

Aircraft type and registration: Ultrasport Panther G-MMEH (single seat MICROLIGHT aircraft)

Year of Manufacture: 1983

Date and time (GMT): 6 June 1984 at 1245 hrs.

Location: In the sea, 1m east of beach to east of Lydd Airport

Type of flight: Pleasure

Persons on board: Crew — 1          Passengers — —

Injuries: Crew — Nil          Passengers — —

Nature of damage: Ditching — aircraft sank

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence (Gp D)

Commander's Age:

Commander's total flying experience: 53 hours, all on type

Information Source: Accident Report Pro-forma completed by Pilot/Owner

The pilot was beginning an attempt to fly across the English Channel from Lydd to Calais, when at an altitude of 2000 ft and positioned several miles off the English coast, the engine began to misfire. The pilot turned the microlight back towards land but after several minutes the engine stopped. It was apparent that the glide performance would be insufficient to enable it to reach the coast so, despite repeated attempts to restart the engine, the pilot prepared to ditch close to two fishing boats.

After a successful ditching the pilot swam to one of the boats. The microlight sank in approximately 1 minute.

The reason for the engine failure could not be conclusively established, but the pilot believes it possible that a second measure of 2 stroke fuel could have been mixed in error with the 2 star mogas used for fuel, just prior to refuelling. The fuel, supplied by a support crew, had been brought from a local garage and it is now thought that the required quantity of oil had been added at that time. The engine on another microlight intending to take part in the crossing, which had refuelled from the same drum as G-MMEH, could not be started prior to the intended flight due to plug fouling. Neither microlight had experienced engine problems prior to being refuelled on this occasion.