

AAIB Bulletin No: 9/95

Ref: EW/G95/07/08

Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Reims Cessna F152, G-BJWH

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-235-L2C piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1982

Date & Time (UTC): 8 July 1995 at 1623 hrs

Location: Bowley Farm, near Ashford, Kent

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Substantial

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 33 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 62 hours (all on type)
Last 90 days - 7 hours
Last 28 days - 2 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The planned flight was from Biggin Hill to Le Touquet, France and return. The aircraft's left tank fuel gauge was believed to be unserviceable, having shown 'empty' at Biggin Hill when the tank contents were visually assessed through the filter as being three quarters full. Since the pilot distrusted the readings of both tanks' fuel contents gauges, he visually assessed the contents, as half full, prior to departure from Le Touquet.

The wind was variable at 5 kt and the flight took off from Le Touquet at 1523 hrs. The pilot's assessment of its progress was entirely satisfactory and according to plan when, having just overflowed Ashford, the engine lost and regained power several times. Having checked that all the engine controls were where they should be, the pilot realised that this was not just a transient falter in the engine performance and so he transmitted a MAYDAY call and selected a field in which to land. He then tried moving the throttle again and the engine 'caught' and then died. He states that by this time he had 'lost' the field of his choice, but was able to choose another, in which he landed. This was a field of standing cereal crop and the aircraft's nose leg collapsed on touchdown, which tipped the aircraft over onto its back.

Both occupants were wearing lap and diagonal safety harnesses which withstood the impact and they able to vacate the aircraft without assistance.