

No: 7/87

Ref: 1c

Aircraft type and registration: Piper PA 18-150 Super Cub (Seaplane) G-AVPT

No & Type of engines: 1 Lycoming O-320-A2B piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1967

Date and time (UTC): 2 May 1987 at 1525 hrs

Location: Scotney Court Water, Near Lydd, Kent

Type of flight: Private (pleasure)

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — None

Injuries: Crew — None Passengers — N/A

Nature of damage: Shattered windscreen and distortion to right wingtip, rear fuselage, rudder and left float. Water damage following 48 hour immersion.

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 51 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 602 hours (of which 23 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The purpose of the flight was the re-familiarisation of the pilot on type and to evaluate the newly specified circuit procedures for the aerodrome. On the day of the accident other pilots had flown several circuits in the aircraft from Scotney Court Water without untoward incident. The pilot in question then made three successful take-offs and alightings. During the third take-off he noted that the aircraft became airborne 'off the hump' and without a clearly defined planing phase. From his experience of float planes he attributed this to the strength of the wind which was 240° at 20 knots and gusting. On previous take-offs he used half flap and it was with this setting that he initiated a fourth take-off run. As normal, the elevator was maintained in the full up position until the aircraft was 'on the hump'. As the aircraft reached the 'hump' stage and with full throttle yet to be applied, it pitched up to an abnormally high attitude and began to roll to the right. Despite corrective action by the pilot, which included closing the throttle with the intention of abandoning the take-off, the aircraft rolled inverted and struck the water in a nose down attitude. The pilot left the aircraft and clambered astride the inverted right float from which he was recovered by the club safety boat after some two and a half minutes.

The pilot considers that a local variation in the wind speed and direction probably caused the capsizing. He also considers that gusts over 20 knots may be excessive for the operation of this type of small floatplane and that the use of take-off flap in strong winds may not be advisable.