



**Serious incident** to the MOONEY M20J  
registered **F-HGPR**  
on Tuesday 6 August 2024  
at La Rochelle - Île de Ré airport

Time	Around 14:00 <sup>1</sup>
Operator	Private
Type of flight	Cross-country
Persons on board	Pilot and one passenger
Consequences and damage	None

**Continuation of a non-stabilised approach, bounced landing, loss of control, go-around, runway veer-off, near collision with obstacles**

**1 HISTORY OF THE FLIGHT**

*Note: the following information is principally based on the pilot's statement, radio communications recordings, security cameras, a video taken by the passenger, as well as data from the SDVFR application used by the pilot.*

The pilot, accompanied by one passenger, was carrying out a tourist trip lasting several days, departing from Annecy - Meythet airport (Haute-Savoie). The second leg consisted of a flight between Biarritz - Pays Basque airport (Pyrénées-Atlantiques) and La Rochelle - Île de Ré airport.

The pilot took off from runway 27 at Biarritz airport at around 12:35 and then flew along the coast at an altitude of 1,500 ft<sup>2</sup>. After flying over Île d'Oléron, he entered the La Rochelle CTR via the SA reporting point. The controller then asked him to call back in left-hand base leg. The pilot flew along the ring road, then started the descent and intercepted the centreline of runway 27<sup>3</sup> about 1.1 NM from the displaced threshold. The aeroplane was then at a height of around 300 ft (see **Figure 1**, point **3**). The pilot, alone in the runway circuit, was cleared to land.

<sup>1</sup> Except where otherwise indicated, the times in this report are in local time.

<sup>2</sup> The glossary of abbreviations and acronyms frequently used by the BEA can be found on its [web site](#).

<sup>3</sup> Paved runway measuring 2,213m x 45, LDA 1,746 m.

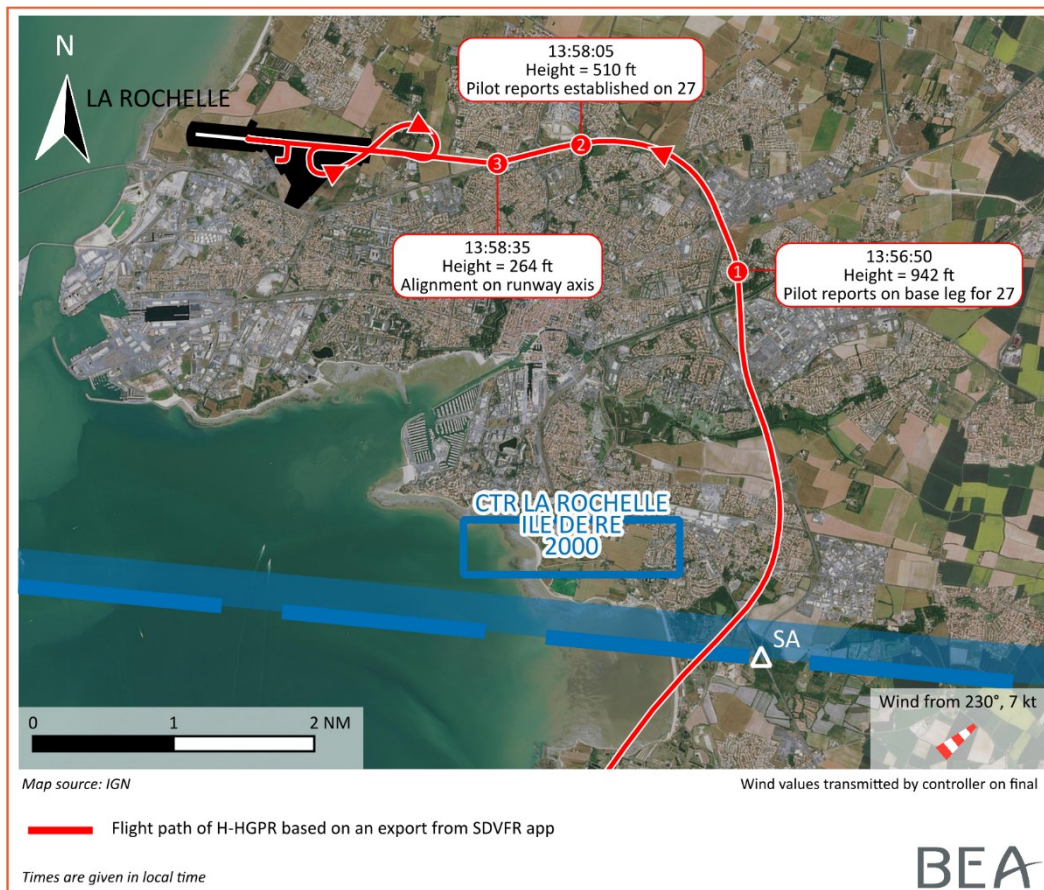


Figure 1: path based on SDVFR data

During the final, he realised that he was below the approach slope by observing four red lights on the PAPI. Nevertheless, he continued his approach. The aeroplane touched down on the runway around 50 m before the displaced threshold and bounced. When the aeroplane touched down on the runway again, it deviated slightly to the left. The pilot, afraid that he could exit the runway, went around. The aeroplane veered off the runway along a path almost perpendicular to the runway and passed close to the ILS Glide antenna and the windsock<sup>4</sup>. The aircraft then took off, adopted a bank angle to the left in climb, and passed close to the commercial aviation parking area at low height.

