Accident

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Quik GT450, G-CGTU	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912ULS piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2011 (Serial no: 8574)	
Date & Time (UTC):	21 August 2025 at 1300 hrs	
Location:	East Fortune Airfield, East Lothian	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	One propeller blade separated. Damage to right wing and left wheel fairing.	
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	57 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	104 hours (of which 104 were on type) Last 90 days - 5 hours Last 28 days - 2 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further enquiries by the AAIB	

Synopsis

A Quik GT450 flex-wing microlight (G-CGTU) was damaged during a landing accident at East Fortune Airfield after striking a plastic barrier at the threshold of Runway 11. The pilot, who had recently obtained her microlight rating and was conducting her first flight with a passenger, encountered turbulent conditions while flying a short, noise-abatement circuit with a limited final approach distance. During the final turn, airspeed decayed below the normal approach range, resulting in the aircraft becoming too low and slow on short final.

A late attempt to initiate a go-around was unsuccessful, and the aircraft clipped the barrier, causing a propeller blade to separate and damage the right wing, before landing hard and coming to rest on the runway. There were no injuries. The accident was caused by the pilot's late detection of the aircraft being too low and slow and consequent late decision to go around, with turbulence and the short final approach segment acting as likely contributory factors. After the accident, the airfield introduced a new rule requiring pilots to go around if they are at or below 200 ft during the final turn.

History of the flight

The pilot had passed her skills test and obtained her National Private Pilot's Licence with a Microlight rating one month before the accident. All her flying had been in the Quik GT450 flex-wing microlight. The accident flight was the pilot's second flight since obtaining her rating and her first flight with a passenger.

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After a local flight the pilot joined the circuit at East Fortune Airfield for an approach to Runway 11. The flex-wing circuit involved a close-in base leg and a short final leg to Runway 11 for noise abatement reasons (red circuit in Figure 1). The unlicensed runway was part grass and part concrete with a length of 450 m. There were plastic barriers at the threshold to separate the runway from a farmer's field.

The pilot noted that it was a bit bumpy at the circuit height of 500 ft aal. The wind was from 110° at 8 kt. After rolling out on final she realised that the aircraft was too low and too slow to clear the plastic barrier at the threshold. She stated that she was too late in applying power to go around and the aircraft clipped the barrier, knocking it over, and then touched down hard. A propeller blade separated and went through the fabric of the right wing. The aircraft bounced back into the air and the pilot advised her passenger to brace. The pilot was unsure if the landing gear had been damaged, so she held off for as long as possible before touching down gently on the grass part of the runway and coming to rest on the concrete part. The pilot and passenger exited the aircraft without injury.

