

# Piper J3C-65, G-BDEY

**AAIB Bulletin No:**  
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**Ref:** EW/G2001/06/24

**Category:** 1.1

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** Piper J3C-65, G-BDEY

**No & Type of Engines:** 1 Continental A65-8 piston engine

**Year of Manufacture:** 1943

**Date & Time (UTC):** 22 June 2001 at 1445 hrs

**Location:** Fenland Airfield near Spalding, Lincolnshire

**Type of Flight:** Training

**Persons on Board:** Crew - 2 - Passengers - None

**Injuries:** Crew - None - Passengers - N/A

**Nature of Damage:** Damage to left landing gear

**Commander's Licence:** Basic Commercial Pilots Licence with a CAA flight examiners authority

**Commander's Age:** 59 years

**Commander's Flying Experience:** 4225 hours (all on similar types)

Last 90 days - 102 hours

Last 28 days - 32 hours

**Information Source:** Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The instructor was carrying out type conversion training with the aircraft owner. Having successfully completed 2 hours and 35 minutes of training it was decided to complete a further two circuits from grass Runway 36/18 before departing for the aircraft's home base of Empingham.

In order to position for take off the aircraft taxied clear of the runway edge markers onto the runway 'runoff area' and backtracked towards the threshold of Runway 36. The aircraft owner was

short in stature necessitating the use of an elevated seat cushion and seat back padding to enable her to reach the rudder pedals. As a result the forward visibility for the instructor, seated in the rear, was obscured in an arc 30° to 40° either side of the aircraft centreline. Weaving the aircraft's nose from side to side during ground manoeuvring was therefore essential in order to have a clear view of the way ahead.

Situated close to the Runway 36 run-up area was a Low Intensity Two Colour Approach Slope System (LITAS). This installation had been damaged in a previous taxiing incident and some of it had been removed. The remainder, a metal frame structure, was marked at its centre by an amber coloured traffic cone approximately 4 feet high with a base diameter of 2 feet.

Despite weaving from side to side whilst the taxiing the aircraft collided with this obstruction. The engine was shut down and the damage inspected. It was determined that the framework had not come into contact with the propeller but had struck the underside of the landing gear, partially cracking the tension bar. As the aircraft was some distance from the airfield club facilities and parking area it was decided to taxi it slowly back for inspection. Before it reached the parking area the tension bar broke completely and the left landing gear collapsed. The aircraft was eventually recovered by lifting the wing and 'walking' it to the hangar.

The instructor reported that, with hindsight, the landing gear should have been made secure before any attempt to move the aircraft was made. He further commented that the runway marker boards had recently been repositioned, at the request of CAA Aerodrome Standards officials, leaving the LITAS installation more exposed within the centre of the runway 'runoff' area.

As a result of this accident and some previous occurrences, the airfield operator is repositioning the LITAS installation to the edge of the runway runoff area.