



Air Accident Investigation Unit Ireland

FACTUAL REPORT

ACCIDENT

**Piper PA 16 Clipper, EI-EMT
Letterkenny Airfield (EILT), Co Donegal
22 May 2012**



**An Roinn Iompair
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt**

Department of Transport,
Tourism and Sport

FINAL REPORT

AAIU Report No: 2013-009
State File No: IRL00912056
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In accordance with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, Regulation (EU) No. 996/2010 and the provisions of S.I. 460 of 2009, the Chief Inspector of Air Accidents, on 22 May 2012, appointed Mr. Paul Farrell as the Investigator-in-Charge to carry out an investigation into this Accident and prepare a Report. The sole purpose of this investigation is the prevention of aviation Accidents and Incidents. It is not the purpose of the investigation to apportion blame or liability.

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA 16 Clipper, EI-EMT
No. and Type of Engines:	1 x Lycoming O-320-A2A
Aircraft Serial Number:	16-29
Year of Manufacture:	1949
Date and Time (UTC):	22 May 2012 @ 17:50 hrs
Location:	Runway (RWY) 25 Letterkenny Airfield (EILT), Co Donegal N 54:57.080', W 07:40'.200
Type of Operation:	General Aviation
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passenger - 0
Injuries:	Crew - None Passenger - None
Nature of Damage:	Substantial
Commander's Licence:	UK PPL(A)
Commander's Details:	Male, aged 69 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,400 hours, of which 940 were on type
Notification Source:	Pilot
Information Source:	AAIU Field Investigation, AAIU Report Form submitted by Pilot



SYNOPSIS

The aircraft was approaching RWY 25 for a landing when, without any control input, the aircraft suddenly tracked to the right of the runway, struck a windsock pole and a boundary ditch and impacted into the adjacent field. The Pilot was unhurt and exited the aircraft without assistance.

1. FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.1 History of Flight

The Pilot, who was experienced on the aircraft type, said that following a 25 minute local flight he was approaching the airfield for a landing on RWY 25. The wind at the time was from 200° and 10 kts.

During the final phase of landing, with the throttle closed and the aircraft approximately 25 ft above the runway, a cross wind caught the aircraft and before the Pilot could react the aircraft had tracked to the right of the runway and control was lost. The starboard wing root impacted with a wind sock pole. Both main wheels impacted with the boundary fence and ditch. There was a cast iron vessel, probably an old animal trough, embedded in the soil of the ditch and the wheel impact caused several large fragments of the vessel to break away. Both main wheels separated from the aircraft and the aircraft turned through almost 180 degrees before coming to rest in the adjacent field (**Photo No. 1**). The Pilot smelled fuel and immediately shut off the electrical Master Switch. The door of the aircraft was jammed shut so the Pilot, who was unhurt, made good his escape through a door window and retreated to a safe distance.

The Pilot held a valid Licence, issued by the UK Civil Aviation Authority and a valid Medical Certificate. The Pilot confirmed to the Investigation that the aircraft was serviceable at the time of the accident and that there had been no problems with any of the flight or engine controls.

Conversations with the Pilot and other pilots familiar with the airfield indicated that with the wind direction on the day, local topography and hangar placement can give rise to sudden, cross wind gust exposure around the point that the Pilot described, as aircraft emerge from the lee of the hangars.

FINAL REPORT



Photo No. 1: Aircraft as it came to rest, note separated wheels and windsock pole

2. AAIU COMMENT

The problem of difficult cross wind conditions when emerging from the lee of the hangars was known at this airfield. On this occasion events unfolded so rapidly that the Pilot was unable to react quickly enough to prevent the accident.

- END -

In accordance with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, Regulation (EU) No. 996/2010, and Statutory Instrument No. 460 of 2009, Air Navigation (Notification and Investigation of Accidents, Serious Incidents and Incidents) Regulation, 2009, the sole purpose of this investigation is to prevent aviation accidents and serious incidents. It is not the purpose of any such investigation and the associated investigation report to apportion blame or liability.

A safety recommendation shall in no case create a presumption of blame or liability for an occurrence.

Produced by the Air Accident Investigation Unit

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