

Rans S6-ESD (modified), G-MYNH

AAIB Bulletin No: 5/2001 **Ref:** EW/G2001/02/14 **Category:** 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Rans S6-ESD (modified), G-MYNH

No & Type of Engines: 1 Rotax 912-UL piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1994

Date & Time (UTC): 18 February 2001 at 1540 hrs

Location: Oldbury-On-Severn, Bristol

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None - Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Damage to wing, fuselage and propeller blade

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 65 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 4,800 hours (of which 1,903 were on type)

Last 90 days - 62 hours

Last 28 days - 24 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot had departed from Oldbury-on-Severn on a short solo pleasure flight. The weather on departure at 1520 hrs was a light and variable surface wind, some high cloud but mainly sunny. A normal take-off was carried out to the east. As the aircraft climbed out and was turned northwards the pilot noticed a fog bank over the river approximately one nautical mile to the northwest of the airfield. When some ten minutes later the pilot looked at the airfield he could see that the fog had spread inland. He immediately returned to the airfield to find that the fog had covered the airfield with its front approximately 400 metres to the east of the westerly runway threshold. Further to the east it was still perfectly clear.

At 1535 hrs the pilot arrived overhead the strip which was clearly visible through the fog which appeared to be about 100 feet deep. A tight left hand circuit was flown with the strip still remaining visible on the downwind and base legs of the circuit. The runway threshold was also visible down to a height of about 50 feet at which point the pilot was some 300 meters from the threshold and just inside the fog bank. The pilot then realised that he was below his normal descent path and he added power whilst concentrating on the ground below. A second or two later the pilot looked up and could no longer see the runway threshold. He attempted to maintain his height and heading but with no heading reference he drifted to the left and his right wing struck the top of some guy wires

supporting a pole carrying 11 kV power cables and which were approximately 30 feet high. The pole was positioned some 40 metres before the threshold and displaced 35 metres to the left of the extended centreline.

The aircraft continued a further 10 metres beyond the pole, rotating to the right through about 90° before striking the ground in a nose down, right wing low attitude. The impact velocity was low and the pilot, who was uninjured, was able to release himself and leave the aircraft through the normal exit. After leaving the aircraft the pilot noted that the visibility was about 30 metres with the blue of the sky just visible immediately above him. People who came to investigate the sound of the accident commented on how rapidly the visibility conditions had changed. The pilot concluded that whilst the vertical visibility through the fog had seemed reasonable, the rapid reduction in horizontal visibility on entering the fog had meant that he lost sight of the runway threshold. He was unable to maintain his heading reference and did not see the obstruction until just before the aircraft struck it.