

No: 9/92

Ref: EW/G92/07/03

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Stolp Starlet SA500, G-AZTV

No & Type of Engines: 1 Continental C90-8F piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1973

Date & Time (UTC): 4 July 1992 at 1004 hrs

Location: Manor Farm, Grateley, Hampshire

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Damage to undercarriage, cowlings and propeller

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 39 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 195 hours (of which 91 were on type)
Last 90 days - 22 hours
Last 28 days - 4 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot
and AAIB telephone enquiries

The aircraft had last been refuelled some two weeks earlier, and had made several flights since then. Before departing, the pilot had confirmed that there was sufficient fuel for the intended flight, from Bournemouth to Wroughton. The aircraft was cruising at 2000 feet and the pilot had just contacted Thruxton asking for permission to fly through their overhead when the engine stopped. The aircraft was not fitted with a self starter. A Mayday call was made to Thruxton. When the pilot became aware that he could not reach that airfield he advised that he would attempt a landing at the nearby Grateley strip. A curved approach to the strip was flown, during which it became clear that the aircraft would not clear the hedge and trees, up to 30 feet high in places. He therefore landed short in an adjoining field. The aircraft touched down and rolled about 50 yards before coming to rest upright. The pilot was uninjured but the landing gear had been torn off.

The aircraft was fitted with two fuel tanks, top and bottom. The lower tank contained about five gallons of fuel. The top tank, which was selected, indicated at least six gallons, but was found to be empty on inspection. The top tank had a capacity of 12 gallons. It was fitted with a float and sight glass type contents gauge. Between empty and six gallons the sight glass should indicate the actual

contents, but above that it does not move and continues to show six gallons. Upon inspection the float was found to be jammed at that position.

The pilot comments that he had checked the fuel visually before the flight but that it is difficult to see how much is in the top tank, as steps are required. He also comments that it would have been wise to have compared the apparent fuel state with that expected from the last fuel uplift and subsequent operation of the aircraft. The last uplift to full tanks was carried out on 12th June 1992 and since that time, up to the time of the loss of power, he calculates that 11.16 gallons would have been used from the top tank.