

## ACCIDENT

<b>Aircraft Type and Registration:</b>	Piper PA-28-181, G-BFSY	
<b>No &amp; Type of Engines:</b>	1 Lycoming O-360-A4M piston engine	
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	1977 (Serial no: 28-7890200)	
<b>Date &amp; Time (UTC):</b>	25 June 2022 at 1740 hrs	
<b>Location:</b>	Chatteris Airfield, Cambridgeshire	
<b>Type of Flight:</b>	Private	
<b>Persons on Board:</b>	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
<b>Injuries:</b>	Crew - None	Passengers - None
<b>Nature of Damage:</b>	Damage to left wing and nosewheel spat	
<b>Commander's Licence:</b>	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence	
<b>Commander's Age:</b>	33 years	
<b>Commander's Flying Experience:</b>	1,800 hours (of which 130 were on type) Last 90 days - 90 hours Last 28 days - 35 hours	
<b>Information Source:</b>	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further enquiries by AAIB	

## Synopsis

The aircraft landed on a disused section of runway at Chatteris Airfield, due to a combination of insufficient airfield detail available during flight planning, and disused runway markers obscured by long grass. Safety actions have been taken by the flight planning tool provider and local flying club to update the airfield information. The airfield has also taken action to maintain the grass length.

## History of the flight

Upon reaching Chatteris the pilot overflew the airfield to assess landing conditions, then proceeded to make an approach onto what he believed to be Runway 24. On landing, the aircraft veered to the left on rough ground, resulting in a loss of directional control and came to rest in bushes at the side of the runway (Figure 1). The pilot later discovered he had landed on a disused section of runway 23, located at the threshold of Runway 24.

## Aerodrome information

Chatteris Airfield is unlicensed and used for intensive parachute operations, requiring Prior Permission Required (PPR) from visiting pilots. The airfield has five grass runways varying in length from 405 to 810 metres. Runway 05/23 is 810m in length, with a disused section of approximately 290m at the north-eastern end marked with white crosses to make it visible from the air. Runway 06/24 intersects 05/23 at the point where the disused section begins.

The pilot reported that he did not see the white crosses during either overflight or approach, due to overgrown grass.



**Figure 1**  
Accident site

## Flight Planning

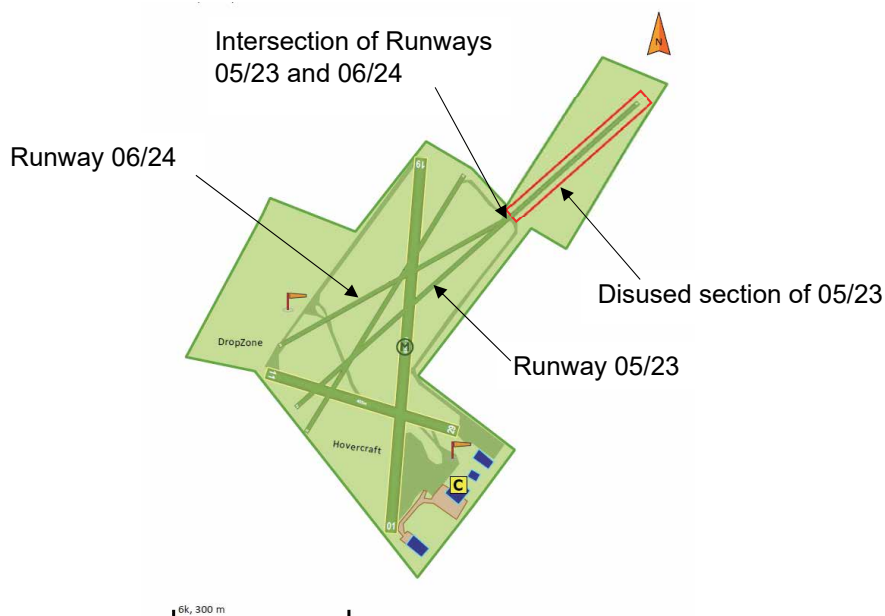
The pilot used an online flight planning tool providing basic airfield information, including an airfield plan (Figure 2) known as a 'plate'. The plate for Chatteris did not mark the disused section of Runway 05/23. More detailed airfield plates are available, via subscription, within the tool which the pilot had a subscription for. These showed the disused section marked with white crosses and contained a warning; however, on this occasion, this detailed airfield plate did not display when the pilot was planning the flight.

Visiting pilot information on the airfield's flying club's website shows an older airfield plate without disused runway markings, advising Runway 05/23 is under construction and to check availability. Whether PPR was obtained by the pilot is disputed between pilot and airfield.

## Analysis

Flight planning and visual information available to the pilot was not sufficient to indicate that the section of runway landed on was disused, leading him to continue the approach. Flight planning tool software content is dependent upon data accuracy and balanced against its intended level of detail. Flight guides are regarded as a more detailed source of information to supplement planning software and PPR information.

The disused runway markers, acting as the last visual reference to the pilot, were obscured due to long grass, leading him to continue the approach despite overflying the airfield beforehand. Visibility of the crosses would have also identified Runway 23 from the closely-orientated Runway 24.



**Figure 2**  
Example Chatteris Airfield plate

## Conclusion

The pilot landed on a disused section of runway due to a combination of insufficient detail available during flight planning, and the disused runway markers being obscured by long grass.

The following safety actions have been taken:

- The airfield management team have taken action to cut the grass of the disused section of Runway 05/23 so that the white crosses are more visible.
- The flight planning tool provider have updated their airfield plate to show the disused section of Runway 05/23.
- The flying club's website is updating their visiting pilot information to display the latest airfield plate showing the disused section of Runway 05/23.