
ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Solar Wings Limited Pegasus XL-R, G-MTWA
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 447 piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1988
Date & Time (UTC):	31 May 2006 at 1108 hrs
Location:	Near Sittles Farm, Fradley, Staffordshire
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to the wing, propeller, engine and nosewheel
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	52 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	63 hours (of which 54 were on type) Last 90 days - 3 hours Last 28 days - 0 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and subsequent engine testing

Synopsis

Shortly after takeoff in blustery conditions and whilst on an extended crosswind leg, the microlight began to descend. The pilot turned in-to-wind but, despite having the throttle fully open, was unable to stop the descent and was forced to land in a field. During the ground roll, the aircraft's nosewheel dug into an area of soft ground, causing it to turn over. The pilot was uninjured and climbed from the wreckage unassisted. Tests of the engine failed to reveal any defect which may have contributed to the accident.

History of the flight

After taking off in blustery conditions from Runway 27 at Roddige Airfield, G-MTWA climbed to a height of

approximately 150 ft before turning crosswind. The pilot reported that despite the engine running at maximum speed, he began to descend. Due to a tailwind component (the wind was reported as 300°/8 kt), the crosswind leg of the left hand circuit became extended and he was now too far from the airfield to land back. The pilot turned the microlight in-to-wind, but could not arrest the rate of descent, so decided to land in a large field directly ahead. Shortly after what he described as a firm touchdown, the nosewheel dug in to soft ground and broke off, and the microlight turned over. The pilot was uninjured and was able to make his escape without assistance.

Investigation

The pilot reported that there had been no evidence of rough or uneven running of the engine during the short flight; therefore, carburettor icing was not considered likely as a factor in the apparent loss of the microlight's performance.

After a replacement propeller had been fitted, the engine was test run, under the supervision of the AAIB, and

no abnormalities were observed with its performance. Also, no restriction or binding of the engine control cables was found. In the absence of any technical defect being apparent, it is considered that the blustery nature of the wind during the flight, possibly associated with a downdraught, prevented G-MTWA from gaining height, leaving the pilot no option but to carry out an immediate forced landing.