

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper L18C (Modified) Super Cub, G-RCUB
No & Type of Engines:	1 Continental Motors Corp C90-14F piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1952 (Serial no: 18-1980)
Date & Time (UTC):	25 December 2013 at 1600 hrs
Location:	Tandragee Airfield, County Armagh
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Serious) Passengers - 1 (Serious)
Nature of Damage:	Severe damage to wings, forward fuselage and tailplane
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	44 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	5,762 hours (of which 1,810 were on type) Last 90 days - 158 hours Last 28 days - 28 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Synopsis

The aircraft was returning following a short local flight. The pilot noted that the wind conditions were such that the normal landing direction would incur a small tailwind component but he believed that this was preferable to an approach over trees at the other end of the runway. He stated that just before touchdown, the tailwind increased and he decided to go around. During the go-around, the aircraft struck the trees and crashed just beyond them.

History of the flight

The aircraft was returning to Tandragee Airfield after a short local flight of 15-20 minutes with the pilot and a passenger on board. The single gravel runway is oriented 180°/360° and is about 400 metres long. The pilot of G-RCUB advised that takeoffs are normally made to the south and landings to the north unless strong southerly winds prevail. This is because of the presence of two lines of trees running at right angles to the runway along the northern boundary of the airfield. On departure, he saw that the windsock was indicating that the wind was between 220° and 240° at 5 kt.

As he returned to Tandragee, the pilot saw that the windsock was indicating substantially the same conditions as when he had taken off, with a tailwind of about 4 kt along the northerly runway. He joined downwind and proceeded through base leg to finals. However, just before touchdown, the tailwind component appeared to increase and he decided to

go around. A video taken by the passenger shows that the aircraft touched down and commenced a landing roll before the pilot advanced the throttle to full power. The aircraft lifted off but can be seen and heard to brush the lower line of trees which was closest to the runway. Three to four seconds later, it collided bodily with the second line of taller trees which brought it almost to a halt in the air before dropping to the ground in a nose-down attitude. Both occupants suffered serious injuries but there was no fire.

The pilot was of the opinion that the windsock had indicated that the conditions were suitable for a downwind landing but must have changed unpredictably just before touchdown. It was also noted that the aircraft was only some 20 kg below its maximum takeoff weight and that Runway 36 has a slight upslope.