

Grumman AA-5, G-BCEE, 15 July 1996

AAIB Bulletin No: 9/96 Ref: EW/G96/07/12 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Grumman AA-5, G-BCEE

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-320-E2G piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1974

Date & Time (UTC): 15 July 1996 at 1700 hrs

Location: Shephards Hill, Isle of Wight

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Propeller, left wing tip and nose leg damaged

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence with Night Rating

Commander's Age: 37 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 471hours (of which 221 were on type)

Last 90 days 34 hours

Last 28 days -18 hours

Information Source:

Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

History of flight

Prior to an intended one hour flight from Bournemouth (Hurn) Airport, the pilot checked his fuel quantity; the right tank had sufficient fuel for approximately 40 minutes flying and the left tank had sufficient for one hour and 20 minutes. The pilot started G-BCEE with the engine selected to the left tank and then changed to the right tank for his power check and subsequent take off. After a normal climb, he levelled at 2,000 feet amsl for the short cruise across to the Isle of Wight. Once over the island, he carried out his normal cruise checks which include a fuel check, before commencing a descent to 1,000 feet amsl. However, as he levelled at 1,000 feet, the engine suddenly stopped. He immediately turned inland, selected a landing site and then declared a 'Mayday'. With his glide established, he checked his instruments and noted that the right tank was indicating empty; he then changed to the left tank and switched the fuel pump to on. The pilot continued with his profile and, on short finals to his intended landing site, noted that the fuel pressure was still indicating zero; he therefore prepared for a forced landing by switching off the magnetos, fuel and master switch and unlatched the canopy. As he approached touchdown, he noticed a deep trench directly in his path and banked the aircraft to the left to avoid it. The nose wheel and left wing tip made the initial contact with the ground but the aircraft remained upright and quickly came to rest. Total flight time had been approximately 25 minutes.

The pilot was convinced that he had completed a comprehensive cruise check just prior to descent but, on reflection, acknowledged that he could not accurately have interrogated his fuel selection and quantity.