

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Reims Cessna FR172H, G-RABA	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Continental Motors Corp IO-360-D piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1972	
Date & Time (UTC):	18 July 2010 at 1240 hrs	
Location:	Compton Abbas Airfield, Dorset	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Minor)	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Aircraft destroyed	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	61 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	89 hours (of which 17 were on type) Last 90 days - 6 hours Last 28 days - 2 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and subsequent AAIB telephone enquiries	

Synopsis

After refuelling, the pilot started the engine with the intention of taxiing the aircraft to the parking area. Upon starting, the engine went to high power, and the aircraft began to move rapidly forward and collided with a hangar before the pilot could intervene. The pilot was uninjured and was able to vacate the aircraft via the normal exit.

History of the flight

G-RABA was operated by a company specializing in airborne banner towing and aerial advertising. The aircraft had been tasked to tow a banner at an event in Tolpuddle. The plan was to fly from Blackpool to Compton Abbas, where the banner would be collected

and the aircraft would be refuelled, before continuing to Tolpuddle. The aircraft departed Blackpool with three people on board, all of whom were pilots. Pilots A and B held Private Pilot's Licences and were the owners of the company which operated the aircraft. Pilot C was a commercial pilot, employed by the company on an ad hoc basis to undertake banner towing.

Pilot A acted as Pilot in Command for the flight from Blackpool to Compton Abbas. After landing at Compton Abbas, he taxied the aircraft to the asphalt apron, and shut down the engine prior to refuelling. All three people vacated the aircraft and Pilot A proceeded to refuel it. He then left the apron area, while Pilot B

got into the aircraft with the intention of taxiing it to the parking area. Pilot C assisted in manoeuvring the aircraft so that it was facing away from the fuel pump and he was then seen on CCTV to move to the vicinity of the left door of the aircraft. When Pilot B started the engine the aircraft rapidly accelerated forward and collided with a hangar before he could react. Pilot C moved back as the aircraft began to move. A number of witnesses reported hearing the engine go to high power immediately after start.

Pilot A, Pilot C and another witness made their way immediately to the aircraft and determined that Pilot B was uninjured, although very shocked. They assisted him in completing the shutdown drills and vacating the aircraft.

Both wings were severely damaged in the collision, resulting in fuel spillage. Airfield staff responded to the incident to provide fire cover and the local Fire Service was also called to assist.

Discussion

Pilot B reported that the technique for a hot start requires the throttle to be set to full power and the mixture set to lean. As the engine fires, the mixture is advanced and the throttle is closed. He stated that the engine fired up on the first attempt, went immediately to full power and the aircraft accelerated forward, taking him by surprise. The parking brake was off during refuelling but he believed that he had reapplied it prior to starting the engine.

Pilot B had previously performed a number of hot starts on this aircraft using the same technique, without any problems. In those cases however, a longer time had elapsed between shutting down and restarting the engine. He considered that the very short time between shut down and restart in this case may have contributed to the engine firing immediately and going to full power before he could close the throttle.