

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Socata TB20 Trinidad, G-CORB	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming IO-540-C4D5D piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1990 (Serial no: 1178)	
Date & Time (UTC):	12 May 2018 at 1530 hrs	
Location:	Oban Airport, Argyll and Bute	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 2
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Damage to left landing gear and left wing landing light	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	51 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	555 hours (of which 280 were on type) Last 90 days - 7 hours Last 28 days - 3 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The aircraft's left mainwheel struck the concrete runway designator numbers while attempting to land on grass Runway 25 at Glenforsa Airport. After aborting the landing, the pilot proceeded to Oban Airport, where the left landing gear collapsed on touchdown and the aircraft veered off the runway.

History of the flight

Following an uneventful flight from Gloucestershire Airport, the pilot descended for an approach to grass Runway 25 at Glenforsa Airport on the Isle of Mull. After making radio contact with the air/ground operator at Glenforsa, he was advised to expect wind shear on short final and to avoid heavy braking because the grass conditions were wet. He elected to fly a low pass to view the airfield and wind conditions, and assessed that although not smooth, the grass surface was serviceable. The windsock indicated a predominantly southerly wind, which he estimated to be approximately 6 kt.

Given the advice to avoid heavy braking, the pilot decided to land as close as possible to the runway designator numbers, in order to allow maximum roll-out distance. At approximately 10 ft agl the aircraft experienced a strong downdraught causing it to land hard and slightly short of the numbers. The pilot felt a hard bump and immediately initiated a go-around. The air/ground operator subsequently informed him that the left landing gear appeared to be damaged.

The pilot decided to divert to Oban Airport, which had additional facilities and a paved runway. On arriving at Oban, he informed the Aerodrome Flight Information Service Officer (AFISO) of the situation and requested a low pass to enable the tower to assess the landing gear. The AFISO reported that the left landing gear was visibly damaged. The airport Rescue and Fire Fighting Service (RFFS) were put on local standby.

The pilot of another aircraft operating in the area offered to fly alongside and assess the damage from closer range, so both aircraft flew to the west of the airfield. The other pilot reported that the left landing gear was not properly aligned and the tyre had detached from the wheel rim. However, the landing gear indication lights continued to indicate that all three landing gear were down and locked.

The pilot indicated his intention to land Runway 01 at Oban and the airport upgraded the incident to a full emergency, notifying the local authority fire service and ambulance. The aircraft touched down on the right mainwheel first and when the left mainwheel touched down, the left landing gear collapsed. The aircraft slewed to the left and departed the runway, coming to rest on the grass approximately 22 m from the runway edge. The RFFS attended, although the pilot and his passengers were uninjured and exited the aircraft without assistance. The other emergency services were subsequently stood down.

Airfield information

Glenforsa is an unlicensed airfield with a single grass runway. The runway designator numbers are made of concrete sunk into the grass. Following the incident, the Glenforsa air/ground operator informed the pilot that witness marks indicated the aircraft wheels had sunk into the runway surface and the left wheel had struck the vertical edge of the concrete runway numbers.

The airport operator provides some runway safety information on its website, but this does not currently include any reference to the concrete numbers.

Discussion

The pilot commented that in future, if faced with similar circumstances to those encountered at Glenforsa, he would ensure that his touchdown aiming point allowed more clearance beyond the concrete numbers.

The airport operator commented that it was not aware of any previous occasions where the concrete runway numbers had presented a hazard to a landing aircraft, but stated that it would review the information published on its website.