ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Flight Design CT2K, G-CBAI
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912ULS piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	2001
Date & Time (UTC):	16 April 2011 at 1300 hrs
Location:	Kilkeel Airfield, Northern Ireland
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Left wing root and leading edge
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	53 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	141 hours (of which 36 were on type) Last 90 days - 10 hours Last 28 days - 5 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Synopsis

Shortly after touchdown, the aircraft drifted to the left of the runway centreline. Although corrective aileron and right rudder were applied, the aircraft departed the runway and struck a wooden windsock pole. A subsequent check of the rudder and nosewheel steering mechanism did not identify any defects.

History of the flight

The aircraft is a monoplane with a tricycle undercarriage and nosewheel steering. Kilkeel Airfield has a single grass Runway 18/36 and, upon making an overhead join, the pilot estimated from the windsock that the wind was light to moderate from approximately 300° and positioned for a landing on Runway 36. Having descended to circuit height, Kilkeel radio advised that the wind was from 250° at 5 kt. The pilot confirmed this from the windsock and repositioned for a landing on Runway 18. Having confirmed that the crosswind component was within the aircraft's limits (maximum crosswind limit with flap 15° to 40° is 13 kt to 11 kt), the pilot continued his approach, configuring the aircraft for a flap 30° landing. On short final, the pilot considered that he was high and carried out a go-around.

Having positioned for a second approach, the aircraft was configured for a flap 40° landing and a approach speed of between 50 kt to 55 kt. Although touchdown on the mainwheels appeared normal, the aircraft started to drift to the left of the runway centreline. The pilot

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stated that the aircraft had a normal tendency to drift to the left during the hold off. He had applied corrective aileron and right pedal, but the controls felt as though they had "locked" and were not responding. The aircraft continued to drift to the left until it departed the runway and entered an area of long grass. Whilst travelling at about 10 kt, the left wing struck a wooden windsock pole, which slewed the aircraft to the left and brought it to a halt. The pilot shut down the engine before he and his passenger, both uninjured, exited the aircraft. The left wing root and leading edge were damaged.

The pilot stated that he had found that this aircraft type had less rudder authority at low airspeeds and power settings compared to other microlights he had flown. However, he advised that he had not previously experienced problems controlling the aircraft after touchdown and that under the prevailing conditions he considered that he should have been able to maintain directional control. A subsequent check of the rudder and nosewheel steering mechanism identified that although slightly stiff in operation, full travel was available.

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