

ACCIDENT

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| Aircraft Type and Registration: | Europa, G-BWIJ | |
| No & Type of Engines: | 1 Mid-West GIAE11OR-CA piston engine | |
| Year of Manufacture: | 2011 (Serial no: PFA 247-12513) | |
| Date & Time (UTC): | 24 June 2017 at 0920 hrs | |
| Location: | Croft Farm Airstrip, Defford, Worcestershire | |
| Type of Flight: | Private | |
| Persons on Board: | Crew - 1 | Passengers - None |
| Injuries: | Crew - None | Passengers - N/A |
| Nature of Damage: | Propeller and minor damage to airframe | |
| Commander's Licence: | Private Pilot's Licence | |
| Commander's Age: | 70 years | |
| Commander's Flying Experience: | 673 hours (of which 138 were on type) Last 90 days - 6 hours Last 28 days - 4 hours | |
| Information Source: | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot | |

Synopsis

The pilot carried out a go-around after a bounced landing. During the go-around there was vibration and a lack of power so he decided to land in a nearby field. The field was short and in attempting to make use of all the available length he undershot, landing in a field of maize.

History of the flight

This Europa aircraft was built and owned by the pilot; it has a monowheel landing gear and outriggers on each wing. The pilot stated that he had not been able to keep in regular flying practice for a 14 month period before the accident, but had recently started flying again.

The pilot went on a short local flight from Milson Airstrip, Shropshire, to Croft Farm Airstrip, Worcestershire. The weather conditions were fine with good visibility and a westerly wind of 10 kt. He was familiar with the airfield and made his approach to grass Runway 27, which is 570 m in length and 18 m width. When on the approach he realised he was high and fast and considered making a go-around, but thought that the landing would be manageable. On touchdown the aircraft bounced and he applied power to go around. As the aircraft started to climb it became obvious that there was something wrong because there was vibration and a lack of power. He decided to land in a nearby field to his left. The target field appeared quite short so he aimed to touch down at its start. He reduced power at what he thought was the right time but the aircraft dropped and touched down short, into a

standing maize crop. The aircraft stopped quickly and remained upright; he was wearing a full harness and was able to vacate the aircraft unassisted.

The pilot inspected the aircraft afterwards and found that during the bounced landing the propeller had struck the runway and been damaged. He attributed the cause of the accident to his shortage of flying practice over the preceding 14 months, in particular circuit flying, which had led to his misjudgement of the landing.

The pilot, when asked, stated that it had crossed his mind to continue the flight and attempt to fly a circuit but had thought that it would be 'stupid' and so he decided to put down in an available field.

Analysis

The pilot felt vibration and a partial loss of power and decided to make a precautionary landing. Decision making in these circumstances, where some engine power is available, can be more complicated than for a complete engine failure. There may be a temptation to continue flight and turn back towards the airfield, when it may not be the best option. The power may be unreliable and there have been many occasions where an attempt to return to an airfield with reduced power has led to a loss of control and a serious or fatal accident. On this occasion the pilot decided to commit to a forced landing and the outcome was successful with no injury and relatively minor damage.