

ACCIDENT

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| Aircraft Type and Registration: | Piper PA-30, N7976Y | |
| No & Type of Engines: | 2 Lycoming IO-320 piston engines | |
| Year of Manufacture: | 1966 | |
| Date & Time (UTC): | 18 June 2010 at 0922 hrs | |
| Location: | Private airstrip, Lymington, Hampshire | |
| Type of Flight: | Private | |
| Persons on Board: | Crew - 2 | Passengers - None |
| Injuries: | Crew - 1 (Minor) | Passengers - N/A |
| Nature of Damage: | Propeller, landing gear, wings and underside of fuselage | |
| Commander's Licence: | Private Pilot's Licence | |
| Commander's Age: | 62 years | |
| Commander's Flying Experience: | 1,571 hours (of which 82 were on type) Last 90 days - 16 hours Last 28 days - 7 hours | |
| Information Source: | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot | |

Synopsis

The aircraft was being flown from Jersey to Southampton at an altitude of 3,500 ft in Visual Meteorological Conditions when the pilot noted a marked drop in performance of the left engine. Despite checking engine control positions and selecting an alternative fuel tank, he could not restore power. He decided to keep the engine running as it appeared to be producing some power and the oil pressure was normal. A PAN was declared to Solent Radar who gave permission for a straight-in approach to Southampton Airport.

As the flight continued the pilot found it increasingly difficult to maintain height and he decided to land at an airstrip near Lymington as he thought he would be unable to reach Southampton. To avoid creating extra

drag, he did not extend the landing gear or flaps until on final approach. The landing gear had not locked down by the time the aircraft landed and it collapsed on touchdown causing the aircraft to stop quickly. The pilot and passenger were able to vacate the aircraft unaided and once clear they advised Solent Radar of the outcome via the emergency services.

Other information

The pilot reported that the aircraft had flown previously that day and that he had uplifted 50 litres of Avgas before this flight to fill the main tanks, giving a total of 50 US gal. In addition the two auxiliary tanks contained 10 US gal each and the two tip tanks contained 7 US gal each. Before departure the fuel levels were checked

using a dipstick and a check of the water drains was satisfactory.

Following the emergency landing, the fuel system water drains were checked again and no water was found. The aircraft was recovered to a maintenance facility in order to investigate the cause of the engine failure and complete the required repairs. If a definitive cause for the engine failure is found, it will be reported in a future AAIB bulletin.

Discussion

The pilot candidly commented that with the benefit of hindsight the ailing left engine may not have been producing any power and that it might have been better to feather its propeller and shut it down. He considered that the extra drag of the windmilling propeller may have been the reason for the aircraft's failure to maintain height.