

No: 11/91

Ref: EW/G91/08/24

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Scintex CP301-C3 Emeraude, G-BIVF

No & Type of Engines: 1 Continental C90-14F piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1962

Date & Time (UTC): 20 August 1991 at 1631 hrs

Location: In sea off Point of Ayre, Isle of Man

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - Minor Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Aircraft ditched in sea

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 56 years

Commander's Flying Experience: Approximately 200 hours total

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft departed Ronaldsway, Isle of Man, intending to fly to Wigtown, Dumfries and Galloway. The take-off was normal but, when approximately 4 miles north of the Point of Ayre at a height of 2000 feet, the engine lost power. The pilot tried to regain power and found that "pumping" the throttle and the priming pump caused temporary bursts of power but insufficient to prevent the aircraft from losing altitude. He transmitted Mayday calls on the Ronaldsway airport frequency and at the third attempt heard his call being relayed by a flying school aircraft. He then concentrated his efforts on gliding the aircraft back towards the Isle of Man and prepared the aircraft for ditching by cracking open the cockpit canopy.

Upon ditching, the pilot struck his head on the instrument panel but vacated the aircraft rapidly and inflated his life jacket. A lifeboat attended after about an hour and a Search And Rescue helicopter from Prestwick arrived about 15 minutes later.

The aircraft was salvaged from the sea and the engine was examined by an overhaul agent. Because of the apparent momentary recovery of power with throttle and primer movement, it was thought that fuel starvation was the most likely cause of the engine failure. However no faults were found within the mechanical fuel pump or the carburettor, bearing in mind the difficulties in inspecting a system which has been immersed in sea water, and no other defects were found.