

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Avid Speedwing, G-RAFV	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Jabiru Aircraft PTY 2200A piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1992	
Date & Time (UTC):	2 August 2010 at 1900 hrs (and 22 June 2010 at 1810 hrs)	
Location:	Firs Farm, Leckhampstead, West Berkshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Damage to right landing gear, lower fuselage tubes, cockpit cross truss and wheel axles	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	54 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	408 hours (of which 22 were on type) Last 90 days - 14 hours Last 28 days - 3 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and subsequent form submitted by co-owner for previous event on 22 June 2010	

Synopsis

On 2 August 2010 the aircraft ground looped during a landing at a farm strip. This had occurred previously, on 22 June 2010, to a co-owner. The pilot in the August event reported that only light lateral force was required for the tailwheel to castor freely, with weak centering springs making directional control difficult. With the mechanical problem rectified, the pilot reported the ground handling much improved. The accidents were not reported to the AAIB at the time as the two pilots did not appreciate that this is a statutory requirement.

History of the flight

On 2 August the pilot was returning to the Firs Farm airstrip after a local flight of circuit familiarisation, on an evening with light winds. He reports that the touchdown was uneventful, straight and well under control but then, whilst rolling out, he lost directional control of the aircraft, despite the stick being held fully back. A yaw to the right developed while the aircraft was still rolling at speed and as this tightened the aircraft left the strip. The ground loop ended abruptly when the aircraft ran into deep tractor ruts along the side of the runway and the right-hand landing gear collapsed, with further airframe structural damage. Both occupants exited safely through the pilot's door.

The pilot commented in his report that this was the second ground loop this aircraft had suffered in a few months. Investigation showed that only light lateral force was required for the tailwheel to “break out” and castor freely, with weak centering springs. This made directional control on the ground very difficult and that, with the mechanical problem rectified, the pilot reported that “the ground manners were much improved”.

The previous event with this aircraft, while being flown by a co-owner, had occurred on 22 June 2010 at the same airstrip. On this occasion directional control had been lost at lower speed, about 20 kt, and the damage,

which occurred when the aircraft encountered the tractor ruts to the right of the runway, was confined to the structure supporting the tailwheel.

Both accidents met the criteria for a ‘*Reportable Accident*’ within the ‘*Civil Aviation (Investigation of Air Accidents and Incidents) Regulations 1996*’ but were not initially reported by the pilots to the AAIB. At the time of the subsequent Permit renewal for this aircraft, the LAA (Light Aircraft Association) brought this requirement to the owners’ attention and they subsequently supplied completed accident report forms on both accidents to the AAIB.