The controller alerted the RFFS and offered assistance to the pilot. The latter informed her that he did not need it and that he was coming back to land. The pilot followed a figure-of-eight trajectory and landed on runway 27.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the path established using the SDVFR data, the aeroplane passed within 30 m of these obstacles.

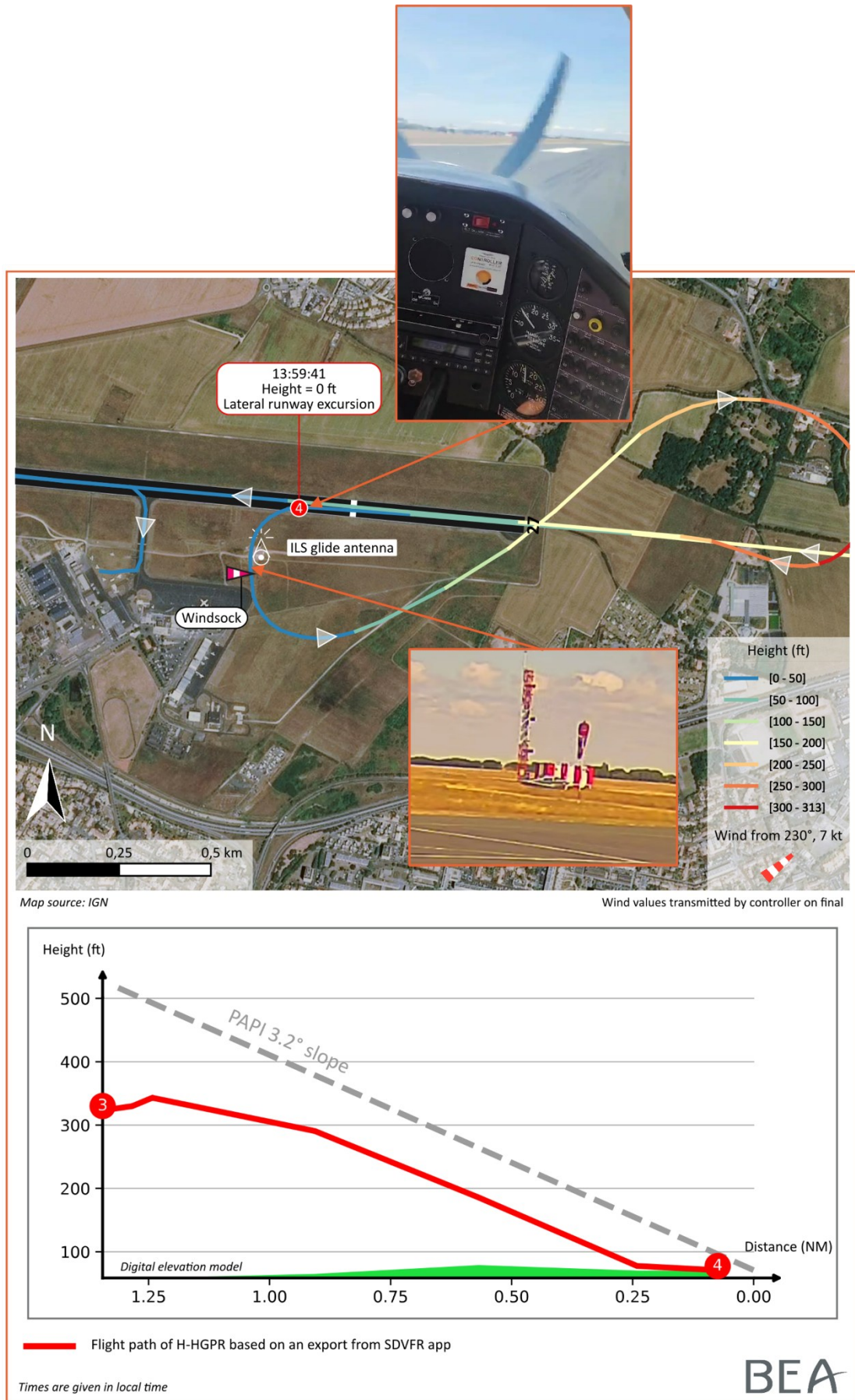


Figure 2: path based on SDVFR data

## 2 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### 2.1 Pilot information and statement

The 62-year-old pilot held a private pilot licence issued in 2010 along with an SEP rating which was revalidated in April 2024. He had logged around 600 flight hours, 5 hours and 30 minutes of which in the last 30 days. He had owned F-HGPR since 2021 and was flying it exclusively. He had logged around 100 flight hours on this aeroplane. This was the first time he landed at La Rochelle, but he specified that he had already travelled to aerodromes with long runways.

