

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Medway Eclipser, G-CCGA	
No & type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912-UL piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2003	
Date & Time (UTC):	2 July 2006 at 1530 hrs	
Location:	Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Monopole and hanging bracket bent, aircraft swamped during recovery	
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	43 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	268 hours (of which 66 were on type) Last 90 days - 19 hours Last 28 days - 11 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Reporting Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The pilot attempted unsuccessfully to land on a deserted beach because he considered that he had an engine problem. A lack of climb performance led to this belief. He subsequently considered that wind conditions encountered at low level accounted for the lack of performance.

History of the flight

The pilot reported that he was taking his daughter to view a seal colony just off the coast at Blakeney. He continued west and flew at low level over some seals but with no boats or people in the vicinity. He then turned through 180° to head towards Cromer, along the shoreline. At this point he was below 100 ft amsl. He applied power

to climb back to a normal altitude for the leg to Cromer. He then became aware that his machine was not climbing normally. Suspecting an engine problem, he decided to land on the beach and check the fuel filters and plug leads. The beach was approximately five miles long and one mile wide and the pilot was conscious that the area was suitable for a precautionary landing, and was a more favourable landing site than the terrain on the route back to Cromer, should total engine failure occur.

The pilot carried out a normal landing into wind. The landing run at first appeared to be as on grass, but the drag of the rear wheels then increased dramatically and the front wheel was pulled down quite firmly. As the

front wheel touched, the trike rapidly decelerated, and realising he was in soft sand, the pilot pushed the bar fully forward whilst applying full power. The machine nonetheless rapidly came to a halt, rolling onto its nosewheel and right mainwheel and coming to rest on the right wingtip. The pilot turned off the engine and master switch and both occupants left the aircraft without injury.

The pilot then located a suitable landing area on foot and alerted a colleague who had been flying nearby and was now overhead. The other pilot landed and helped right the overturned machine. Both pilots then dragged it to firmer sand. The pilot of G-CCGA examined the fuel filters and found them to be clean. He tried to taxi the machine towards the shore. Unfortunately, soft sand was again encountered and the aircraft became stuck.

The colleague then flew the pilot's daughter back to Cromer. The pilot was assisted by the RNLI to de-rig and tow the aircraft to their boathouse. Notwithstanding great effort to locate a 'dry' route, the machine was swamped as they passed through the shallowest point of a sea channel.

Pilot's comment

The pilot subsequently noted that, following the accident, the wind was swinging from 100° to 40° and occasionally gusting. He subsequently felt that low level wind conditions explained the lack of climb performance. The engine was reaching full power during his attempt to taxi to the land and its indicated temperatures were normal.