

Cessna F150H, G-AWPP

AAIB Bulletin No: 6/99 Ref: EW/G99/02/04 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Cessna F150H, G-AWPP

No & Type of Engines: 1 Continental O-200-A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1968

Date & Time (UTC): 3 February 1999 at 1815 hrs

Location: Nr Cranfield Airfield, Bedfordshire

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 2 - Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None - Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Substantial

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 34 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 131 hours (of which 128 were on type)
Last 90 days - 5 hours
Last 28 days - 3 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot had planned a flight from Cranfield to Le Touquet and return. Before departure from Cranfield, the aircraft was fueled to full tanks. The outbound leg was uneventful with a flight time of one hour twenty minutes. The aircraft departed Le Touquet at 1603 hours and flew back to Cranfield at 2,400 feet. At 1822 hours, with the aircraft on finals to Runway 22 and a surface wind of 260°/20 kt and carburettor heat on, the engine suddenly stopped with no prior warning. The pilot immediately checked his fuel contents which showed that the left tank was one quarter full and the right tank was empty. An attempt to restart the engine was unsuccessful so the pilot transmitted a MAYDAY call and prepared for a forced landing as the aircraft was now down to 700 feet agl and he was convinced he would not be able to reach the runway. As it was by now dark, the pilot had difficulty in locating a suitable area but managed to land in a field. The aircraft bounced on landing and on the second contact with the ground, the nosewheel dug into the soft ground and the aircraft inverted. Neither occupant was injured and they were able to evacuate the aircraft unaided.

On departure from Cranfield, the pilot had quoted the fuel endurance on his flight plan as 4 hours 30 minutes. The total airborne time since refuelling was 3 hours 40 minutes. At the time of the accident both the pilot's calculations and the fuel indications suggested that there was at least

30 minutes of fuel remaining. After the accident, the fuel tanks were drained and the left tank was found to contain one and a half litres of fuel and the right only a trace. However, the aircraft had been inverted for some hours before this check was done and some fuel may well have leaked through the filler caps although there was no sign of fuel staining on the grass beneath the tanks.

On the 50 hour check undertaken about a week before the accident, the ignition switch was found to be defective in that the magnetos remained live when the switch was in the off position. The aircraft was being flown in this condition while awaiting a replacement switch. The ignition switch was removed from the aircraft and tested at the AAIB where it was found to be serviceable.