

AAIB Bulletin No: 12/93

Ref: EW/G93/10/17

Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper L18-C Super Cub, G-BJEI

No & Type of Engines: 1 Continental C90-8F piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1952

Date & Time (UTC): 25 October 1993 at 0940 hrs

Location: Sheepwash Airstrip, Devon

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 2 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - 1 Serious Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Substantial structural damage to airframe and engine

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence with Night Rating

Commander's Age: 45 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 1,801 (of which approximately 900 were on type)
Last 90 days - 50 hours
Last 28 days - 1 hour

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

The handling pilot was in the front seat and was being shown the local area by the aircraft owner who was in the rear seat. After a normal take off, and at an estimated 200 feet agl, the rear seat occupant reached forward to check the carburettor heat. However, he had difficulty reaching the control and called for the handling pilot to check it. Then as the rear seat occupant leaned back into his seat he believes that he inadvertently caught and retarded the rear throttle lever. With the engine suddenly losing power the handling pilot immediately selected a lower nose attitude and began a turn to the left. The owner called for a turn to the right towards a farm strip, approximately 80° off track, and the pilot responded with a good rate of turn. Simultaneously, both occupants pushed the throttle quickly forward but there was no engine response. The pilot attempted to glide to the farm strip but, because of the aircraft's height and position, failed to do so and crashed on top of a bank close to the strip. On impact the aircraft turned through 90° and slid forward approximately 12 feet before coming to rest.

In his report the owner stated that he has experienced previous instances when rear seat passengers have accidentally closed the rear throttle and he believes that this is because the throttle knob protrudes from the sidewall trim. He proposes to rebuild the aircraft and intends to incorporate a guard over the rear throttle lever to prevent a similar occurrence. His initial investigation of the engine after the accident revealed that, at impact, the throttle was fully open, the engine was not under power and there was no indication of an engine failure.