

Accident

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Dornier Do 28A-1, N123CA	
No & Type of Engines:	2 Lycoming O-540-A1D reciprocating engines	
Year of Manufacture:	1964 (Serial no: 3051)	
Date & Time (UTC):	26 November 2022 at 1430 hrs	
Location:	Spanhoe Airfield, Northamptonshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers – None
Nature of Damage:	Left wing slat dented, right elevator and horizontal stabiliser tip damaged	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	79 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	4,470 hours (of which 450 were on type) Last 90 days - 6 hours Last 28 days - 1 hour	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further enquiries made by the AAIB	

Synopsis

The pilot briefly lost directional control of the aircraft during a crosswind landing in gusty conditions, resulting in the aircraft leaving the side of the runway. The pilot regained control and aborted the landing, during which the aircraft clipped some saplings as it climbed away. A functional check of the flying controls demonstrated no controllability issues, and the aircraft was flown back to the departure airfield. A post-flight examination of the aircraft by the pilot revealed damage to the left wing, right elevator and horizontal stabiliser.

History of the flight

Following a flight from Old Warden to land at Spanhoe – about 30 nm to the north-west – the pilot, before making an approach to land, circled the airfield to check the windsock was consistent with earlier forecasts of wind from 190° at 12 kt gusting 18 kt. The wind was across both of Spanhoe's unlicensed runways so the longer 700 m concrete Runway 27 (originally a taxiway) was chosen.

A long approach was made with the aircraft crabbed left into wind – there was no indication of any gusting. The pilot flew a tail-low wheeler landing, applying power on the upwind (left) engine to help yaw the aircraft onto the runway heading. The landing was slightly long. Just as the power on the left engine was reduced – with the aircraft passing a gap between buildings and hangars on the left – a “violent” gust lifted the left wing. The pilot applied

maximum aileron to lower the wing and right brake to keep the aircraft on the runway. However, the aircraft turned left through about 25° and veered off the runway onto the grassed area used for parking aircraft and vehicles. The application of full power on the left engine “did little to arrest the swing”. Ground looping the aircraft “was not an option due to space available and parked vehicles”, so the pilot initiated a go-around during which it was noted that the left wing had clipped some saplings adjacent to the hangars.

Once airborne and at a safe height (and under the watchful eye of the passenger who was also a pilot), the pilot checked the flying controls, including flaps. Establishing these were functioning correctly they returned to Old Warden for an uneventful landing, into wind, on Runway 20. A post-flight examination of the aircraft by the pilot revealed damage to the left wing and right elevator and horizontal stabiliser.

Pilot’s comments

The pilot, in his assessment of the cause, noted that the safety lesson he had learned from this event was to be prepared and “expect the unexpected when least expected”.