

Rans Microlight, G-MZIY

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Aircraft Type and Registration: Rans Microlight, G-MZIY

No & Type of Engines: 1 Rotax 503 piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1997

Date & Time (UTC): 9 May 1998 at 1955 hrs

Location: Two miles west of Manchester (Barton) Airfield

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None - Passengers - 1 Minor

Nature of Damage: Substantial

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 52 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 83 hours (of which 42 were on type)
Last 90 days - 20 hours
Last 28 days - 7 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot had flown from Manchester (Barton) Airfield to a microlight strip at Otherton; flight time was one hour and ten minutes. Prior to this flight, he had filled the fuel tank to full (32 litres) which should result in a maximum endurance of two hours forty minutes. The weather was good with a surface wind of 260°/08 kt and a cloud base of approximately 4,000 feet agl.

On the ground at Otherton, the pilot tried to obtain some fuel but the only fuel available belonged to another pilot who was airborne and the pilot of G-MZIY was also not confident that the fuel contained the correct ratio of oil. Additionally, he checked the fuel tank and considered that it was still more than half full. With the slight head wind he had experienced on his outbound flight, he was confident that he had sufficient fuel for his return flight. This return flight progressed normally until approximately two miles from Barton Airfield, after 57 minutes flying, when the engine stopped. The pilot was in radio contact with Barton and in sight of the airfield; he immediately

turned into wind and informed Barton of his intention to make a forced landing. He was unable to make his initial landing site and so selected a smaller rougher looking field. Touchdown was on the rear wheels but, as the nosewheel contacted the soft soil it detached and G-MZIY turned onto its back. The pilot assisted his passenger out of the aircraft before informing Barton Radio that they were not injured.

The pilot acknowledged that the most likely cause of the accident was that he had run out of fuel; he could not confirm if any fuel was still in the tank when the engine stopped because the aircraft had inverted after ground contact. The fuel tank is in the wing root and it is easy to see the fuel level; he had checked that it still contained fuel as he passed the visual reporting point at Thelwall Viaduct some 6 miles from Barton. However, he acknowledged that the aircraft may not have been level when he visually checked the fuel tank contents at Otherton and therefore his assessment of fuel prior to departure from there may have been incorrect.