
Department for Transport

AAIB Bulletin S3/2007

SPECIAL

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Europa Classic, G-HOFC
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912S piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1996
Date & Time (UTC):	1 June 2007 at 1450 hrs
Location:	Near Magor, Gwent, South Wales
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Fatal) Passengers - 1 (Fatal)
Nature of Damage:	Aircraft destroyed
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	66 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	Total 1,575 hours Hours on type 1,023 hours (to be confirmed) Last 90 days - 17 hours Last 28 days - 7 hours
Information Source:	AAIB Field Investigation

This bulletin contains facts which have been determined up to the time of issue. This information is published to inform the aviation industry and the public of the general circumstances of accidents and must necessarily be regarded as tentative and subject to alteration or correction if additional evidence becomes available.

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The accident flight

The aircraft was returning from Bodmin airfield in Cornwall to Uckfield Farm strip, Whitston, South Wales. Witnesses on the ground in the immediate area of the accident described the aircraft flying normally, maintaining height and heading. The engine was running and sounded normal with no changes in power heard. The tail plane suddenly made large and rapid up and down movements, papers and other loose items were then seen to fall from the aircraft. At the same time the horizontal stabilisers separated from the tail followed by the wings folding upwards before they detached from the fuselage. The engine stopped and the fuselage and other aircraft structure fell to the ground, fatally injuring the two occupants.

Technical investigation

Examination of the wreckage at the accident site confirmed that the aircraft had suffered an in-flight structural failure which had resulted in the separation of both wings and tailplanes before the fuselage struck the ground.

The investigation, in which the AAIB is working closely with the Popular Flying Association, is at an early stage; however evidence has been found which may have immediate airworthiness implications to the aircraft type. Irregularities have been found with the structure of the right wing to which the rear lift/drag pin is installed. There is also evidence of movement of the tailplane surfaces beyond the normal range of movements, possibly as a result of flutter.

As a result of these initial findings, the Popular Flying Association has released two Airworthiness Bulletins requiring immediate and repetitive inspections; PFA 247/FSB006 *'Europa Classic and Europa XS Tailplane Flutter Avoidance and Integrity Of Tailplane Attachment'*, and PFA 247/FSB007 *'Europa Classic Integrity of Wing Attachment'*. The content of these Airworthiness Bulletins has been made mandatory in the UK by the issue of Mandatory Permit Directives 2007-005 and 2007-006.

The investigation is continuing and a final report will be published by the AAIB in due course.