

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-28-181 Cherokee Archer II, G-USSY
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-360-A4M piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1982 (Serial no: 28-8290011)
Date & Time (UTC):	13 June 2018 at 1148 hrs
Location:	Skegness Water Leisure Park, Lincolnshire
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Minor) Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Beyond economic repair
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	79 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	387 hours (of which 347 were on type) Last 90 days - 7 hours Last 28 days - 1 hour
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Synopsis

When overhead Skegness, the pilot could not see the ground markings for his chosen runway so elected to land on the shorter, east-facing runway. There appeared to be some confusion over the designations of the runways, and the pilot reported that the wind at his departure airfield had been westerly. Due to the first landing attempt being 'long', the aircraft went around but struck a hedge whilst doing so. The pilot reported some difficulty in controlling the aircraft but managed to re-position for a landing on the same runway. That landing culminated in the aircraft overrunning the end of the runway and striking the same hedge. Since the accident, Skegness Airfield has emphasised the runway orientation information on its website.

History of the flight

The pilot reported that he planned to fly with a passenger from Leicester to Skegness for a day trip with a friend. He telephoned Skegness Airfield before departure to gain prior permission to land there and was told that there was no air to ground radio operating that day. Having been there before, he decided to make the flight. Prevailing winds meant that a westerly facing runway was appropriate for departing Leicester.

The pilot originally planned to land on the longer of the two grass strips at Skegness, which is oriented 030° and 210°. On arrival, the pilot reported that there was no windsock and, despite performing two level circuits at 1,000 ft agl, neither occupant of the aircraft

could see the ground markings for the chosen runway. Therefore, he elected to use the shorter, east-west orientated, strip – which he could see.

The pilot originally reported the designation of his chosen landing runway as being '03', but stated afterwards that it was in fact '11'.

He performed a left-hand circuit for Runway 11 at 1,000 ft agl and turned on to final approach at 700 ft agl. Towards the end of the approach, he realised that he was going to land far down the runway so he performed a go-around. During that manoeuvre, the aircraft clipped a hedge situated after the departure end of the runway, and some foliage became attached to the airframe.

The pilot reported that he struggled to maintain control and prevent the aircraft from stalling. He turned the aircraft right "with difficulty" to avoid a large caravan park ahead and entered a non-standard right hand circuit over a clear ground area, again for Runway 11. He stated that the aircraft would only "stay in the air" with full power selected. The rudder and elevator appeared to operate normally, but the ailerons were operating "strangely".

Due to the high power setting, G-USSY touched down at an airspeed of around 90 KIAS. The brakes seemed to have little effect. Approaching the end of the runway, the pilot shutdown the engine and told the passenger to 'brace'.

In order to avoid some trees situated within the same hedge as was struck previously, the pilot slewed the aircraft to the right. The aircraft came to rest in the hedge. This blocked the doors, and the occupants remained inside the aircraft for approximately 15 minutes until other people arrived at the aircraft and could open the luggage hatch.

Runway designation

The pilot reflected that the choice of runway was a factor in the accident, and that the winds appeared to be more westerly than he had originally thought. Prior to the flight, he accessed runway information on the Skegness Airfield website, which describes them as follows:

*'Runways 03/21 799m x 23m
11/29 650m x 23m
All circuits inland i.e. 03/11 LH - 21/29 RH'*

Conclusion

The description of the runways and the circuit directions may have contributed to some confusion by the pilot over the runway designations. Since the accident Skegness Airfield stated that it intends to alter its website to emphasise the runway designations.