

Piper L21B(Modified), G-BIRH, 7 February 1999 at 1430 hrs

AAIB Bulletin No: 4/99 Ref: EW/G99/02/08 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper L21B(Modified), G-BIRH
No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-360-A4A piston engine
Year of Manufacture: 1955
Date & Time (UTC): 7 February 1999 at 1430 hrs
Location: Hinton-in-the-Hedges Airfield, Northants
Type of Flight: Private
Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - None
Injuries: Crew - Minor - Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage: Substantial to propeller and wing struts
Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age: 39 years
Commander's Flying Experience: 360 hours (of which 7 were on type)
Last 90 days - 5 hours
Last 28 days - 0 hours
Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The weather forecast for the day of the accident included a surface wind of 310°/17 gusting to 29 kt and the pilot had completed eleven glider tows without incident. After the eleventh landing in a northwesterly direction, the pilot retracted the flaps and commenced a left turn to return to the launch point. As the aircraft was taxiing cross wind, the pilot felt the tail lifting and closed the throttle. The tail then began to settle and the pilot reached for the mixture control with the intention of shutting down the engine. As he did so, the tail again lifted and pitched the aircraft onto its nose where it paused before coming to rest inverted. The pilot made the aircraft safe and was aided in his evacuation by club members who were quickly on the scene.

The pilot attributed the cause of the accident to a gust of wind that was of greater strength than any experienced beforehand and from an unexpected direction. The wind reported at the time of the accident was 330°/20 kt.