



Air Accident Investigation Unit Ireland

**FACTUAL REPORT
SERIOUS INCIDENT TO
Powerchute Kestrel (Microlight), G-MWFI
Dunmore, Co. Galway
05 August 2012**



Ail Roinn Iompair
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt

Department of Transport,
Tourism and Sport

FINAL REPORT

AAIU Report No: 2013-001**State File No: IRL00912086****Report Format: Factual Report****Published: 14/01/2013**

In accordance with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, Regulation (EU) No. 996/2010 and the provisions of SI 460 of 2009, the Chief Inspector of Air Accidents, on 05 August 2012, appointed Paddy Judge as the Investigator-in-Charge to carry out an Investigation into this Serious Incident and prepare a Report. The sole purpose of this Investigation is the prevention of aviation Accidents and Incidents. It is not the purpose of the Investigation to apportion blame or liability.

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Powerchute Kestrel (Microlight), G-MWFI
No. and Type of Engines:	1 x Rotax 503
Aircraft Serial Number:	00360
Year of Manufacture:	1990
Date and Time (UTC):	05/08/2012 @ 14:06 hrs
Location:	Carrowpadden, Dunmore, Co. Galway
Type of Operation:	General Aviation - Pleasure
Persons on Board:	Crew -1 Passengers - 0
Injuries:	Crew - Minor
Nature of Damage:	Aircraft: Minor Other: Power Lines
Commander's Licence:	None
Commander's Details:	Male, aged 63 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	Approximately 100 hours, of which 100 were on type
Notification Source:	Ireland West Fire Services
Information Source:	AAIU Report Form submitted by the Pilot AAIU Field Investigation



SYNOPSIS

The Pilot of G-MWFI conducted a low 'fly by' over a field where a vintage farm equipment rally was being held. While doing so the aircraft struck and damaged a low-voltage electricity power line which caused the aircraft to hit the ground. The Pilot suffered a minor injury and the aircraft minor damage. The Pilot was unlicensed and the aircraft, which had been de-registered by the UK in 2011, did not have a Permit to Fly.

1. FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.1 History of Flight

The Pilot stated that the field where the annual vintage tractor and farm equipment rally was being held was unsuitable for take-off because of expected crowds. Accordingly, a more suitable and safer site was selected about 1 km from the town of Dunmore and about 2 kms from the rally field. The land owner's permission to use this field was obtained and the Pilot took-off from there. The take-off was witnessed by some local people who photographed a number of his 'fly bys' before he departed towards the rally at 400-500 ft. He had previously been informed that a helicopter would be operating pleasure flights from the rally field.

The Pilot said that the weather for the short trip was fine. As he approached the field, he recalled that he saw a helicopter flying towards him and concentrated on its flight path as he needed to know where its landing area and take-off point were. He stated that he had not previously been to the field and did not want any problems with the helicopter crew or the pilot. He said that he kept to his left well out of the helicopter's way and watched where it was going to land. After observing the helicopter for a short period he saw it landing and then looked forward to fly around the edge of the field. He stated that "*At this point I hit the cables and was on the ground before I knew what had happened*". The Pilot suffered only minor injuries and did not require medical attention.

The local Gardaí secured the aircraft pending the arrival of an AAIU inspector who later inspected the aircraft and the accident site. The accident site was a large undulating field through which a power line comprised of two 220 V (low-voltage) electric power wires ran. The ground was very soft and the impact position of the aircraft was identified as being approximately 10 metres from a display line of tractors and 15 metres from the power line. The poles supporting the power line were 103 metres apart at the point of contact; the wires were approximately 10 metres above ground level at their lowest point. The wire strike damaged/frayed one of the wires and caused a blackout to local electricity consumers until repairs were made later that day.

1.2 Aircraft

The aircraft, a Powerchute Kestrel, consists of a steerable tricycle undercarriage under a metal frame with two seats, behind which an engine with a pusher propeller is mounted. This apparatus is suspended in flight beneath a steerable parachute canopy.

When inspected by the Investigation the canopy, control lines and rigging were found intact and in good condition. Control line continuity was established and the engine started and operated normally.

FINAL REPORT

Evidence of a wire strike was found on the side of the aircraft. The left wheel trans-axle was bent aft (**Photo No. 1**), probably due to ground impact.

