

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Aeromot AMT-200S Super Ximango, G-CECJ	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912-S2 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2006	
Date & Time (UTC):	17 August 2007 at 1520 hrs	
Location:	Lasham Airfield, Hampshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Minor)	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Substantial damage to landing gear, wings, propeller, cowlings and engine bearer	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	68 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	505 hours (of which 12 were on type) Last 90 days - 10 hours Last 28 days - 5 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The aircraft was on approach to land at Lasham Airfield where extensive glider operations were taking place. Whilst his concentration was focussed on these activities, the pilot failed to notice that the aircraft had become too close to the ground, which it struck with a relatively high rate of descent just outside the perimeter track. The aircraft stopped with major damage to the airframe but with only minor back injury to the pilot.

History of the flight

The pilot was on his third solo flight in the aircraft, which he had just acquired. He had been advised to avoid landings with a crosswind component in excess of 5 kt so, as he approached the Aerodrome Traffic Zone

from the south at a height of 2,000 feet, he was looking for signs of the wind direction and strength. From some smoke in the distance he estimated that the wind strength had decreased somewhat from when he had taken off, but he could not see a windsock.

In addition to a verbal account, the pilot provided a sketch (Figure 1) describing the activity on the airfield and the presence of an airborne glider to the south of the field, which he thought might be in contention for the landing area. He decided that he would land on the grass just to the south of the paved Runway 27, in order to avoid a glider which was being towed just inside the southern perimeter track. Mindful of the proximity of the

