

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Lake Connewarre, Victoria	Height a.m.s.l. (ft) Sea Level	Date 30.10.72	Time (Local) 1855	Zone ESuT
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Percival Proctor MK 3	Registration VH-BXQ	Certificate of Airworthiness	Valid from 4.1.68	Valid to 3.1.77
Registered Owner C. J. Hunt, 19 Stephen Street, BELMONT, Victoria.	Operator C. J. Hunt, 19 Stephen Street, BELMONT, Victoria.	Degree of damage to aircraft Destroyed		
		Other property damaged		

Defects discovered The port outer flap structure was found to be reduced in strength because of in-service deterioration. There was also evidence that a repair had been carried out some considerable time previously in which a rib skin splice was made other than in accordance with the method specified in the repair manual and in which there had been unsatisfactory glueing of several components. It is unlikely that the condition of the flap structure would have been detectable by routine visual inspection.

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Portarlinton	Time of departure 1840 approx.	Next point of intended landing Polley's Field Connewarre	Purpose of flight Ferry	Class of operation Private
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4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
Colin James HUNT	Pilot	42	Private	60	197	Fatal

5. OTHER PERSONS (All passengers and persons injured on ground)

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

During a landing at Portarlinton on the afternoon prior to the accident the aircraft overran the landing area by some 200 feet over rough ground and nosed down bending one blade of the propeller. The pilot at that time arranged for the aircraft to be pushed back to the side of the landing area and then advised, by telephone, details of the occurrence to the owner of the aircraft. The owner proceeded by car from Geelong to Portarlinton and, as it was then night, inspected the aircraft with the aid of car headlights. He decided to leave the aircraft in situ and return the next day with a view to folding the wings and then towing it to the field at Connewarre where it was normally based. On the afternoon of the following day the owner and the pilot again proceeded to Portarlinton and inspected the aircraft. One tyre was damaged and was deflated and a replacement wheel was fitted to the aircraft. When folding one wing the owner then decided that the aircraft width was unsuitable for road towing and that he would fly the aircraft to the field at Connewarre, 13 miles to the south west. The folded wing was repositioned and the owner straightened the bent propeller blade by using a borrowed clamp. The aircraft subsequently took off towards the west, with only the owner on board, and was seen heading towards Connewarre at a relatively low altitude. Shortly afterwards the aircraft was observed over Lake Connewarre, apparently on a long final landing approach for the nearby landing field. The sky was overcast and there was light rain falling. At a height of about 250 feet, and at a position approximately one mile from the landing field, the aircraft suddenly rolled to the left and dived into the lake, virtually disintegrating on impact. No parts of the port outer flap plywood skin panel could be identified among the severely damaged wreckage. This panel was located, virtually intact, some four weeks after the accident on the shore of the lake $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north east of the accident site. Detailed examination of the total flap structure revealed evidence consistent with the panel having separated from the structure as a result of air loads in flight. It is normal practice in this type of aircraft for flap to be extended on final approach for landing but it was not possible to establish from the evidence available whether or not any flap was in the extended position at the time of impact.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

probable cause of the accident was that following in-flight separation of the port outer flap skin panel at a low height, the pilot was unable to maintain control of the aircraft.

Report released

(I. M. LESLIE)

Designation Acting
Assistant Director-General
(Air Safety Investigation)

Date

14.8.73