

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Rotorsport UK MTOsport, G-GSMT	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 914-UL piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2008 (Serial no: RSUK/MTOS/001)	
Date & Time (UTC):	28 February 2014 at 1600 hrs	
Location:	South-east of Stonehill Farm, Crawfordjohn, Lanarkshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Damaged beyond economic repair	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	57 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	435 hours (of which 155 were on type) Last 90 days - 7 hours Last 28 days - 4 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

One or more seagulls struck the propeller when the aircraft was flying at a height of 500 ft agl. The propeller was damaged and this caused severe vibration, which necessitated a reduction to idle power. During the subsequent forced landing, avoiding action had to be taken when wires were spotted just prior to touchdown. The aircraft landed upright in a shallow river but the rotors struck the far river bank and the aircraft rolled onto its side. The occupants made their own escape and were not injured.

History of the flight

The aircraft was on a return flight to its home airfield at Stonehill Farm, near Crawfordjohn, Lanarkshire after a visit to Kirkbride Airfield in Cumbria. Apart from some isolated showers, it was a sunny day with good visibility and a light south-westerly breeze. The pilot was following the valley of the Snar Water river in a north-easterly direction, at a speed of approximately 85 mph and at a height of 500 ft agl, when he saw a few seagulls close to the aircraft. He was unable to avoid the birds and at least one of them struck and damaged the propeller. This caused a loud bang and a great deal of vibration was felt through the airframe and the control stick. The pilot selected the throttle to idle and the vibration reduced but he was forced to land immediately. He chose a field in front of the aircraft and just to the right of the river. However, as he approached the field, he spotted low-level electricity cables, which he had insufficient height or speed to fly over. The pilot turned left and attempted

to cross the river but, again, the aircraft did not have enough energy and he was forced to make a controlled landing in the water, at low speed.

The river had a water depth of between 1 ft and 2 ft but the far bank was steep and around 8 ft high. The rotor blades impacted the earth bank and the aircraft immediately rolled violently to the right. It came to rest partially submerged, lying on its right side. The passenger, who was a trainee gyroplane pilot, turned off the duplicate magneto switches, which remained above the water, on the left side of the rear seat. This stopped the engine and the pilot then managed to turn off the ignition. Neither occupant was injured and they both unstrapped and escaped the aircraft without difficulty. They later manoeuvred the aircraft upright and, with some local assistance, dragged it from the river.