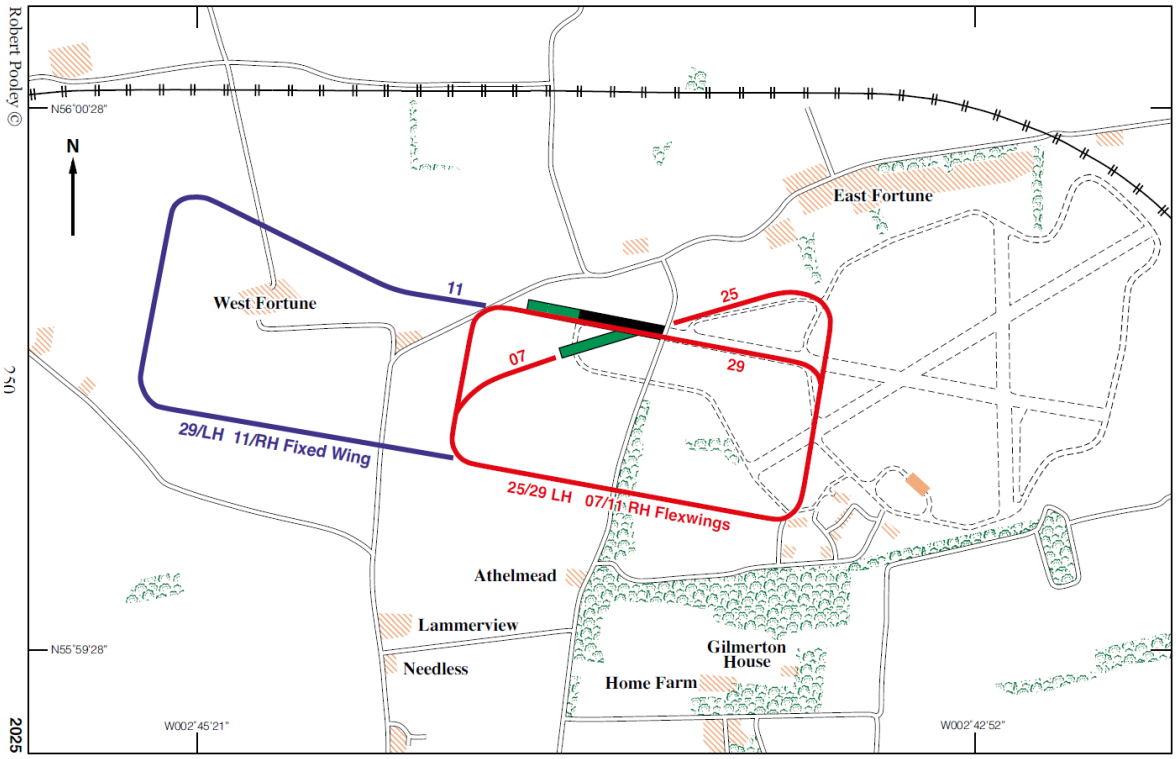


Figure 1

East Fortune Airfield circuit diagram – Pooleys Flight Guide 2025
(© Robert Pooley)

Accident site

The plastic barriers at the Runway 11 threshold were supported by plastic feet overlayed with sandbags to prevent them being blown over in strong wind. The right-most barrier (relative to the direction of travel) was knocked over by G-CGTU (Figure 2).

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Figure 2

Plastic barrier at the Runway 11 threshold that was knocked over by G-CGTU (view opposite to the direction of travel)

Aircraft information

The Quik GT450 is a flex-wing microlight with a maximum takeoff weight of 450 kg. The aircraft's best glide speed is 47 mph, but the operator's manual includes a warning which states '*Never approach at less than 55 mph*'. The extra speed is to allow for any wind gradient experienced during final approach and to increase the speed at which the aircraft responds to control inputs. The flight manual recommends a final approach speed of 55 to 60 mph.

Aircraft examination

The aircraft had some minor damage to the left wheel fairing. The propeller blade had separated near the blade root and penetrated through both layers of the right wing (Figure 3); it was not clear if it separated due to hitting the barrier or from hitting the ground during the hard landing.

