

ACCIDENT

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| Aircraft Type and Registration: | Europa, G-SHSH | |
| No & type of Engines: | 1 Rotax 912-UL piston engine | |
| Year of Manufacture: | 2002 | |
| Date & Time (UTC): | 27 June 2006 at 1340 hrs | |
| Location: | Kemble Airfield, Gloucestershire | |
| Type of Flight: | Training | |
| Persons on Board: | Crew - 2 | Passengers - None |
| Injuries: | Crew - None | Passengers - N/A |
| Nature of Damage: | Propeller blades broken and minor damage to right wing tip | |
| Commander's Licence: | Air Transport Pilot's Licence (including Single Engine Piston Flight Instructor's Rating) | |
| Commander's Age: | 43 years | |
| Commander's Flying Experience: | 5,738 hours (of which 1 was on type) Last 90 days - 52 hours Last 28 days - 6 hours | |
| Information Source: | Aircraft Accident Reporting Form submitted by the pilot | |

Synopsis

Shortly after touchdown, the aircraft began to oscillate in pitch and yaw and the pilot was unable to correct these oscillations. The propeller struck the ground and the aircraft ground looped to the left. It was the pilot's first flight in a mono-wheel Europa.

History of the flight

The commander of the aircraft was conducting a biennial validation check on the second pilot during the flight. The second pilot was the aircraft owner and regularly flew this aircraft but the commander had no previous experience on this particular type. Runway 08, which had an asphalt surface, was used during the check flight.

The surface wind was from 080° at 6 kt and the visibility was good with a high cloudbase.

With the validation check successfully completed, the commander took control and flew a normal circuit to Runway 08 from which he landed. On touchdown the aircraft bounced slightly; however, once established on the ground it began to oscillate in pitch and yaw. The commander was unable to correct these oscillations which became divergent, culminating in the propeller striking the ground. This caused a rapid yaw to the left leading to the aircraft's right wing tip scraping the ground and the aircraft stopping on the runway

approximately 90° off the runway heading. Both pilots, who were wearing 4-point harnesses, were uninjured and were able to evacuate the aircraft through the normal exits.

The commander attributed the accident to his lack of experience on this type of aircraft. Although he had previous tail wheel aircraft experience, the Europa's landing gear, comprising a single main wheel, a tail wheel and wing outriggers, has some unique handling

characteristics. There have been nine groundloop occurrences reported to the AAIB since 2000 of which the majority have occurred to pilots with less than 20 hours on type when landing on asphalt or concrete runways. Recent articles in the Europa Club magazine and advice from the PFA emphasise existing guidance that where possible, pilots gain experience using grass strips before progressing to hard runway surfaces. Grass is more tolerant to drift during landing and makes directional control easier during the rollout.