

No: 3/89

Ref: EW/G88/12/13

Category 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-28-140, G-AVWG

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-320-E2A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1967

Date and Time (UTC): 11 December 1988 at 1220 hrs

Location: Tal-Y-Fan, Conway, Gwynedd

Type of Flight: Training

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 3

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Aircraft destroyed

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence with IMC and Assistant Instructor Ratings

Commander's Age: 53 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 509 hours (of which 335 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot.

The aircraft was flying below the cloudbase, on a cross-country flight from Blackpool to Mona and had turned south down the Conway estuary. The cloudbase had varied, according to the adjacent terrain, between about 1000 and 2000 feet and the wind was in excess of 30 kt from the northwest. After about 1.5 nm the pilot turned right onto 280° and, a few moments later, further right onto 330°. This put the aircraft at a height of about 1400 feet on a heading towards ground rising to between 1400 and 3000 feet.

At this point, the pilot realised that they were losing climbing speed and descending rapidly. The pilot states that the visibility back towards the estuary was insufficient to allow them to turn back and they "had no alternative but to make a forced landing and could not turn back through 180° for fear of stalling". The pilot has since stated that he had no idea that (standing wave) downdraughts could be so severe.

According to the pilot, the forced landing broke only the landing gear however, according to the owner, the aircraft has been assessed as a write-off. The occupants, who were wearing diagonal upper torso restraint harnesses, evacuated the aircraft without further incident. There was no fire.