

SERIOUS INCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Liberty XL-2, N518XL
No & Type of Engines:	1 Continental IOF-240-B piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	2006
Date & Time (UTC):	10 January 2018 at 1528 hrs
Location:	5 miles west of London Biggin Hill Airport
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Door damaged after opening in flight
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	66 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	625 hours (of which 345 were on type) Last 90 days - 12 hours Last 28 days - 1 hour
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

As the pilot levelled off after climbing to his cruise altitude, he became aware of a vibration which was getting louder. The left door then opened suddenly and his headset and glasses were torn off by the slipstream. He donned his spare glasses quickly and tried to reach his spare headset and handheld transceiver, but was unable to. He realised that flying the aircraft was the greatest priority and concentrated on this. He selected 7700 on the transponder and returned to land back at Biggin Hill.

Examination showed that a section of the door had detached after the door opened. The remains of the door were subsequently recovered, with no reports of any injuries or damage to property.

The pilot was behind schedule but did not feel rushed. He was unable to say categorically that he had checked the security of the left door prior to takeoff and considered that it had not been fully latched.

This occurrence highlights the importance of ensuring that spare glasses are within reach and concentrating on flying the aircraft following an unexpected event.