

Piper PA-28-161 Cherokee Warrior II, G-BNOH

AAIB Bulletin No: 9/2004	Ref: EW/G2004/05/09	Category: 1.3
INCIDENT		
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-28-161 Cherokee Warrior II, G-BNOH	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-320-D3G piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1987	
Date & Time (UTC):	17 May 2004 at 1230 hrs	
Location:	Old Sarum Airfield, Wiltshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Wing leading edge dented	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	65 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	356 hours (all on type)	
	Last 90 days - 6 hours	
	Last 28 days - 3 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The aircraft landed on Runway 24 at Old Sarum following an uneventful flight from Sherburn-in-Elmet. On completing his landing run the aircraft commander, who was unfamiliar with the airfield, asked if he should backtrack the runway, but was advised by Old Sarum Radio to "EXIT RIGHT AND TAXI OUTSIDE THE YELLOW CONES", towards an area of recently mown grass. The commander and his passenger, also a pilot, agreed that this was the taxiway, and the aircraft proceeded towards the parking area with its left wing partly overhanging long grass. As the aircraft approached the parking area, it struck a tall metal fence post, partially hidden behind a bush, denting the leading edge about three feet inboard of the left wing tip. The aircraft was pushed back from the obstruction and taxied to a parking position, where an engineer from the local maintenance organisation inspected the damage and determined that the aircraft should not be flown.

Airfield information

Old Sarum is a grass airfield originally opened by the Royal Flying Corp in 1917. The centre of the field is occupied by the licensed Runway 06/24, which is delineated by two rows of white cones. To the south is a parallel, unlicensed area occasionally used by gliders. To the north of the licensed runway is another manoeuvring area, referred to as a 'taxiing area', providing access between the runway, aircraft parking, the flying club and other buildings on the northern boundary of the airfield. This taxiing area is immediately adjacent to the licensed runway and is separated from it only by the

white cones that form the latter's northern edge. Parking for visiting aircraft is beside the northern airfield boundary on a strip, that at the time was of recently mown grass, north of the taxiing area and separated from it by a row of yellow cones. There were no other aircraft parked in this area at the time of the incident that may have helped to identify it as a parking area rather than a taxiway.

The runways and other manoeuvring areas all lie within the boundaries of a single large field, most of which is mown regularly and maintained to a high standard. Although the licensed runway is correctly marked in accordance with Chapter 7 of CAP 168 '*Licensing of Aerodromes - Aerodrome signals, signs and markings*', the smooth overall appearance of the field can make the various parallel sections of the airfield difficult to distinguish when viewed from an aircraft on the ground. It was unclear to the commander which of the various mown areas were for parking or for manoeuvring. He considered the information to taxi "OUTSIDE THE YELLOW CONES" ambiguous, because, in his view, the phrase could be considered as applying to the relative position of the observer: In this case either the radio operator's position to the north of the yellow cones or the aircraft position to the south.

Follow up action

Part of the advice contained in General Aviation Safety Sense leaflet 6C '*Aerodrome Sense*' is that pilots should look up an intended destination aerodrome in the AIP or a commercially available flight guide before setting off. G-BNOH carried charts from both sources, but neither provided sufficient detail to enable the taxiing area or parking area to be positively identified. Staff manning the air/ground radio facility at Old Sarum pointed out that there is no area that can be strictly defined as a taxiway and the Aerodrome Standards Department of the CAA advise that there are no published requirements for the marking of such unpaved areas.

Although air/ground radio operators acknowledge the importance of unambiguous taxiing and parking instructions, pilots are reminded to keep an especially good lookout when manoeuvring at unfamiliar airfields or those with no air traffic control service. Most airfields can be contacted in advance for a briefing on local peculiarities. The tall metal fence post has since been painted yellow and had a number of short streamers attached to it in an attempt to make it more visible.