

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-32-300, G-DIWY	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming LO-540-K1A5 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1969 (Serial no: 32-40731)	
Date & Time (UTC):	23 June 2020 at 1655 hrs	
Location:	North Coates Airfield, Lincolnshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 3
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Minor)	Passengers - 3 (Minor)
Nature of Damage:	Major damage to the nose landing gear, engine and airframe	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	58 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	81 hours (of which 44 were on type) Last 90 days - 15 hours Last 28 days - 10 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The nose landing gear collapsed on touchdown causing the aircraft to veer off the runway to the left and drop into a dyke.

History of the flight

The pilot was carrying out a flight from Full Sutton Airfield, Yorkshire, to North Coates Airfield, Lincolnshire. The weather was good, with the wind 220° at 6 kt, CAVOK, OAT 27°C, Dew Point 14°C and QNH 996 hPa. The flight was uneventful, and the aircraft joined downwind for Runway 23, which had a mown grass surface 750 m x 18 m, with flaps selected and all checks completed. On the final approach, the surface wind was passed as 140° at 12 kt and the aircraft passed over the runway threshold with 89 mph IAS. A normal touchdown was made on the runway centreline, but the aircraft "jerked" to the left and continued to veer to the left despite rudder inputs to the right. The pilot applied the wheel brakes but, as the aircraft appeared to skid, he released them slightly as it appeared to be exacerbating the problem, and the aircraft continued to turn to the left. It departed the left side of the runway into the long grass at about 55 mph. Approximately six feet into the grass, there was a large dyke, which was not visible to the pilot due to the length of the grass, and the left wing dropped into it. The aircraft yawed sharply to the left, which in turn caused the nose to impact the dyke wall head on. The aircraft yawed a further ninety degrees to the left, coming to a stop facing back towards the Runway 23

threshold. The pilot turned off the fuel and electrical system and everyone exited through the doors, moving to the far side of the runway due to fuel leaking from the wings. The pilot telephoned the emergency services who attended the scene.

A runway inspection showed that the point of touchdown was on the centreline with all three wheels appearing to have touched at the same time. It did not feel like a heavy landing, but the nose landing gear had collapsed, veering the aircraft to the left and preventing the pilot steering it back to the centreline.

The pilot commented that none of the airfield charts available to him had mentioned the presence of the dyke and had he known about it, with the increased crosswind, he may have done things differently. The approach and ground tracks with the position of the dyke are shown at Figure 1 below.

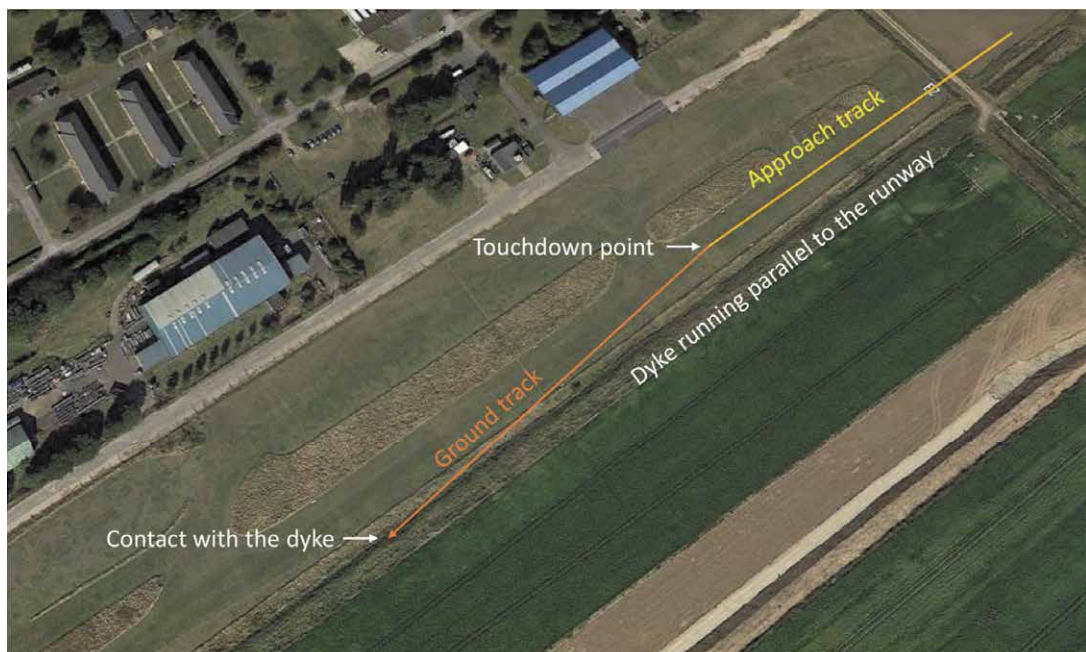


Figure 1

North Coates Airfield showing the position of the dyke