a calm and timely manner.

It was the pilot's normal practice to apply the commonly used mnemonic BUMPFICH to the downwind check. On reflection he considered that it had been unwise to deviate from a familiar pattern by starting the check before he had lowered the landing gear. The power setting throughout the approach appears to have been higher than that at which the warning horn would have operated. The situation was aggravated by the fact that he had neither done a final approach check nor made a final approach '3 greens' radio call which may have drawn his attention to the omission.