



SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

ACCIDENT REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Date of Accident	21 April 2000	Time of Accident	0930Z			
Aircraft Registration	ZU-BBW	Type of Aircraft	Bushbaby			
Name of Owner		Name and Number of Operator				
Mr. J.M. Larter		Private (LS/1)				
Pilot-in-command Licence Type		Microlight	Age	55	Licence Valid	Yes
Pilot-in-command Flying Experience		Total Flying Hours		342.0	Hours on Type	N/A
Last point of departure		Cato Ridge Aerodrome				
Next point of intended landing		Howick Aerodrome				
Location of the accident site with reference to easily defined geographical points (GPS readings if possible)						
Albert Fall Dam Area (Kwazulu-Natal)						
Meteorological Information		Wind - 040°/10kt, CAVOK, Temperature +28°C				
Number of people on board		One	No. of people injured	None	No. of people killed	None
Synopsis						

A statement that was obtained from the pilot follows: "While flying in the vicinity of Albert Falls Dam I suddenly had an engine misfire. I notified my flying colleague in his own aircraft that I had a problem and needed to find a place to land without delay. The engine then cut out completely. The nose dipped and I attempted to reach a road, while trying to restart the engine without any success.

As my glide rate was not as expected I know that I would not make the road on the other side of the orange orchard, I had nowhere else to go. I flared just before impact with the small orange trees and clipped the top of one row with the wings, resulting in extensive damage to both wings. I was able to exit the aircraft without a scratch. The aircraft did not catch fire."

The aircraft fuel system consisted of two main fuel tanks one in each wing that feeds to a header tank located behind the pilot's seat. From the header tank fuel gets transferred to the engine via gravity feed or electrical fuel pump. The header tank with a capacity of approximately 8 liters is filled from the main tanks via gravity feed. Both the main transfer tubes are equipped with fuel shut off valves. The average fuel consumption at full power is approximately 20 liters an hour.

Probable Cause

The engine failure could be attributed to fuel mismanagement. The pilot took off with the header tank being full, but failed to open the fuel valves that feed the header tank from the main tanks causing the header tank to run dry. After being airborne for approximately 30 minutes the engine suddenly failed, the pilot was unable to restart the engine.