

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	1) Casa 1-131E Series 2000 Jungmann, G-BECW 2) Stolp Starduster SA 100, N40D
No & Type of Engines:	1) 1 Tigre G-IV-B piston engine 2) 1 Lycoming 0-320-B3B piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1) 1953 2) 1974
Date & Time (UTC):	22 January 2006 at 1605 hrs
Location:	Old Hay Airfield, Kent
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	1) Crew - 1 Passengers - 1 2) Crew - 1 Passengers - None
Injuries:	1) Crew - None Passengers - 1 (Minor) 2) Crew - None Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Extensive damage to both aircraft
Commander's Licence:	1) Private Pilot's Licence 2) Commercial Pilot's Licence (Australian)
Commander's Age:	1) 52 years 2) 61 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	1) 2,591 hours (of which 377 were on type) Last 90 days - 25 hours Last 28 days - 8 hours 2) 1,780 hours (of which 225 were on type) Last 90 days - 4 hours Last 28 days - 1 hour
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Forms submitted by the pilots

Synopsis

Two tail wheel aircraft landed at this unlicensed airfield at the same time but on reciprocal runways and subsequently collided in the centre of the airfield.

History of flight of aircraft G-BECW

This aircraft departed Old Hay Airfield on the afternoon of the accident and flew to various local airfields

before returning to Old Hay. The pilot checked the windsock prior to his approach, it indicated a northerly wind of approximately 5 kt which was almost straight across the grass Runway 10/28. In accordance with his normal practise when the wind direction did not favour a particular runway, this pilot made an approach to Runway 28 as he considered its approach area to

be less obstructed than that of Runway 10. A normal landing was achieved and the aircraft was kept on the centreline whilst the pilot completed his rollout and taxied towards his exit point. Approximately 50 m prior to his exit point, the aircraft collided with another aircraft which, due to the head-on nature of the collision and restricted forward vision of this tail wheel aircraft, was unseen prior to the collision. Both occupants, who were wearing 5-point harnesses, were able to evacuate the aircraft through the normal exits.

History of flight of aircraft N40D

This aircraft departed from Runway 10 at Old Hay for a local flight with the pilot having estimated the surface wind as 020-030° at 5-7 kt. He returned to the airfield 15 minutes later and made a normal approach and touchdown on Runway 10. With the landing speed under control, the pilot taxied the aircraft on the runway centreline towards his intended exit point which was the intersection with Runway 13/31. Before reaching this point, he collided with a previously unseen aircraft taxiing the opposite way. The pilot, who was wearing a 4-point harness, was able to vacate the aircraft through the normal exit. This aircraft was a tail wheel design and as such, also had restricted forward vision on the ground.

Airfield

Old Hay Airfield is an unlicensed airfield with no air traffic control or aerodrome signals square. Runway selection is therefore at the discretion of the pilot and according to the Rules of The Air Rule 17 (7):

'a flying machine shall take-off and land in the direction indicated by the ground signals or, if no such signals are displayed, into the wind, unless good aviation practise demands otherwise.'

In 2005, the airfield was allocated its own radio frequency to enable pilots using the airfield to make blind transmissions of their position and/or intentions. Although no provision was made for regular air-ground control, the airfield operator felt that a dedicated radio frequency would reduce the risk of collision. There are about six aircraft based at Old Hay and visiting aircraft are allowed on a 'prior permission required' basis. On the day of the accident, it is believed that these were the only two aircraft operating from this airfield and neither used the airfield's radio frequency.

Discussion

This accident occurred when the only two aircraft using the airfield at the time decided, unbeknown to each other, to land at the same airfield, at the same time, but using reciprocal runways. Both pilots had valid reasons for using the different landing runways and although they should have been able to see each other whilst airborne, once on the ground the tail wheel design of both aircraft would have hindered visual acquisition of the other. Although this particular series of events is unlikely to be repeated, it could have been prevented had both pilots used the airfield's radio frequency which was acquired for just such a scenario. The airfield operator is also considering standardising circuit procedures for nil/cross wind conditions.