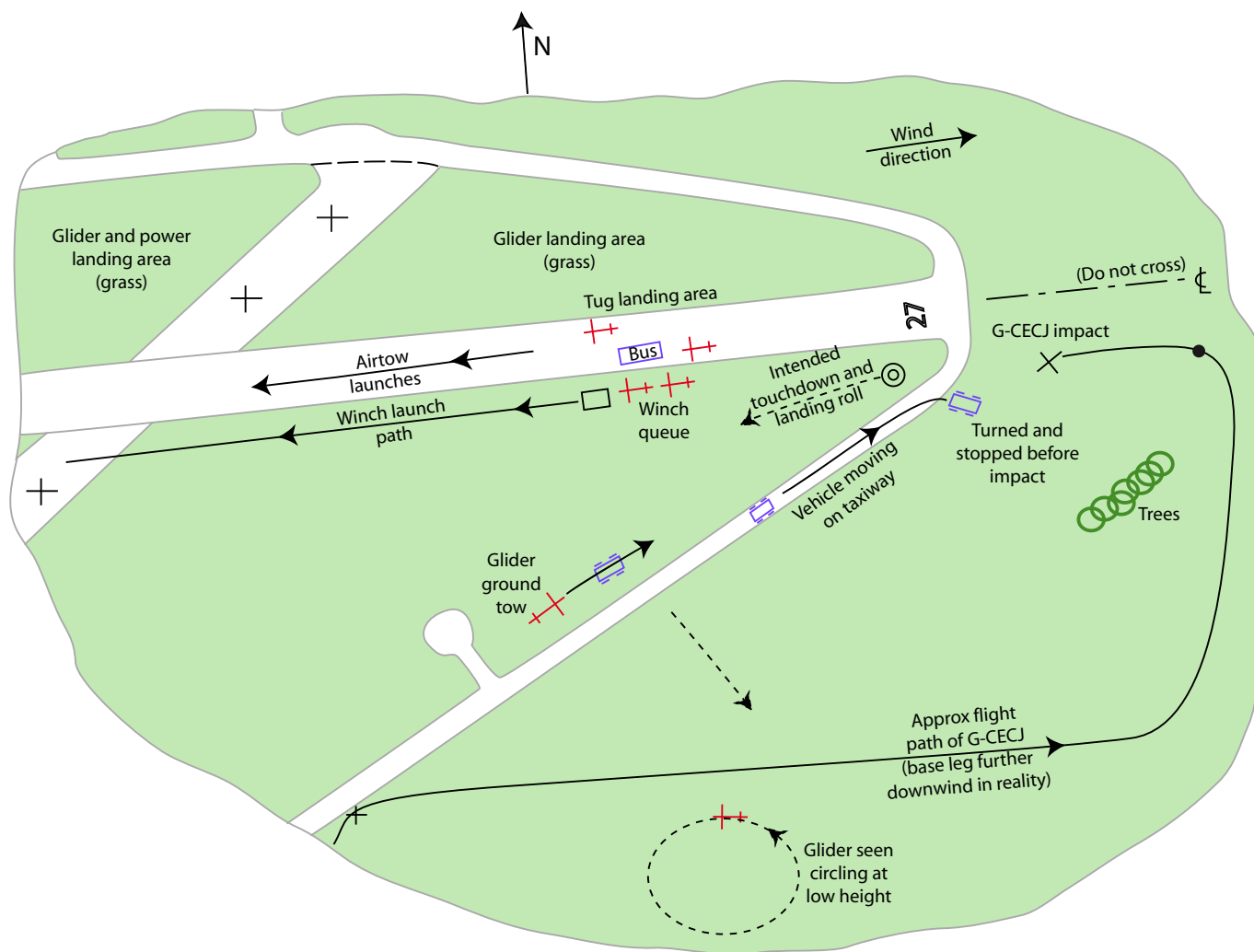


Figure 1

Reproduction of pilot's sketch

glider winch launch queue, he intended to touch down immediately after crossing the eastern perimeter track, as shown in the sketch. He was also concerned about his own tendency to bounce or balloon when landing a tailwheel aircraft on grass, (although he considered that he had overcome on his previous solo flying sessions). He trimmed the aircraft for a 60 kt gliding approach with the engine at idle and his right hand on the airbrake lever.

Initially using a fair amount of airbrake to achieve the selected touchdown point, the pilot then noticed

a vehicle being driven towards him on the perimeter track and he was concerned that their two paths might intersect. However, as he watched, the vehicle turned onto the grass and stopped but, when his full attention returned to the approach, he suddenly realised that he was too low. He immediately closed the airbrake but did not think of opening the throttle as the aircraft struck the ground: he did not recall flaring but concluded that he must have achieved a roughly level pitch attitude because the tailwheel fork broke off at the first impact. The aircraft came to rest in about three fuselage lengths in long grass and on upward-sloping rough ground.

The pilot switched off the electrics, opened the canopy and prepared to evacuate. However, someone who had arrived almost immediately (probably the vehicle driver) advised the pilot to remain in the cockpit as he was in some pain from his back. Although the pilot was subsequently assisted in leaving the aircraft, he was satisfied that he would have been able to do so on his own if fire had threatened.

Analysis

The pilot candidly admits that the primary cause of this accident was his own failure to 'aviate' due to distraction from the ground activity. In his opinion, the aircraft must have encountered a significant increase in rate of descent due to 'sink' or a change of wind gradient which went unrecognised due to his concerns with the ground activity. In future, he has resolved to fly approaches with this possibility in mind, his hand on the throttle or ready to use it, and with reference to the airspeed indicator.

The pilot also commented that he should have considered using the relatively uncluttered area north

of Runway 27 (although he had earlier noted a glider having just landed in that area, not shown on the sketch). He cited several reasons why this did not seem attractive at the time. Firstly, he would have to extend his flight considerably to the east in order not to cross the extended centreline of Runway 27. Secondly, his normal parking spot was on the southern side of the airfield and he was uneasy at facing a long taxi in a high aspect ratio aircraft with which he was still relatively unfamiliar. Thirdly, the small wheels on the aircraft were very vulnerable to irregularities in the ground and he had previously found difficulty climbing the 'step' where the grass met tarmac runways or taxiways.

Finally, it is understood that a temporary seat cushion from domestic furniture was being used pending arrival of previously-ordered energy-absorbing cushions and that this may have been at least partially responsible for the discomfort caused to the pilot's back.