

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper L18C Super Cub, G-BBYB	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Continental C90-8F piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1952	
Date & Time (UTC):	17 March 2007 at 1215 hrs	
Location:	Headcorn Airfield, Kent	
Type of Flight:	Aerial Work	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Propeller bent, tailfin and wings damaged, wing support struts bent	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	48 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	135 hours (of which 5 were on type) Last 90 days - 4 hours Last 28 days - less than 1 hour	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The pilot lost directional control during the takeoff on his first solo flight on the type. He therefore attempted to abandon the takeoff but the aircraft nosed over and became inverted.

Summary of pilot's report

A period of circuit consolidation was carried out by the accident pilot under the supervision of a club check pilot. During this period, four touch-and-go landings took place, followed by a full-stop landing. The check pilot then left the aircraft, having recommended that the accident pilot carry out one or two solo circuits.

The pilot taxied to the holding for Runway 29, carried

out the pre-takeoff checks and visually checked the final approach. He noted that the circuit was busy. He then made a radio call stating that he was ready for departure, lined up and commenced the takeoff run. This was straight until he lifted the tail, shortly after which the aircraft hit a small undulation causing it to lift off to a height of two to three feet. The aircraft immediately veered and drifted to the right whilst the pilot tried to correct with application of rudder. The aircraft touched down again but the pilot was not able to regain directional control. As the aircraft was heading for the fence line, the pilot closed the throttle and commenced braking. The aircraft then nosed over and became inverted. The pilot released his harness, shut off the fuel and exited through the door.

Subsequent investigation of the airfield's wind recording equipment indicated that a number of gusts occurred at the time of the accident. It was noted that for the duration of each gust the wind backed to south-west. Observation of the windsock confirmed this trend. It appears that during the consolidation flight the wind had been steady at 8-10 kt. Some 2½ hours before the accident, the actual wind had been reported as 250°/09 kt.

The pilot believes that the aircraft became airborne with insufficient airspeed and was affected by the gusting crosswind. As this was his first solo flight on the aircraft

type, the change in characteristics without the passenger weight may have been a contributing factor, although he had been briefed to expect this.

Check pilot's comments

The check pilot noted that the accident pilot had previously carried out a number of dual details on the type. On one of these he was reported as having coped well in blustery conditions. The check pilot considered that the accident pilot had carried out the dual circuits and landings safely prior to the accident flight.