

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Siai Marchetti F260C, N61FD	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming 0-540 series piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1983	
Date & Time (UTC):	21 March 2010 at 1250 hrs	
Location:	Rettendon Common, Essex	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Substantial	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	49 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	498 hours (of which 133 were on type) Last 90 days - 12 hours Last 28 days - 8 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

As the aircraft climbed through 2,500 ft the pilot became aware that the rear of the canopy on the left side had lifted by approximately 25 mm from its normal position. He declared a MAYDAY to Farnborough Radar and stated his intention to divert to Southend Airport. He reduced the airspeed but this did not prevent the canopy from departing the aircraft and striking the fin and right side of the tailplane. The aircraft remained controllable, but the pilot felt that the elevator authority had been reduced. Given the possibility of structural damage, he decided to carry out a precautionary landing in a field. The reduced elevator authority made the approach more difficult and the landing on soft ground caused the nose gear to collapse, resulting in extensive damage to the aircraft. The pilot was uninjured and able to vacate the aircraft unaided.

The rearward-sliding canopy is mounted on rollers which run in rails. The rails are attached to each side of the fuselage by three sliding pins that locate into lugs on each rail. Operation of the canopy jettison handle causes the sliding pins to be withdrawn, allowing the canopy to be jettisoned in an emergency. The pilot reported that the jettison handle was still locked in the normal position and that the damage suggested that the sliding pins were not fully located in the lugs on the left hand rail. The aircraft had flown for four hours since refitment of the canopy following maintenance activity.