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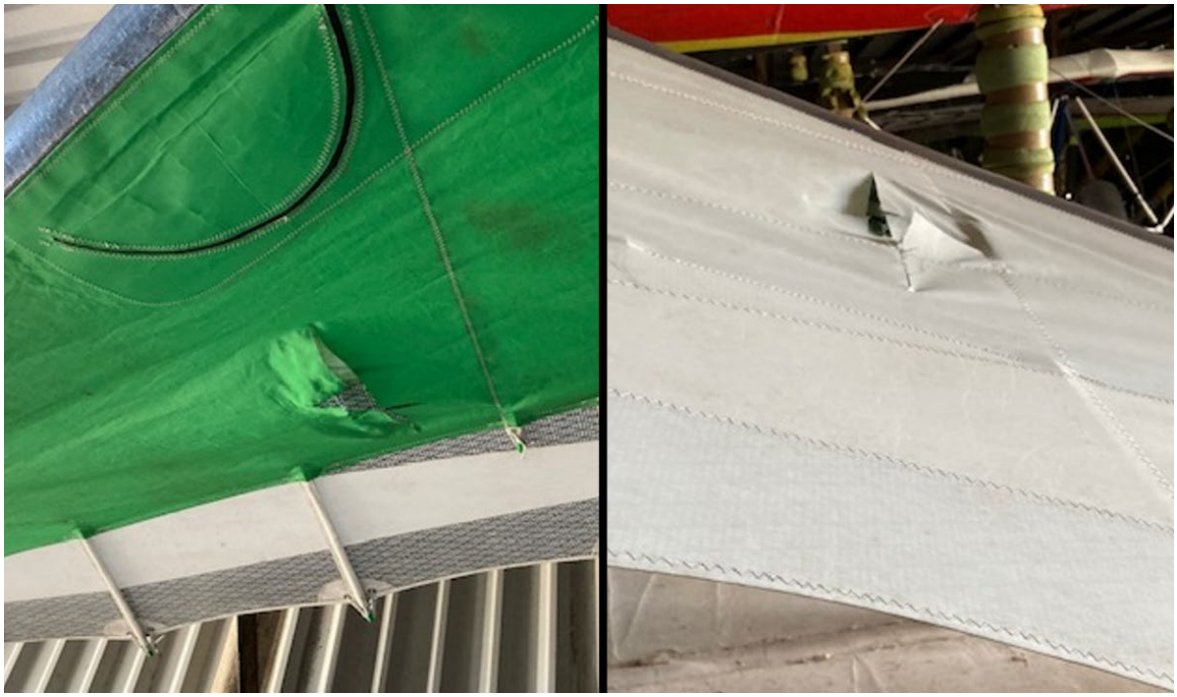


Figure 3

Damage to right wing from separated propeller blade (underside – left image, upper surface – right image)

Previous accidents at East Fortune Airfield involving fences on approach

On 8 May 2025, an Exodus Deltajet 500 Stingray flex-wing microlight (registration G-CMYY) also struck the plastic barrier at the approach end of Runway 11 during landing. At the time there was also a wire fence along the threshold, and the aircraft struck the top wire. The aircraft pitched up and rolled beyond inverted, before hitting the ground on its right side, fatally injuring the pilot and seriously injuring the rear-seat passenger. A section of the top wire of the fence was found wrapped around the propeller hub. At the time of publication of this report, the investigation into the G-CMYY event was nearing completion.

On 4 October 2021, a Pegasus Quantum 15-912 (registration G-NAPO) was on approach to Runway 25 when its landing gear clipped the fence post at the runway threshold, causing the aircraft to yaw right and roll left onto the runway. It slid to a stop on its side, having sustained damage to the wing[1].

Pilot information

The pilot stated that she was normally good at going around and that she should have initiated the go-around earlier. She only realised that the aircraft was too low once it was on final approach. She normally used an approach speed of 65 to 70 mph while turning final, but had allowed the speed to bleed off to 50 to 55 mph without initially realising it. She

Footnote

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/aaib-record-only-investigations-november-december-2021/aaib-record-only-investigations-reviewed-november-december-2021 [accessed 16 July 2026].

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stated that because she was concentrating on the turn, she was not watching the speed, and maybe the turbulent air was a factor too. She did not have a minimum height in mind for the turn to final.

All the pilot's training had been at East Fortune and she had done multiple landings to Runway 11 so was familiar with the circuit and the barrier. She would always plan to fly a glide approach but would use the throttle if necessary.

The pilot was aware of the accident three months earlier to G-CMYY. The wire fence had been removed because of that accident, and the '11' runway numbers had been moved from near the threshold to 57 m further down the runway to be at the recommended aiming point. The pilot was aware that the numbers had been moved and this was her first time landing on Runway 11 with the numbers in that location, but she did not think that was a factor. During her skills test on 21 July 2025, she had landed on Runway 11 four times. Her subsequent flight on 31 July was to Runway 29, and this was followed by the accident flight.

