

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Pegasus Quik GT450, G-PUGZ	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912ULS piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2012 (Serial no: 8639)	
Date & Time (UTC):	17 February 2018 at 1500 hrs	
Location:	Little Gransden Airfield, Cambridgeshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Extensive	
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	52 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	2,124 hours (of which 2,052 were on type) Last 90 days - 18 hours Last 28 days - 8 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

While landing with a crosswind, the pilot encountered an unexpected downdraught and he was unable to prevent the aircraft striking the ground and departing the runway at the downwind edge.

History of the flight

The pilot, an experienced flexwing instructor, approached Runway 28 at Little Gransden Airfield with a southerly wind of 5-7 kt. He aimed to land one third of the way along the 810 m grass runway to avoid rotor effect in the lee of the trees and buildings situated south of the threshold area. However, as the pilot completed his round-out, at a height of approximately 3 ft, the aircraft unexpectedly encountered a strong downdraught and he was unable to initiate a go-around before the nose of the aircraft hit the ground.

On impact, the nose landing gear collapsed and the engine ran to its maximum speed due, it was later discovered, to damage inflicted to the foot throttle mechanism. As the aircraft skidded forward and right, the pilot removed one hand from the control bar to turn off the magneto switches, situated on his right side. This took a few seconds to accomplish because the aircraft was bumping against the ground, the switches are small and he was wearing gloves. During this time, because he had only one hand on the control bar, he was unable to prevent the wing from striking the ground.

The aircraft departed the northern edge of the runway and the nose cone dug into soft mud, causing the main wheels to lift off the ground momentarily. The aircraft settled upright, so the pilot had no difficulty climbing out, but he believes that if he had not managed to turn off the magnetos the power of the engine would have flipped the aircraft upside down.