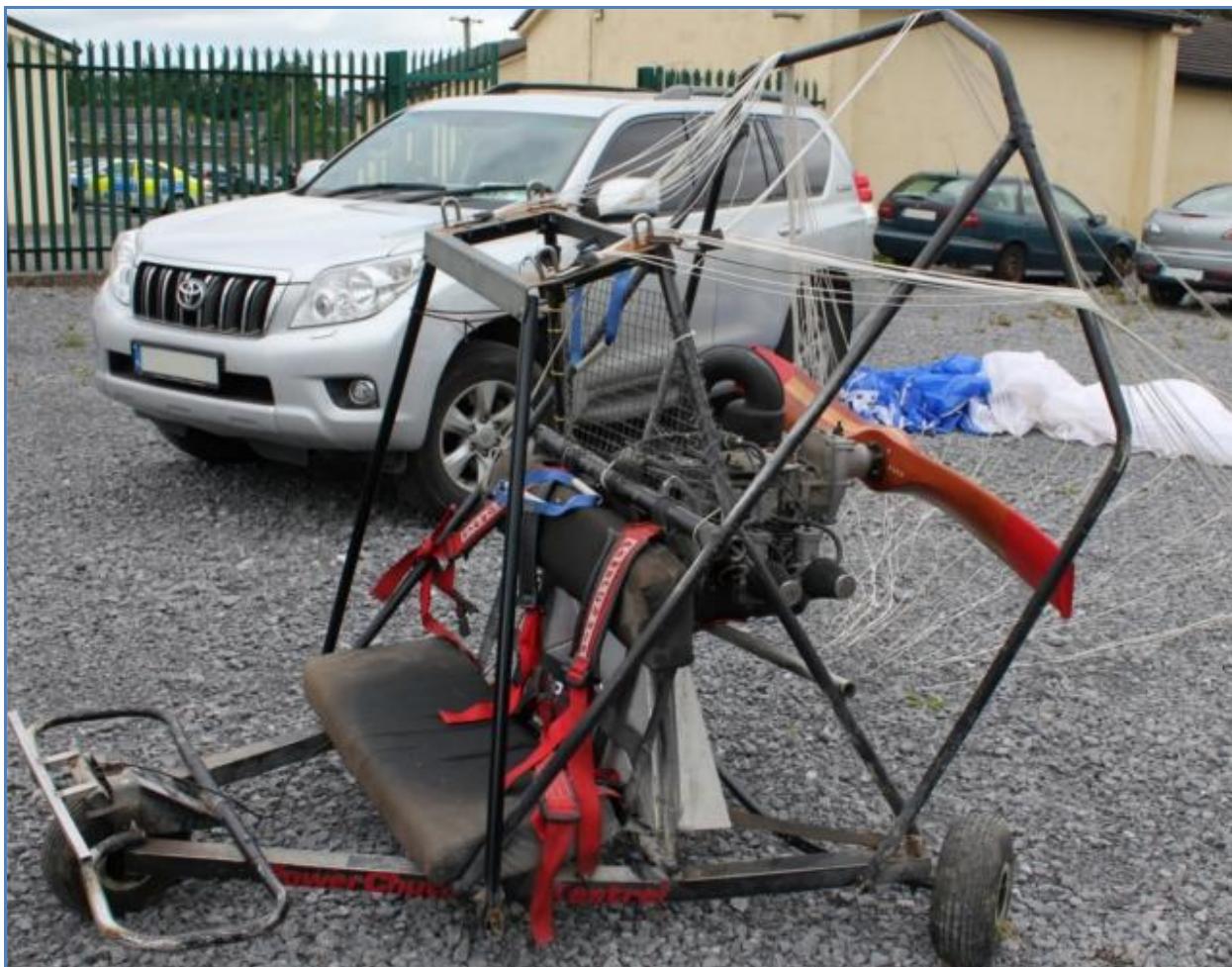


Photo No. 1: Paramotor G-MWFI

Receipts for recent maintenance work were provided to the Investigation by the Owner/Pilot.

1.3 Regulations

The United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) website showed that the aircraft was classified as a microlight¹ but had been de-registered on 7 February 2011. It had not been re-registered in Ireland where microlight activity is regulated by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) which requires that it be flown by a properly qualified pilot. The aircraft was not currently registered and the Pilot did not hold a pilot licence.

The Regulations concerning the operation of flights in Ireland are published by the IAA in S.I. No. 72 of 2004 (RULES OF THE AIR) ORDER, 2004. These state that:

¹ **Microlight:** An aircraft with a maximum take-off mass generally not exceeding 450 kg (for a two seat landplane).



3. Minimum heights

- (1) Except as permitted by the appropriate authority or as hereinafter provided aircraft shall not be flown:
- (a) over congested areas of cities, towns or settlements or over an assembly of persons, at less than:
- (i) a height of 450 metres (1,500 ft) above the ground or water, or
- (ii) a height of 300 metres (1,000 ft) above the highest obstacle within a radius of 600 metres from the aircraft, or
- (iii) such other height as would permit, in the event of the failure of a power unit, a safe forced landing to be made, whichever height is the greatest.
- (b) elsewhere:
- (i) closer than 150 metres, (500 ft) to any person, vehicle, vessel or structure, or
- (ii) at a height less than 150 metres (500 ft) above the ground or water,
- (c) over or in the immediate vicinity of any place within the State, where a large number of persons is assembled in the open air in connection with any event of public interest or entertainment, save when:
- (i) such flights are made with the written consent of the Authority and of the organisers, if any, of the event and are in accordance with any conditions or limitations specified by the Authority, or
- (ii) the aircraft is passing by in the normal course of navigation and flying at a height in compliance with subparagraph (a) of this paragraph.

COMMENT

While the Pilot showed the Investigation evidence of recent engine maintenance work, the aircraft itself was unregistered and did not have a Permit to Fly. Furthermore the Pilot did not possess a valid pilot licence and the aircraft was flown contrary to the Rules of the Air, at a low height close to and thereby endangering members of the public.

In accordance with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, Regulation (EU) No. 996/2010, and Statutory Instrument No. 460 of 2009, Air Navigation (Notification and Investigation of Accidents, Serious Incidents and Incidents) Regulation, 2009, the sole purpose of this investigation to prevent aviation accidents and serious incidents. It is not the purpose of any such investigation and the associated investigation report to apportion blame or liability.

A safety recommendation shall in no case create a presumption of blame or liability for an occurrence.

Produced by the Air Accident Investigation Unit

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