

Aircraft Type and Registration: Avid Speed Wing, G-BVFO

No & Type of Engines: 1 Rotax 582 piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1994

Date & Time (UTC): 11 June 1995 at 1610 hrs

Location: 2 km north of Shepton Mallet, Somerset

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Damage to main landing gear and adjacent fuselage area; left flaperon damaged; wooden propeller, one blade broken off

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 58 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 360 hours (of which 120 were on type)
Last 90 days - 31 hours
Last 28 days - 9 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

At 1520 hrs, the aircraft took off from Branscombe, South Devon for a flight to Enstone, Oxford. The aircraft was flying at 1,800 feet amsl when, at about 1610 hrs, the engine stopped. The pilot realised that, despite a reminder on his kneepad to "CHANGE TANKS AT 1700" (local time), he had not done so and the right tank was now empty. He changed to the left tank which contained 40 litres of fuel, but had insufficient time to restart the engine; he set up the aircraft for an immediate forced landing. He did not make a MAYDAY call because of lack of time; he also considered that the open terrain made survival appear certain.

The chosen field had a slight uphill gradient towards the north where wooded hills rose to about 200 feet above the selected landing area. The surface wind was estimated to have been 330°/15 kt. A high sink rate developed during the final part of the approach which the pilot was unable to arrest and a heavy landing ensued. The main landing gear collapsed and, when the aircraft had stopped, the pilot, who was wearing lap and diagonal upper torso restraint, escaped uninjured through the main door.

The pilot thought that the high sink rate on landing was caused by a downdraft, however, in a frank and comprehensive report, he described it as "a classic case of 'fat, dumb and happy' and caused by a lapse of cockpit discipline".