No: 10/91 Ref: EW/G91/08/23 Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: (1) Piper PA-28R-200 Cherokee Arrow II, G-TOBE

(2) Glos Airtourer 150, G-AXIX

No & Type of Engines: (1) 1 Lycoming IO-360-C1C piston engine

(2) 1 Lycoming O-320-E2A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: (1) 1974

(2) 1969

Date & Time (UTC): 17 August 1991 at 1650 hrs

Location: Near Ryde Pier, Isle of Wight

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - (1) 1 (2) 1 Passengers - (1) 1 (2) 1

Injuries: Passengers - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: G-TOBE sustained damage to the ADF aerial, the fin and

the rotating beacon lens. G-AXIS was undamaged

Commander's Licence: (1) Private Pilot's Licence with IMC rating

(2) Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: (1) 43 years (2) 45 years

Commander's Flying Experience: (1) 1,650 hours (of which 721 were on type)

(2) 545 hours (of which 206 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Forms submitted by the pilots

and information provided by the Royal Aero Club

Records Racing and Rally Association

The Cherokee and the Airtourer were involved in a minor collision, having just crossed the finishing line during a qualification heat for the Schneider Trophy Air Race.

The heat was conducted over the Solent area, bounded by West Wittering, Gilkicker Point and Eaglehurst, on the mainland, and Cowes, Ryde Pier and Bembridge (out to the Nab Tower) on the Isle of Wight. Up to 50 light aircraft participated and the event had been the subject of a NOTAM. The race regulations emphasised adherence to The Air Navigation Order and Regulations but the event carried an Exemption from Rule 17(4) of Section IV of Rules of the Air Regulations 1990 governing overtaking.

Both the heat and the race are carefully handicapped in order to provide, as nearly as possible, a simultaneous finish for all the aircraft, giving both an exciting finish for the spectators and a race atmosphere for the competitors. Allowing for intentional height changes to take advantage of prevailing winds, the competitors are expected to maintain race height throughout the three laps but are allowed to perform a gentle descent on the final leg, towards the finishing line abeam of Ryde Pier. The purpose of this manoeuvre is twofold: to facilitate race number recognition by the judges and to provide the competitors with the opportunity to arrange not only horizontal but also vertical separation between their aircraft.

In order to make handicapping possible, the top speed of each aircraft (100% power) is declared before the event. The Airtourer had declared 157 mph whilst the Cherokee had declared 169 mph. A video recording of the finish of the heat shows the Airtourer, still in a gentle descent some 200 metres after crossing the line, very slowly overtaking and touching the upper surface of the Cherokee, which was flying straight and level. Both aircraft were able to fly away from the impact and they landed safely.

The pilot of the Airtourer states that he did not, before, during or after the event, either see or hear the other aircraft and attributed the slight bump to wake turbulence. After landing he inspected the aircraft for damage and, finding none, enquired if any other competitors had been involved.

The pilot of the Cherokee states that he was flying straight and level, at a height of about 150 feet and a speed of 170 kt, when he felt a downdraught and heard the noise of another aircraft's engine. However, although he looked for the other aircraft, he saw nothing. After landing, as well as the damage described above, he noticed a tyre mark on top of the fuselage above the pilot's seat area.

The Chief Steward of the Race Committee held an inquiry the next morning and it was the unanimous finding of the Stewards that blame for the collision could not be attached to either pilot.