

No: 2/92

Ref: EW/G91/12/06

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper J3C-65 Cub, G-BSNF

No & Type of Engines: 1 Continental O-200-A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1939

Date & Time (UTC): 28 December 1991 at 1530 hrs

Location: Farway Common airstrip, near Sidmouth, Devon

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - None Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - N/A Passengers - Minor

Nature of Damage: Broken propeller, damaged engine cowling, air intake and windscreen. Both wing leading edges damaged and the fuselage framework requires re-jigging

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 40 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 353 hours (of which 52 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and AAIB enquiries

The pilot and his passenger were preparing to leave Farway Common airstrip. The aircraft required the propeller to be hand swung to start the engine. The passenger, although not a pilot, flew regularly with the aircraft pilot and had been trained by him to assist with the start by holding the control column and applying the brakes. The passenger had not been briefed on the operation of the magnetos or on closing the throttle. On this occasion the pilot pumped the throttle and set it for the start, switched on the magnetos and then went to the front of the aircraft to swing the propeller. He reported that the engine started immediately he swung the propeller and that the engine ran much faster than normal. The passenger was unable to hold the aircraft on the brakes and it began to taxi ahead down a slope. Eventually the wheels dropped into a shallow ditch causing the aircraft to 'nose-over' and strike a wall behind the ditch upon which it came to rest inverted.

There have been six reportable accidents involving the hand swinging of propellers since December 1976 in which aircraft and property have been damaged and people have suffered injury. One such accident was reported in GASIL 9/90 and the hand swinging of propellers was the subject of CAA Safety Sense Leaflet No.1.