North American T-6G Harvard, G-BKRA

AAIB Bulletin No: 7/2003	Ref: EW/G2003/04/16	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	North American T-6G Harvard, G-BKRA	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Pratt & Whitney R-1340-AN-2 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1951	
Date & Time (UTC):	8 April 2003 at 1130 hrs	
Location:	Dunkeswell Aerodrome, Devon	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Slight damage to left wingtip and landing gear	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	39 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	672 hours (of which 25 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 10 hours	
	Last 28 days - 2 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The pilot was carrying out a routine solo flight from Gloucestershire Airport to Dunkeswell and then he planned to return to Gloucestershire Airport. He had contacted Dunkeswell by telephone prior to his departure and was informed that Runway 05 was in use and that parachuting might be taking place when he arrived. At that time, the weather at Dunkeswell was CAVOK with a surface wind reported as generally from 100° at 10 kt. The transit to Dunkeswell was uneventful and the pilot attempted to contact 'Dunkeswell Radio' air to ground service but received no acknowledgement. He considered over-flying the aerodrome to check the wind but as he had been warned about the parachuting, he elected to join downwind right-hand for Runway 05. He saw another light aircraft ahead of him adopting that procedure; he therefore decided to make a wide circuit and to follow the other aircraft.

On the downwind leg, the pilot lowered two stages of flap and the landing gear then, ensuring a safe spacing from the aircraft ahead, he turned onto the final approach. He lowered full landing flap and reduced speed to an approach speed of 85 mph. There was no turbulence or significant drift and although he had not seen the windsock, he thought his approach was quite normal and he did not detect a crosswind of any magnitude. The aircraft was rounded out and it touched down on all three wheels at the intended point on the centreline of the runway but immediately it began to swing to the left. The pilot applied corrective right rudder and initially the aircraft continued tracking down the centre of the runway but then it swung to the right. Despite the application of left rudder the pilot

was unable to prevent the aircraft from ground looping to the right. Throughout the ground roll the pilot held the control stick in the normal neutral position.

Prior to this accident the pilot had not experienced any unexpected and significant directional departures to the left or right. He had accumulated some 450 hours of tail-wheel flying experience and considered the reason for the ground loop was associated with landing a tail-wheeled aircraft on a metalled surface runway as opposed to grass. The remote weather station at Dunkeswell recorded an average surface wind for the period 1000 to 1200 hrs of 120° at 9 kt.