
ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Ikarus C42 FB UK, G-EGGI	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912 ULS piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2002	
Date & Time (UTC):	6 May 2008 at 1430 hrs	
Location:	Bitteswell Farm Strip, near Lutterworth, Leicestershire.	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Extensive damage to the airframe	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	81 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	475 hours (of which 250 were on type) Last 90 days - 8 hours Last 28 days - 1 hour	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The pilot had flown an approach to Runway 31 at Bittwell Farm Strip in turbulent and gusty wind conditions. Having touched down at about the normal position, he then realised that the groundspeed was excessive and attempted to stop. Unable to do so, he then decided to go around but the aircraft struck a tall hedge at the far end of the strip.

The pilot considered that with the difficult approach and the gusting wind moving him towards the tall hedge, he should have initiated the go-around earlier.

History of the flight

The pilot had planned to carry out a number of circuits at Bittwell Farm Strip. The site has a single grass runway

orientated 13/31. It is 300 m long, 20 m wide and with a 200 m overrun across a cattle grid on Runway 13. The upwind end of Runway 31 ends with a hedge which is approximately 5 ft high and forms a large gap between taller hedges, some 40-50 ft high, on either side.

The visibility was good and there was no significant cloud or weather; the windsock indicated a light and variable wind, mainly from the southeast. The surface temperature was high, but the actual temperature at the field was not observed or recorded by the pilot. The aircraft was fitted with a GPS navigation system but because the pilot only intended to fly some circuits he did not switch it on.

The aircraft made a normal takeoff from Runway 31. At about 100-300 ft the aircraft encountered severe turbulence with gusting winds and the pilot decided to return immediately since the conditions were not as good as he had expected. He flew a right-hand circuit at about 500-600 ft, and, when established on the final approach for Runway 31, he selected full flap. He experienced difficulty in maintaining an accurate approach speed of 50 kt in the very gusty conditions.

The aircraft touched down on the runway at about the normal position and the pilot became aware of the aircraft's excessive groundspeed, possibly due to a slight tail-wind component. Applying the wheel brakes appeared to have no effect and the pilot considered that the aircraft would overrun the end of the runway and strike the hedge at the end. He therefore applied full power for a go-around, and was confident that adequate distance was available to clear the hedge. The aircraft lifted off but when it was approximately 60 m from the hedge it began tracking to the right, towards the taller hedge. The pilot was unable to correct the situation

and the aircraft impacted the high hedge at a height of approximately 25 ft. The aircraft came to an abrupt halt and descended to the ground relatively gently onto a cushion of hedge material.

When the aircraft came to rest, the pilot, who was uninjured, switched off the fuel and electrical system and vacated the aircraft through the normal exit.

Analysis

The turbulent and gusting wind conditions were not apparent to the pilot until he became airborne. These conditions made it difficult for him to maintain an accurate approach speed, which resulted in an excessive ground speed during the landing roll. Had the aircraft not tracked to the right during the go-around, probably caused by a strong gust of wind, the aircraft would have cleared the lower hedge. The pilot also considered that the GPS navigation system could have provided the aircraft's groundspeed during the approach, which would have given an early indicator of the need for a go-around.