

Aircraft type and registration: Britten Norman Islander BN2B-26 G-BJOP (light twin engined fixed wing aircraft)

Year of Manufacture: 1981

Date and time (GMT): 23 February 1985 at 0823 hrs

Location: Castletown Aerodrome, Caithness

Type of flight: Non-scheduled Passenger

Persons on board: Crew — One Passengers — Eight

Injuries: Crew — None Passengers — None

Nature of damage: Damage to starboard main undercarriage leg. Upper mainplane distorted

Commander's Licence: Airline Transport Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 35 years

Commander's total flying experience: 4641 hours (of which 3800 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft was on a charter flight from Kirkwall Airport to a private landing strip at Castletown, Caithness. The aircraft departed Kirkwall at 0805 hrs, and the commander reports that the flight proceeded normally until about 2 nautical miles from Castletown. Whilst positioning towards a base leg for runway 15 the landing strip was inspected for livestock and other obstructions and a large flock of sheep was observed east of the runway 33 threshold. As the strip itself appeared clear, the commander decided not to risk dispersing the sheep by making a low pass, but to proceed to land unless an obstruction or animal was observed during the final approach.

Careful checks on runway conditions were made during the final approach and, since it appeared to be clear, full flap was lowered and a normal touch down made. Very shortly afterwards, and before the nose landing gear was lowered, the commander reports that he was aware of two sheep running from right to left across the aircraft's path. At this stage it was too late to attempt avoiding action, and the right main landing gear struck one or both animals.

The aircraft was brought to a halt using gentle braking, and the passengers were disembarked. There were no injuries to the aircraft occupants, however one sheep was killed. The weather at the time was clear, with in-flight visibility reported as 35 kilometres.