ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Maule MXT-7-160 Star Rocket, G-BUXD
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-320-B2D piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1993 (Serial no: 17001C)
Date & Time (UTC):	28 April 2017 at 1110 hrs
Location:	Eaglescott Airfield, Devon
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Aircraft extensively damaged
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	52 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	183 hours (of which 20 were on type) Last 90 days - 7 hours Last 28 days - 7 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Synopsis

The aircraft stalled after the pilot flew a go-around after losing sight of the runway.

History of the flight

The pilot reported that he had flown from Goodwood to Eaglescott Airfield, where he flew a right-hand circuit to land on Runway 07. On turning on to finals the pilot lost sight of the runway and so orbited twice while he attempted to regain sight of the runway. During this manoeuvre the aircraft descended and the pilot, on realising that he was now too low, commenced a go-around. The pilot reported that he did not adequately monitor his airspeed during the go-around and the aircraft stalled; with insufficient height to fully recover from the stall, the aircraft crashed in a field short of the runway. The pilot and passenger were uninjured but the aircraft was extensively damaged.

Airfield information

Eaglescott Airfield has two grass runways and the western end of the airfield is surrounded by fields with a similar alignment to Runway 07 (Figure 1). The airfield instructions for visiting pilots is that Prior Permission is Required (PPR) by telephone and the arrival procedure is to make a radio call 10 miles out and then fly a standard overhead join at 2,000 ft QFE and a left-hand circuit at 800 ft.

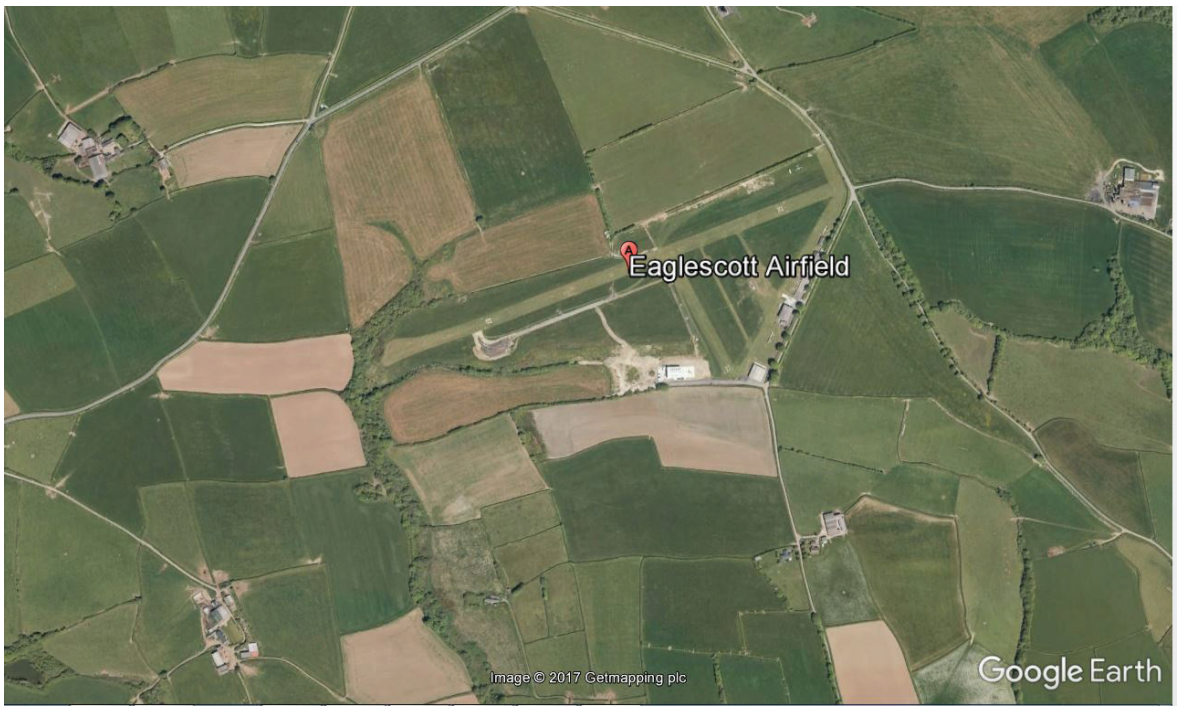

Figure 1
Eaglescott Airfield

Witness reports

The Airfield Manager (AM), who is also the Chief Flying Instructor, reported that he took the telephone call from the pilot when he requested PPR. He gave the pilot the QFE setting and advised him to arrive in the overhead at 2,000 ft QFE for a standard overhead join for a left-hand circuit for Runway 07. The pilot made the required radio call when 10 miles out and as he approached the overhead reported that he was letting down on the dead-side for a right-hand circuit on Runway 07. The AM stated that as the radio calls were confident, and there was no other traffic in the circuit, he did not correct the pilot. The pilot reported "Downwind Runway 07" at a position that the AM considered to be closer to the airfield than normal. The AM continued to watch G-BUXD and noticed that after it had made a slight descent on the base leg the aircraft then flew a right orbit. The AM made a radio call to the pilot when the aircraft was pointing towards the airfield and suggested that he should roll out, perform a go-around and complete a standard left-hand circuit.

The pilot did not respond to the radio call and continued orbiting. The AM made a second call when the aircraft was pointing towards the airfield stating "go-around, go-around, climb straight ahead, and perform a standard left-hand circuit." The aircraft then seemed to make a 45˚ join onto final from the base leg and when on the final approach appeared to commence a go-around. However, the nose of the aircraft was seen to rise, the left wing dropped and the aircraft disappeared from view. The AM called the emergency services (999) and the Eaglescott based Devon Air Ambulance helicopter who arrived on the scene within three to four minutes of the accident.

AAIB Comment

The pilot informed the AAIB that he had, correctly, written in his flight plan that he should fly a left-hand circuit at Eaglescott Airfield. He used a tablet device to navigate, and on-route checked the airfield information recorded on the device, which stated that pilots should fly a right-hand circuit. On rechecking the airfield information on the device after the accident, the pilot realised that this referred to gliders and that fixed-wing powered aircraft should fly a left-hand circuit.

With a passenger sitting in the front right seat, it would have been difficult for the pilot in the left seat to remain in sight of the runway when flying a right-hand circuit close to the airfield. As shown in Figure 1, the number of nearby fields with similar 'east-west' alignment to that of Runway 07 may have made identification of the runway more difficult.