Aerodrome information

The length of the final leg of the flex-wing circuit to Runway 11 was about 100 m, whereas the length of the final leg to Runway 29 was about 500 m. The airfield operator had looked at lengthening the final leg to Runway 11, but this could not be done due to noise concerns from neighbours. The fixed-wing circuit to Runway 11 has a longer final leg due to the greater difficulty of those aircraft types flying a short final leg. As there were not many fixed-wing aircraft arrivals at the airfield, this circuit was acceptable to neighbours.

After the fatal accident to G-CMYY they removed the wire fence and moved the runway numbers to be at the recommended aiming point. After the accident to G-CGTU they took additional safety action and sent out an email to club members with the following new rule:

> *'We are now going to make it a RULE that if you are at 200 feet or less in that final turn, you DO NOT LAND. You go around. It does assume that you are on QFE, not QNH, so it is imperative that you check and get this right. If you got this wrong on a GST [General Skills Test] it would be a straight fail. All it takes is a quick glance at the altimeter as you start the turn, and hit the power if you're 200 feet or less. Ideally you should be 250 to 300 feet starting that turn, or higher depending on the wind.'*

The circuit diagram in the Pooleys flight guide shown in Figure 1 was also amended in the 2026 guide to include the following: '*Flexwing circuits approach to Rwy 11 final turn must not be lower than 200 ft AGL*'.

At the time of publication, other runways at East Fortune still had a wire fence across their thresholds and the landowner was reluctant to have these removed. But the airfield stated that the approaches to these runways are much longer and so did not present the issue faced with the approach to Runway 11. However, they stated that they would request that the Pooleys flight guide be amended to include information that there were wire fences at the thresholds of the other runways.

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The airport operator stated that the short approach to Runway 11 was introduced in around 1991, and apart from the accidents involving G-CMYY and G-CGTU he was not aware of any other accidents involving aircraft hitting the fence at the Runway 11 threshold, so considered the risk to be low. G-NAPO involved Runway 25, and other accidents involving the fences had involved over-runs on landing.

Analysis

The pilot stated that the reason the aircraft hit the barrier was because she allowed it to become too low and slow in the final turn, and by the time she realised this and initiated a go-around it was too late to avoid the barrier. The turbulent conditions were likely a contributory factor as it led to the pilot spending more time focussing on the final turn and not scanning the airspeed indicator. The pilot did not have a minimum height in mind for the turn to final. The short final leg of only about 100 m may have been a contributory factor. If the final leg had been longer, then when the pilot rolled out on final she would have had more time to assess the aircraft's height and speed and more time to react and increase power before reaching the runway threshold. The airfield operator acknowledged this but had been unable to increase the final leg length due to noise concerns from neighbours. They considered the risk to be low as they were only aware of two accidents involving hitting the Runway 11 fence on approach in the 35 years they had been using the short final leg. However, to reduce the risk, the airfield created a club rule that if the aircraft is at 200 ft aal or less in the final turn then you need to initiate a go-around. They had previously also removed the wire fence and moved the '11' runway marker to be at the recommended aiming point.

Conclusion

The aircraft struck the barrier at the runway threshold because the aircraft had got too low and slow during the final turn, and by the time the pilot realised this and actioned a go-around it was too late to avoid the barrier. Likely contributory factors were the turbulent conditions and the short 100 m final leg. To help reduce the chance of recurrence the airfield has introduced a new rule that you need to initiate a go-around if you are at 200 ft aal or less in the final turn to Runway 11.

Safety action

After the accident to G-CGTU the airfield sent an email to club members on 25 August 2025 with the following new rule: *'We are now going to make it a RULE that if you are at 200 feet or less in that final turn, you DO NOT LAND. You go around. It does assume that you are on QFE, not QNH, so it is imperative that you check and get this right. If you got this wrong on a GST* [General Skills Test] *it would be a straight fail. All it takes is a quick glance at the altimeter as you start the turn, and hit the power if you're 200 feet or less. Ideally you should be 250 to 300 feet starting that turn, or higher depending on the wind.'*

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