

**ACCIDENT**

<b>Aircraft Type and Registration:</b>	Pegasus Quik, G-CEML
<b>No &amp; Type of Engines:</b>	1 Rotax 912-ULS piston engine
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	2007 (Serial no: 8260)
<b>Date &amp; Time (UTC):</b>	18 December 2012 at 1400 hrs
<b>Location:</b>	Private airstrip near Warrington, Cheshire
<b>Type of Flight:</b>	Private
<b>Persons on Board:</b>	Crew - 1                      Passengers - None
<b>Injuries:</b>	Crew - 1 (Serious)      Passengers - N/A
<b>Nature of Damage:</b>	Damage to wing spar and fabric, fuselage pod, propeller and landing gear
<b>Commander's Licence:</b>	National Private Pilot's Licence
<b>Commander's Age:</b>	48 years
<b>Commander's Flying Experience:</b>	188 hours (of which 188 were on type) Last 90 days - 15 hours Last 28 days - 0 hours
<b>Information Source:</b>	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further enquiries

**Synopsis**

The microlight struck a set of power lines while landing at a private airstrip. The pilot was not aware of the presence of the power lines and did not see them prior to the collision. He sustained serious injuries and power to nearby properties was disrupted.

**History of the flight**

The flexwing microlight took off at about 1300 hrs for a local flight. The weather was fine, with calm wind, no low cloud, and visibility between 5 and 10 km. On returning to the airstrip, the pilot elected to carry out a glide approach for a landing in an easterly direction. The area being used for takeoff and landing on this

occasion was not the usual strip, which was rather damp, but an adjacent prepared field which allowed a predominantly east-west takeoff and landing. The pilot was aware that power lines crossed the approach when landing in an easterly direction. He saw these whilst on the approach and successfully avoided them. However, he was unaware that a second set of power lines also crossed near to the start of the landing area, beyond the first set when viewed from the approach. With his attention moving to focus further up the landing area in preparation for the touchdown, the pilot did not see the second set of power lines. As he was about to start his landing flare, the microlight struck them.

The microlight pitched sharply upwards before dropping back to the ground. Although it was extensively damaged, the engine was still running at idle. The pilot shut it down and made the microlight safe before vacating, which was made difficult by his injuries. The microlight had struck a set of three power lines<sup>1</sup>, one of which was severed, while the other two remained intact (and still live) but tangled with the microlight. Power to nearby premises was interrupted while the energy distribution company carried out the necessary repairs. The pilot later attended hospital and, in addition to cuts and bruises, was found to have sustained several broken ribs.

### **Description of the airstrip**

The owner of the airstrip explained that two takeoff and landing areas were actually available, with a main grass strip about 1,000 m long. On occasions, this could become waterlogged, in which case a smaller grassed area, adjacent to the site's small hangar, could be used. This area was a prepared field some 200 m long, but with a longer run off area adjacent to the main strip. The area had power lines along the road at its western boundary, and a further set (involved in the accident) running diagonally across the western side of the area, about 40 m inset from the western boundary. One of the supporting poles was at a field boundary, and the other was beyond it.

### **Causal factors**

The pilot explained that he had not flown for a few weeks and had not originally intended to fly that day. However, the fine conditions had prompted him to make a relatively undemanding local flight to regain currency. Although the site had recently become his base, it was still new to him and he had only flown there a few times, always from the main airstrip.

In conducting a short notice local flight in fine conditions, the pilot felt he had omitted to pay the same level of attention to local hazards as he would have done had he been visiting another airfield for the first time. He had not seen the power lines before takeoff, despite taking off from the same area. He attributed this to his attention being focussed laterally as he manoeuvred for takeoff in the relatively unfamiliar area. During the approach, his failure to see the wires probably arose from their relative lack of conspicuity (including the lack of obvious supporting poles), and possibly the steeper approach angle associated with a glide approach.

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#### **Footnote**

<sup>1</sup> The power lines were believed to be 11kV distribution cables.

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