

Vans RV-6, G-RVAW

AAIB Bulletin No: 9/2004	Ref: EW/G2004/06/16	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Vans RV-6, G-RVAW	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-320-A1A piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2000	
Date & Time (UTC):	20 June 2004 at 1700 hrs	
Location:	High Flatts Farm, Chester le Street, Co Durham	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to the right wing and the undercarriage	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	60 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,746 hours (of which 60 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 37 hours	
	Last 28 days - 17 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The aircraft was based at High Flatts Farm landing strip, which is orientated 300°/ 120°(M) and is 500 metres long by 19 metres wide. The pilot had completed a cross country flight, and on arrival at High Flatts Farm noted that a large shower was affecting the strip. He decided to hold about 2 nm away whilst the worst of the weather cleared the area, and also to allow a preceding aircraft to backtrack the strip to the hangar. The approach to land was commenced in improving visibility, though there were still small amounts of cloud over the strip. The wind at the time was estimated to be variable at 2 to 3 kt.

Tall trees affect the approach to Runway 30, and touchdown was achieved approximately 200 metres into the strip and on the 'centreline'. Although forward vision had been good for the approach, as the pilot closed the throttle for landing, the windscreen became obscured by a fine drizzle which reduced forward vision to zero. With no forward visual reference for the pilot the aircraft veered to the left on the damp strip and the left wing tip contacted the oil seed rape crop that bordered the strip. The aircraft yawed to port, and continued to travel sideways along the strip until the right wing contacted and entered the crops, bringing the aircraft to rest. The aircraft sustained damage to the right wing, undercarriage, tailwheel and stern post. The pilot was uninjured and able to shut down and vacate the aircraft without assistance.

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The accident was caused by a loss of forward visual references brought about by fine drizzle on the windscreen. During the approach, the combined effects of airspeed and airflow through the propeller dispersed the rain but this effect was reduced when the throttle was set to idle for the landing. When the aircraft contacted the crops, the yaw and subsequent damage to the aircraft was relatively severe due to the robust nature of the oil seed rape crop.