

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Shadow Series CD, G-MYUS	
No & type of Engines:	1 Rotax 503-2V piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1995	
Date & Time (UTC):	22 July 2006 at 1220 hrs	
Location:	5 miles West of Boscombe Down, Wiltshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Minor)	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Severe airframe damage	
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	56 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	165 hours (of which 53 were on type) Last 90 days - 8 hours Last 28 days - 0 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

Whilst on a local flight from Old Sarum Airfield, the aircraft encountered extremely heavy rain, strong winds and reducing visibility. The pilot commenced a precautionary landing but was suddenly enveloped in torrential rain, which deprived him of any visual attitude reference. The engine then failed. The aircraft landed heavily in a cornfield, causing severe damage to the airframe. The pilot, who received minor injuries, had a disability and remained in the aircraft, summoning help using his mobile telephone. There was no fire.

History of the flight

The pilot's intention was to carry out a few circuits at Old Sarum Airfield, near Salisbury, and then fly to Fordingbridge via Alderbury visual reference point

(VRP) before returning to Old Sarum. He had checked the weather forecast and was aware that thunderstorms were predicted for later in the afternoon.

Engine start was at 1135 hrs and a short time later, the aircraft took off from Runway 24. After conducting three 'touch and go' circuits, the pilot climbed the aircraft to 1,200 ft and headed towards Alderbury. However, when abeam the VRP, he observed lightning to the northeast of his position. He decided to abandon his original plan and headed westwards to go around Salisbury and return to the airfield from the east. While passing south of Salisbury, the visibility rapidly deteriorated, the wind picked up and he had to descend to maintain visual contact with the ground. The wind speed continued to

increase to an extent that severely reduced the ground speed. Realising that a precautionary landing was necessary, the pilot saw a suitable field ahead but was suddenly enveloped in torrential rain. This reduced the visibility to near zero, depriving him of any visual attitude reference. The engine then failed and the pilot struggled to maintain control in what were by this time extremely difficult conditions. A few seconds later, at approximately 1220 hrs, the aircraft landed heavily in a wheat field, with the airframe sustaining significant damage. Shortly afterwards, a gust of wind tore off the partially separated right wing, which came to rest on top of the cockpit canopy. The pilot subsequently commented that this served as a useful shelter from the rain for the following few hours. He had had no time to

transmit a radio message prior to landing, but was able to summon assistance from the flying club with his mobile phone. Although he had suffered no significant injury in the accident, he suffers from a disability and was not capable of walking to safety.

According to the aircraft owner/operator, the engine failure was the result of heavy contamination of the engine filters with rainwater. However, it is considered that this probably had little effect on the outcome as the pilot, faced with appalling flying conditions, had already made the decision to land. After the accident he assessed the cause as his failure to recognise and act upon the rapidly deteriorating weather situation.