

No: 8/86

Ref: 1b

Aircraft type and registration: Aeronca 7AC Champion G-BGWV

No & Type of engines: 1 Continental A65-8F piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1946

Date and time (UTC): 8 June 1986 at 1848 hrs

Location: 1½ m NNE of Steventon Warren Farm, Nr Winchester, Hants

Type of flight: Private (pleasure)

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — 1

Injuries: Crew — None Passengers — None

Nature of damage: Substantial damage to wings, struts, undercarriage and forward fuselage

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 39 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 439 hours (of which 168 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot.

The aircraft was used on a long cross country flight from its base at Popham via Redhill and Fenland to RAF Church Fenton before returning to Popham. Before the return flight from Church Fenton the aircraft was refuelled. Because the refuelling nozzle was too large to enter the aircraft's filler, a funnel was used and refuelling was stopped when the tank apparently overflowed. Believing the tank to be filled to capacity with 12 imperial gallons the pilot calculated an endurance of 3 hours 25 minutes and a flight time of 2 hours 20 minutes.

By the time Doncaster was reached the pilot had realised that the wind was stronger and more southerly than forecast, ground speed was established and a new flight time of 3 hours was calculated. This flight time was confirmed by later observations and the pilot joined the Popham circuit downwind almost exactly 3 hours after take-off.

As the aircraft was turned onto base leg the engine stopped and since the pilot did not believe that he could reach the airfield he selected a field for a forced landing. As the aircraft touched down the pilot realised that the ground sloped down in the direction of flight and in order to avoid severe obstructions ahead he turned the aircraft to the right into a hedge. After the aircraft came to rest the pilot kicked out the cockpit window and the occupants got out of the aircraft uninjured.

Examination showed that the fuel had been exhausted.

The pilot had calculated his endurance on the basis of measured fuel consumption during two recent long cross country flights. The 1947 edition of Janes All the Worlds Aircraft quotes the aircraft range as 270 miles at a cruising speed of 90 mph.