

Beech M35, G-ATSR

AAIB Bulletin No: 3/99 Ref: EW/G98/12/17 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Beech M35, G-ATSR

No & Type of Engines: 1 Continental IO-470-C piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1959

Date & Time (UTC): 6 December 1998 at 1310 hrs

Location: Kingsland Church, Hereford & Worcester

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None - Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Substantial to nose landing gear

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 50 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 1,023 hours (of which 16 were on type)
Last 90 days - 17 hours
Last 28 days - 3 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Prior to the flight, the pilot carried out a thorough inspection of the aircraft including taking samples from all fuel drains and visually checking the contents of all fuel tanks. The two auxiliary tanks were full and the main tanks were one quarter full. The aircraft had flown just over three hours since the tanks were filled and this would have left sufficient fuel remaining for about two hours flight. After start-up, the pilot ran the engine for about one minute from each tank in turn. After an uneventful take off, the pilot climbed to 3,000 feet and established the aircraft in the cruise with the right main fuel tank selected. As he approached his destination airfield after about 10 minutes in the cruise, the pilot observed another aircraft in the circuit and stopped his descent at about 1,800 feet. On opening the throttle, he became aware of a lack of power and changed the fuel selection from the right main tank to the left main tank. As there was no improvement in engine power, the pilot then selected the auxiliary tanks which involved moving the main fuel selector to AUX and then selecting the auxiliary tanks to ON by feeling for a detent in the auxiliary fuel selector. As no power increase was observed, the pilot visually checked his fuel selections and engine controls which all appeared satisfactory. Having completed his checks and finding nothing amiss, the pilot considered that he was unlikely to reach the airfield and elected to make a forced

landing in a field. This was completed satisfactorily but the nose landing gear was damaged during the landing roll.

The pilot considered that the cause of the accident was his failure to select the tank containing the most fuel while in the cruise and his failure to select the electric fuel booster pump while changing tanks. He considered that he may also have been distracted by the complex procedure required to change from main to auxiliary fuel tanks. Similar problems in selecting the fuel tanks on this aircraft type have been experienced by other users and the problem would appear to be associated with the detent in the fuel selector not being sufficiently positive.