

Crew members ready to lift a dinghy onto the Abeille Languedoc (stock image) ( Image: AFP via Getty Images)

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## crash wash up on beach

A French public prosecutor has said that official documents belonging to two Brits missing from a light plane crash in the English Channel have been found on a beach

By Tim Hanlon, News Reporter 23:13,7 Apr 2022 | UPDATED 23:50,7 Apr 2022











COMMENTS

Official documents belonging to two British nationals involved in a light plane crash in the English Channel have washed up on a beach in France.

Boulogne public prosecutor Guirec Le Bras has confirmed that the papers belonged to those on board the Piper PA-28, which went down last Saturday.

The pilot and passenger – who have not been identified – were on a trip to the French seaside resort of Le Touquet organised by the South Warwickshire Flying School, before coming down in an April snowstorm.

"The official documents that have been found make it possible to make a link with the people on the plane which disappeared in British waters," said Mr Le Bras.

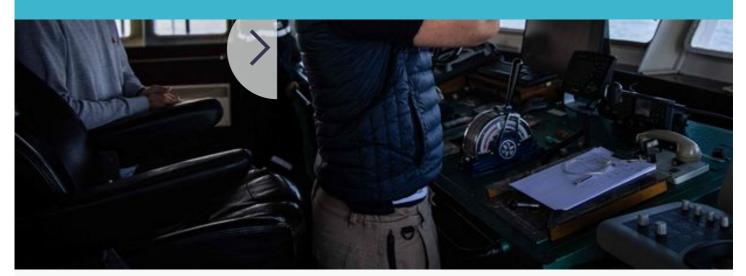
He said that the documents were found on the beach at Equihen-Plage, just north of Le Touquet, by a local walker on Wednesday.



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Papers from two British nationals involved in the plane crash have washed up on a French beach ( Image: AFP via Getty Images)

They will be handed over to air accident investigators, and to the British authorities, Mr Le Bras added.

Asked if any debris from the plane had been found, Mr Le Bras said no.

It was last Saturday morning that the plane left Wellesbourne - the home airfield of the South Warwickshire Flying School - along with five other planes.

Within two hours, they hit a snowstorm over the English Channel, and the Piper disappeared into the freezing sea below.

The search for those on board went on for two days before being called off by the French authorities after no wreckage was found.

"All of the planes from England were confronted with a very large cloud of snow in freezing cold weather," said an investigating source in France.



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The pilot and passenger on the Piper PA-28 have not yet been identified (stock image) ( Image: Alamy)

"It caused some of the planes to turn around, while others zig zagged in the hope of getting round it.

"The Piper went straight in, and this may well have caused the crash. If the survivors had managed to get out of the sunken plane, survival time in the water below would have been very short."

The stricken plane - registration number G-EGVA - was owned by part time Flying Instructor Guy Wakeley, 51, who is also a well-known financial services boss.

Mr W akeley, non-executive director at City of London equity investment company HgCapital Trust plc, was not on the trip to Le Touquet.

Rodney Galiffe, the Managing Director of the South Warwickshire Flying School, confirmed that accident investigators were in Wellesbourne, as they continued with their enquiry.

British Coastguard originally launched an operation supported by French aircraft and boats when the same plane went down in the Channel.

Flight records show that that the Piper PA-28R-200 Cherokee Arrow II – which was built in 1976 – had left Wellesbourne at 7.56am on Saturday and went off radar over the Channel within two hours.

The Piper has been in production since 1960 and various models have been involved in a number of high-profile accidents in that time.

In August 1972, Prince William of Gloucester, the Queen's cousin, was killed along with his copilot in a Piper Cherokee Arrow after crashing on take-off from Halfpenny Green, near Wolverhampton, during an air race.

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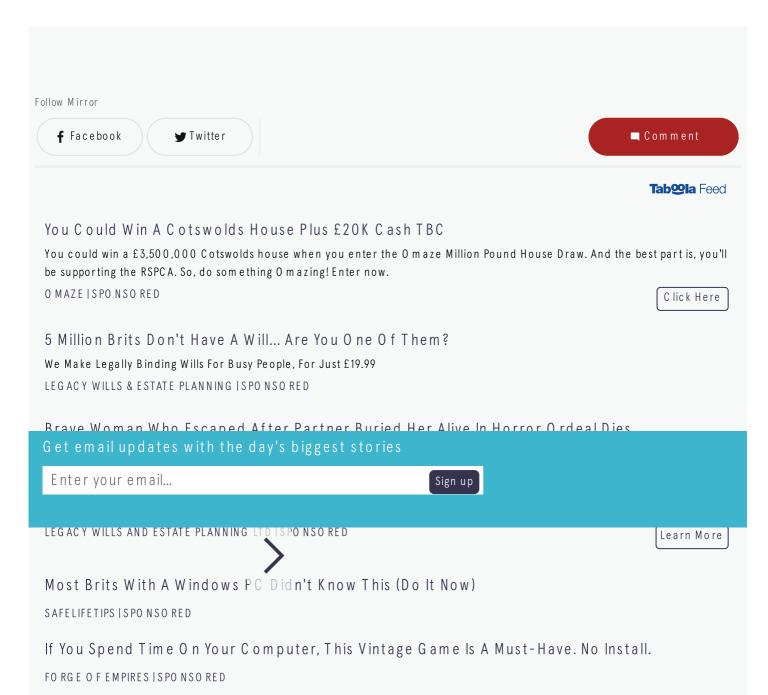
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