

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Europa, G-TAGR	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912 ULS piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2004 (Serial no: PFA 247-13061)	
Date & Time (UTC):	19 April 2014 at 1605 hrs	
Location:	About 1 nm north of Branscombe Airfield, Devon	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Damage to propeller, nosewheel and engine cowling	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	71 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,021 hours (of which 17 were on type) Last 90 days - 23 hours Last 28 days - 12 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The aircraft's engine began misfiring during flight. The pilot made two attempts to land at a nearby airstrip but on each occasion the aircraft was high and had to go around. After the second go-around, the engine stopped and the pilot made a forced landing in a ploughed field. The nosewheel dug into the surface, causing damage to the aircraft.

History of the flight

The aircraft was flying in fine weather conditions between Perranporth in Cornwall and Bournemouth. About 35 minutes into the flight, at a height of 3,000 ft, the engine started to misfire. The pilot switched on the fuel pump and, after about 10 minutes of normal running, switched it off again. A few minutes later the engine again started misfiring and the pilot again switched on the fuel pump. This produced normal running for a few more minutes but then the engine began to misfire, even with the fuel pump selected on.

The pilot made a MAYDAY call to Exeter ATC, who informed him he was about 3 nm east of Branscombe Airfield. The pilot turned towards the airfield, assisted by radar vectors from ATC. The airfield had a grass airstrip orientated 01/28 but the pilot did not see it until flying overhead. With an easterly wind, he turned to approach the airstrip from the west, but as the aircraft was too high for a direct approach he flew a go-around.

During the second approach, the engine was producing inconsistent power. The aircraft was again high and touched down with about one third of the available distance remaining. The pilot did not think that he would be able to stop before a hedge and trees at the end of the strip, so applied full power to go around again. Initially the engine responded normally but started to misfire again as the aircraft climbed through about 200 ft. The pilot started a left turn back towards the airstrip but the engine stopped. There was a ploughed field ahead, and the pilot landed the aircraft in it. Touchdown was on the main wheels, but after a ground roll of 30 or 40 ft, the nose wheel dug into the ground and the aircraft came to a stop.

The pilot reported that a blocked fuel filter may have been the cause of the engine misfire and eventual stoppage.