

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-25-235 Pawnee, G-BETM	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-540-B2B5 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1976	
Date & Time (UTC):	29 October 2009 at 1004 hrs	
Location:	Sutton Bank Airfield, North Yorkshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to left landing gear	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	63 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	806 hours (of which 324 were on type) Last 90 days - 7 hours Last 28 days - 5 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Immediately after touchdown, following a normal glider aerotow flight, the pilot heard a "bang" from the left side of the aircraft and thought the noise was associated with the landing gear. He then switched the magnetos to OFF and attempted to hold the left wing off the ground for as long as possible. However, as the aircraft slowed the left wing dropped and its tip contacted the damp grass runway surface; the aircraft slowly turned through 180° before coming to rest. The pilot vacated the aircraft without difficulty.

Post-accident inspection revealed the eye-end attachment lug on the left landing gear damper unit had failed; such a failure allows the landing gear to be unrestrained and pivot outboard. It was evident from the fracture surfaces that the eye-end had been cracked for some time before finally failing on this landing. The pilot reported that the aircraft was used exclusively for aerotowing operations and averaged some six flights per hour from a grass runway.