

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Aviat A-1B Husky, G-GGZZ	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-360-A1P piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2000 (Serial no: 2078)	
Date & Time (UTC):	6 June 2018 at 1600 hrs	
Location:	Sherlowe Airstrip, Shropshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Damage to right wing, struts, main landing gear, propeller and engine	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	76 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	8,470 hours (of which 1,200 were on type) Last 90 days - 63 hours Last 28 days - 27 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

On final approach, the aircraft was forced to land in a field because the engine did not respond when the throttle was advanced.

History of the flight

The pilot was flying a circuit using short takeoff and landing techniques, with the aircraft's owner observing from the rear tandem seat. The circuit was flown below 500 ft aal, because of an adjacent military airfield, and on the base leg the pilot selected full flap, before slowing to an indicated speed of 45 mph. He then turned onto the final approach, aiming to touchdown approximately 50 m beyond the downwind end of the runway but, at less than 100 ft aal, the aircraft descended below the desired approach angle.

With the engine running slightly above idle, the pilot advanced the throttle steadily but the engine failed to respond, so the pilot was forced to try and land the aircraft in a field of rapeseed adjacent to the airstrip. The right main landing gear collapsed on ground contact and the aircraft abruptly decelerated to a halt, some 30 m short of the runway, with its right wingtip resting on the ground. The occupants vacated the aircraft without assistance.

Following the accident, the owner reported that he had practised numerous landings over a period of several weeks, because he was preparing to take part in a competition. On a couple of occasions the engine had not responded when, to cushion his touchdown, he

rapidly advanced the throttle from idle. After discussing this with engineers, he concluded that his rapid advancement of the throttle had caused a rich cut¹ and, although the issue did not recur in the three weeks prior to the accident flight, he did brief the pilot about this before they flew. The pilot had, therefore, been careful to avoid a rich cut, by keeping the engine running above idle and by avoiding rapid movement of the throttle.

No evidence of a technical malfunction was found during the post-accident inspection, and the engine was due to be stripped-down and rebuilt during the aircraft's repair.

Pilot's comments

The pilot has considerable type experience and, although the reason for the engine's lack of response to throttle movement is unknown, he does not believe that carburettor (induction) icing was the cause, as this is not a problem he has found this aircraft type to be prone to and because he thought it was unlikely to occur on a flight of such a short duration. In his view the accident highlights that if an aircraft exhibits an intermittent fault, it is prudent to initiate an appropriate technical investigation at the earliest opportunity.

Footnote

¹ A rich cut occurs when a piston engine suddenly loses power because the fuel mixture is too rich.