

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Rans S6-ES Coyote II, G-CCJN	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 582-48 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2005	
Date & Time (UTC):	5 February 2012 at 1300 hrs	
Location:	Eshott Airfield, Northumberland	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Nose leg, cockpit floor and right main leg damaged	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	64 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	781 hours (of which 127 were on type) Last 90 days - 3 hours Last 28 days - 1 hour	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The aircraft engine stopped at low height, shortly after takeoff. The pilot turned back to the airfield and attempted a landing on a secondary runway, but the aircraft landed heavily, causing damage to the landing gear and forward fuselage. Neither occupant was injured.

History of the flight

Following normal pre-flight inspection and checks, the pilot taxied the aircraft for Runway 26. The pilot was accompanied by a co-owner of the aircraft as his passenger. The weather was fine, with a light westerly surface wind. Pre-takeoff checks were carried out, which included running the engine at full power: all indications appeared normal.

Takeoff and initial climb proceeded normally until the aircraft was at about 200 ft, at which point the engine suddenly stopped. The pilot lowered the nose and, as there was no runway remaining ahead, started a right turn back towards the airfield whilst attempting to restart the engine. He determined that his best option was to continue the right turn to land on the cross Runway 19, a tarmac runway with a grass strip beside it.

The aircraft reached the grass strip but, with little height and speed in hand, the pilot was unable to carry out a normal flare. The aircraft hit the ground heavily in a nose low attitude, causing the nose leg to collapse and fold up under the forward fuselage. The right main leg was also damaged.

Both the pilot and his passenger were wearing lap strap seatbelts with diagonal shoulder straps. Neither was injured and both were able to exit the aircraft unaided. The cause of the engine failure had not been established at the time of reporting, but fuel starvation was considered by the pilot to be a probable cause.

AAIB comment

The engine failure occurred at a critical stage of flight. The success of the manoeuvre was probably due to the pilot's experience and familiarity with the aircraft and airfield, together with relatively benign weather

conditions and favourable airfield layout. However, the aircraft sustained significant damage and was probably close to the stall when the pilot attempted to flare. Previous experience has shown that a number of attempted turn-backs have resulted in loss of control, normally due to decayed airspeed, with sometimes fatal outcomes. In all but exceptional circumstances, the safest course of action following an engine failure immediately after takeoff is to land straight ahead, maintaining airspeed and turning only as much as may be required to avoid obstacles.