The pilot indicated that flying along the S-shaped ring road could explain why he ended up below the approach slope on final. Realising that he was too low on observing four red lights at the PAPI, he increased the power. He did not explain why he continued the final even though he was aware of flying low and probably too fast. It is possible that he was focused on the route and a little tense as he absolutely wanted to follow the published route.

Regarding the landing, he explained that he had already experienced small bounces with F-GHPR, which he managed without any particular difficulties.

The pilot specified that he was not hampered by the weather conditions or other traffic.

### 2.2 Aerodrome information

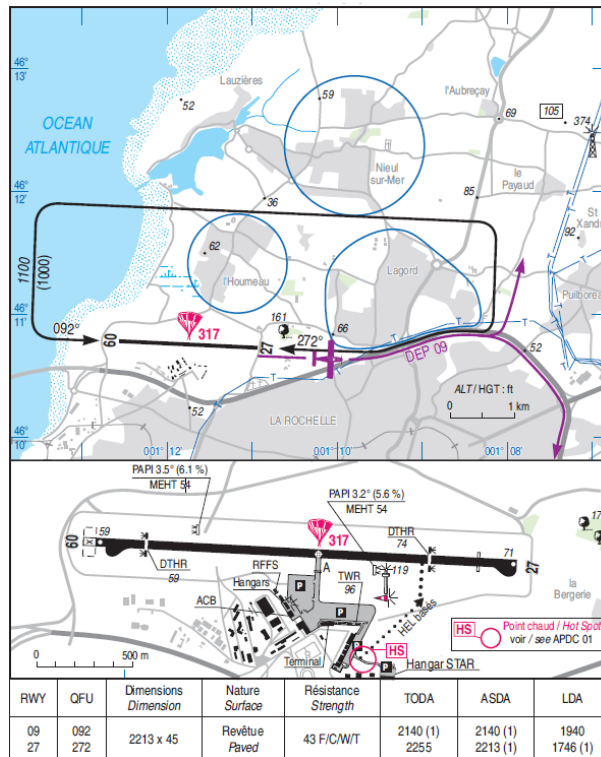


Figure 3: excerpt from the visual approach chart (Source: AIS)

In the special instructions of the approach chart, the following is specified for landing on runway 27: “Make final turn to intercept and follow ring road to RWY centre-line. PAPI is mandatory.” The PAPI for runway 27 is calibrated for a slope of 3.2° (5.6%).

### 2.3 Meteorological information

The automatic METAR report at 14:00 indicated the following:

- wind of 7kt from 230°, varying from 180° to 280°;
- visibility greater than 10 km;
- few clouds at 3,400 ft;
- temperature 26°C.

On final, the controller gave the pilot a wind of 7 kt from 230°.

## 3 CONCLUSIONS

*The conclusions are solely based on the information which came to the knowledge of the BEA during the investigation.*

### Scenario

The pilot continued his approach even though he knew that he was below the published approach slope. During the landing, the aeroplane bounced and then the pilot lost control of the plane, which veered left and was then off-centre of the runway axis. The pilot, worried about a runway excursion, carried out a go-around. The engine effects on increasing the power and the LH crosswind may have accentuated this loss of control. The aeroplane slid and exited the runway, following a path almost perpendicular to it, and was very quickly outside the runway safety area. The pilot continued the take-off, and the aeroplane passed close to obstacles without the pilot being able to control its path.

### Safety lessons

On continuing a non-stabilised approach, the flare manoeuvre may be difficult to manage, and the pilot may be confronted with an unexpected situation (long flare, bounce, lateral swerve). The pilot may then have to make choices in a very dynamic situation: continue the landing with the risk of damaging the plane or take off again. The study of previous events shows that the accidents with the most serious consequences during landing occurred, above all, during go-arounds performed with insufficient control of the aircraft. On the other hand, the accidents which occurred when the landing was continued, while they often lead to material damage, rarely result, on a light aeroplane, in serious or fatal injuries. During training or recurrent training, it is important to mention the various mechanical phenomena of the flight occurring during a rejected landing. It is also essential to consider all the criteria to be taken into account in order to decide whether it is preferable to reject rather than continue the landing.

***The BEA investigations are conducted with the sole objective of improving aviation safety and are not intended to apportion blame or liabilities.***