

Cessna F177RG, G-AYPI

AAIB Bulletin No: 1/2002	Ref: EW/G2001/10/17	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Cessna F177RG, G-AYPI	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming IO-360-A1B6 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1971	
Date & Time (UTC):	29 October 2001 at 1050 hrs	
Location:	1.5 miles south of Guernsey south coast	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew 1 (Minor)	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Destroyed	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilots Licence	
Commander's Age:	58 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,110 hours (of which 840 were on type) Last 90 days - 3 hours Last 28 days - 1 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and examination of the maintenance records	

History of the flight

The pilot, a part owner of the aircraft, planned a day trip to Dinard. After carrying out a pre-flight check of the aircraft, which included an engine oil quantity and fuel drain check, the pilot started

the engine and taxied to the run-up area. Following an engine power check and aircraft pre-departure checks, the pilot was cleared by ATC to leave the Jersey Zone boundary on track for Dinard, not above 3000 feet.

After departure from Guernsey, the pilot levelled the aircraft at 2000 feet amsl and was instructed by ATC to contact Jersey Approach. However, when the aircraft was approximately 12 nm from Guernsey, the engine started to backfire and then to run roughly. The pilot informed Jersey ATC who requested that he contact Guernsey Approach. Shortly after contacting Guernsey Approach, the rough running became worse and the aircraft was unable to maintain height. By this time the pilot had turned back and had good visual contact with Guernsey Airport.

He transmitted a MAYDAY call, informing the controller that he would have to ditch, released the door catches and prepared to ditch the aircraft. His preparation included ensuring that his life jacket was tightly secured to him and that the life raft was on the front passengers seat. With the flaps extended to 30°, the aircraft impacted the sea in a level attitude before coming to an abrupt halt and pitching forward. The left wing then dipped into the sea and the cabin rapidly began to fill with water. The pilot was initially unable to open either door but eventually, when the cabin was submerging and nearly full of water, he was able to kick open his door and to exit the aircraft underwater.

Once on the surface of the sea he inflated his lifejacket and saw the tail of the aircraft slip below the surface. He did not know what had happened to the life raft, and he was in the water for about 15 minutes before a small single manned fishing boat approached him. The fisherman held onto his arms until the rescue services arrived and pulled him out of the water. He was then taken to hospital. The aircraft wreckage was not recovered.

Examination of the Log Books

Examination of the Airframe and Engine Log books showed that regular maintenance had been carried out on the aircraft and that a 50 hour Check on both the airframe and engine had been completed on the 9 August 2001. The Engine Log book had two entries relating to oil consumption. The first entry was dated 19 February 01 and read:

'Reported high oil consumption, traced to No 4 cylinder. Piston rings replaced due top ring snapped and 2nd ring and oil control ring stuck in piston. Piston grooves cleaned - all reassembled iaw (in accordance with) lyc. (Lycoming) mm (Maintenance Manual) - filters checked and refitted. Oil changed to straight 100.' (AAIB explanatory text in brackets).

The second entry, dated 4 July 01, read:

'High oil consumption reported. All compressions checked, No 3 cylinder compression drops off when not completely on TDC (top dead centre). Cylinder removed, honed, rings found carbon contaminated. All cleaned out and reassembled iaw mm.'