

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Europa, G-BZTH
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912-UL piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	2002 (Serial no: PFA 247-12494)
Date & Time (UTC):	4 August 2017 at 1106 hrs
Location:	Near Parsons Barn, Long Compton, Warwickshire
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Minor) Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Forward fuselage distorted and fractured aft of firewall
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	72 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	802 hours (of which 661 were on type) Last 90 days - 45 hours Last 28 days - 4 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Synopsis

While on a cross-country flight the engine failed due to an oil leak and the pilot made a forced landing in a field. There were ridges in the field that were not visible from the air and the aircraft was severely damaged when it hit one of these ridges.

History of the flight

The pilot was flying from Enstone to an airstrip near Gloucester in conditions of good visibility and with a westerly breeze. Approximately eight miles northwest of Enstone, at an estimated altitude of 1,900 feet agl, the engine failed and would not restart. The pilot selected a suitable field and managed to touch down at the point he aimed for.

After running along the ground a short distance, the aircraft decelerated violently and came to a halt. The pilot exited through his door and then noticed there were ground ridges which were not visible from the air. He had landed across the ridges and it was one of these that caused the deceleration and the damage to the aircraft (Figure 1).

Following recovery of the aircraft, the pilot discovered that the oil drain plug for the engine was missing and the engine had seized due to lack of lubrication.



Figure 1

The engine and forward fuselage of G-BZTH seen resting on a ridge with the rear fuselage in a broad furrow

Prior to the flight the pilot had changed the engine oil, with assistance from a friend. The oil had been drained and the aircraft left unattended before the engine was refilled with oil, and an engine run was carried out to check the oil pressure. No oil leak was seen after the engine run, but it appears the oil plug was not refitted correctly, possibly due to some miscommunication, and it became detached during the flight, allowing the oil to escape.