

Rans S6-ESD Coyote II, G-MYJL, 25 August 2002

AAIB Bulletin No: 11/2002	Ref: EW/G2002/08/23	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Rans S6-ESD Coyote II, G-MYJL	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 503 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1993	
Date & Time (UTC):	25 August 2002 at 1023 hrs	
Location:	Devils Chair, Stiperstones, Shropshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Serious)	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Substantial	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilots Licence	
Commander's Age:	45 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	600 hours (of which 275 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 28 hours	
	Last 28 days - 9 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The pilot planned a cross-country flight from a private strip at Hardwicke, Hay-on-Wye, Herefordshire, to Caernarfon Airfield, Gwynedd. The plan was for three aircraft to fly in company, taking a route westwards to the coast and then turning north to Caernarfon. This route was chosen because it avoided flying over much of the highest terrain in the region. The pilot watched the local area television weather forecast in the morning, which indicated fair weather with light winds and overcast cloud conditions. He also checked the weather forecast at Caernarfon by telephone before departure and decided that it was suitable for his flight. As part of the pre-flight planning, he programmed the co-ordinates for Sleaf Airfield, Shropshire, into his GPS as a possible diversion airfield.

After about ten minutes of flight, the three pilots, who were in radio and visual contact with each other, found that they were flying towards a lowering cloud base and the visibility was

deteriorating. They decided to abandon the original plan of going to Caernarfon and changed course, intending to divert to Sleaf.

En-route to Sleaf, the pilot of G-MYJL found the weather conditions were worsening but, in view of the relative distances, he decided that his best course of action was to continue rather than turn back to Hardwicke. One or two minutes further into the flight, the pilot of G-MYJL lost sight of rising terrain ahead. The aircraft flew into cloud and the pilot very rapidly became disorientated. The aircraft was not equipped with any attitude indicator, turn and slip, or turn co-ordinator instruments. The pilot had no experience of flying in cloud and he later estimated that he lost control of the aircraft within seconds.

As soon as he realised that he had lost control, the pilot closed the throttle. He remembered seeing the ground just before impact. Afterwards, he remained conscious and, despite substantial damage to the aircraft and injury to himself, was able to get out through the passenger entry door area on the right side of the fuselage. He got clear of the aircraft but then realised that he was seriously injured and would require assistance. He crawled back to recover his mobile telephone and used it to call the emergency services. He had some difficulty in explaining his location because he was referring to his aeronautical chart and the operator's reference was to an Ordnance Survey map. As a result, he returned again to the aircraft in order to recover his GPS, from which he was able to pass a GPS position. This enabled a rescue helicopter to locate him.

From where the aircraft turned off the original track, there was some 30 nm of high ground, rising to a maximum of 2,166 feet (660 metres), along the diversion route. The aircraft came to rest in an area of high ground known locally as The Devil's Chair, which rises to 1,758 feet (536 metres). The other two aircraft, with which the pilot was in company, also experienced difficulties in the weather conditions but were able to land safely.