

Cessna 172N Skyhawk, G-BUAN

AAIB Bulletin No: 1/2004	Ref: EW/G2003/10/03	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Cessna 172N Skyhawk, G-BUAN	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-320-H2AD piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1977	
Date & Time (UTC):	4 October 2003 at 1013 hrs	
Location:	6 miles south of the Scilly Isles	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 2
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Minor)	Passengers - 1 (Minor)
Nature of Damage:	Aircraft sank and not recovered	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	75 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	2,520 hours (of which 900 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 20 hours	
	Last 28 days - 7 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The aircraft was one of a group of seven that were participating in a Fleet Air Arm Squadron 'fly in' from Kemble to the Scilly Isles. It was en-route from Lands End to the Scilly Isles at 2,000 feet when, without warning, the engine stopped. The engine failure drills were carried out but a restart was unsuccessful and an emergency call was made to St. Marys ATC to advise them that the aircraft was ditching. The aircraft touched down on the top of a wave crest heading into a 12 kt headwind. The passengers were able to make a rapid exit but the pilot caught his foot on the cockpit coaming and was only able to free himself when the aircraft had sunk to a depth of approximately 10 feet. A nearby fishing vessel rescued the occupants and a search and rescue helicopter airlifted them to hospital. The aircraft was not recovered.

All the aircraft that day had ample fuel for the flight and none of the other aircraft, flying at a similar level, reported any significant carburettor icing. The accident aircraft's fuel cock had been selected to both tanks and the rapidity with which the engine failure occurred led associates of the pilot to speculate that it may have been caused by a double magneto failure brought about by the failure of the single magneto drive. Later variants of this engine incorporate a double drive to the magnetos. The possibility, however, that some other unidentified problem caused the engine failure cannot be excluded.