

DH87B Hornet Moth, G-AHBL

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/2001

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Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration:	DH87B Hornet Moth, G-AHBL	
No & Type of Engines:	1 De Havilland Gipsy Major 1F piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1936	
Date & Time (UTC):	1 August 2001 at 1219 hrs	
Location:	Cambridge Airport, Cambridgeshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Left landing gear collapsed and left wingtip damaged	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilots Licence	
Commander's Age:	80 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	10,000 hours (of which 0.00 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 60 hours	
	Last 28 days - 20 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

A pilot who regularly flew the Hornet Moth had agreed to allow a colleague, who was an experienced Tiger Moth pilot, to fly the aircraft. Following a detailed brief on the intended flight, the colleague as the handling pilot occupied the left front seat and the pilot the right front seat. The Hornet Moth has side by side seating unlike the tandem seating of the Tiger Moth and flying controls are only installed for the pilot occupying the left seat.

The weather was fine with the wind light and variable and following a normal taxi the aircraft was cleared for take-off on Runway 23. The handling pilot increased power and commenced the take-off run keeping the aircraft straight on the runway but, as he raised the tail, the aircraft veered left

into the slack wind. The handling pilot overcorrected with right rudder, and when at the end of its travel he applied the right wheel brake. This initiated an abrupt ground loop to the right.

The handling pilot closed the throttle and the pilot in the right seat selected the magnetos to the OFF position. The aircraft slid some 20 metres sideways before the left hand main landing gear collapsed. The aircraft then turned through 180° to the left before coming to a stop. The right hand seat pilot completed the post-crash actions and then both occupants vacated the aircraft through the normal exits. The airfield Rescue and Fire Fighting Services responded immediately.

The pilot who normally flew the aircraft considered that, the cause of the accident was the over correction of the initial swing to the left by the handling pilot. In view of the lack of dual controls, he was unable to intervene and prevent the ground loop.