

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** Sportavia RF5B Sperber, G-SSWV

**No & Type of Engines:** 1 Limbach L 2000 EO piston engine

**Year of Manufacture:** 1973

**Date & Time (UTC):** 3 August 1993 at 1925 hrs

**Location:** Netherthorpe Airfield, Nottinghamshire

**Type of Flight:** Private

**Persons on Board:** Crew - 1                      Passengers - 1

**Injuries:** Crew - None                      Passengers - None

**Nature of Damage:** Landing gear collapsed, fuselage broken at cockpit,  
wing leading edge and trailing edge damage

**Commander's Licence:** Private Pilot's Licence

**Commander's Age:** 44 years

**Commander's Flying Experience:** 232 hours (of which 86 were on type)  
Last 90 days - 14 hours  
Last 28 days - 5 hours

**Information Source:** Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and  
report from repair engineer

Engine start-up, pre-flight checks and take off had proceeded normally but on the climb out at a height of about 30 feet the engine power failed suddenly. The pilot immediately put the aircraft into the glide attitude and checked that the fuel and ignition were on and the throttle open. The propeller was windmilling but the engine was producing no power. The pilot landed the aircraft ahead into a field of standing wheat. He attempted to flare the aircraft just above the crop but, because of the drag from the windmilling propeller, the deceleration was unexpectedly rapid and the aircraft landed heavily.

The fuel flow rate to the engine was checked on the following day and was found to be normal. The aircraft was recovered for repair and, once the fuselage had been supported and secured, the engine, at the second attempt, was successfully started and run. However, when the fuel was being removed from the tank by suction pump, the pump inlet became blocked with large flakes of red paint. Six large flakes were found in the tank with dimensions typically ½ inch to 1 inch (See photograph). One small paint flake was also found in the neck of the tank outlet pipe. The paint resembled that commonly found lining jerrycans.

The engineer who carried out the investigation pointed out that the outlet pipe in the fuel tank was flush with the floor of the tank. Without a thimble strainer over the outlet or some other protective arrangement this would have allowed the flat flakes of paint to be sucked down onto the orifice, blocking it completely.

Item No 4 in the August 93 edition of the General Aviation Safety Information Leaflet refers to a case where large paint flakes were found in fuel which had been stored in new jerrycans and notes the importance of always using a suitable filter when refuelling from such containers.

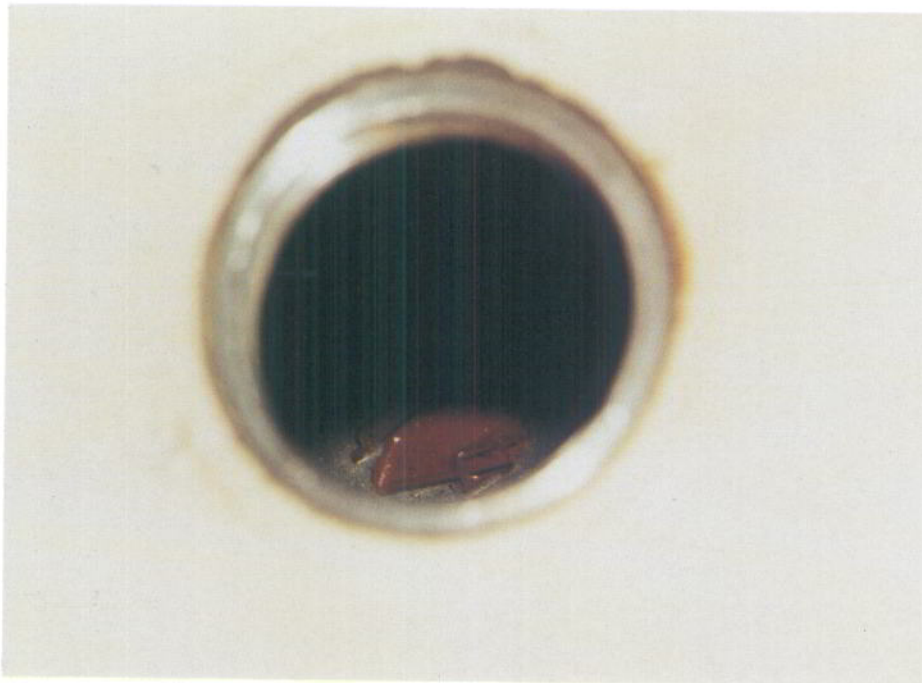


Photo: D. McLean

**Paint flakes seen through filler cap**