Cessna 175C Skylark, G-ARUZ

AAIB Bulletin No: 4/2004	Ref: EW/G2003/08/07	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Cessna 175C Skylark, G-ARUZ	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Continental G0-300-E piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1961	
Date & Time (UTC):	3 August 2003 at 1630 hrs	
Location:	Membury, near Axminster, Devon	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 3
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Nose-leg separated at firewall, large hole in fuselage underside, lower cowling severely damaged, carburettor broken off, hole in engine sump	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	70 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	477 hours (of which 176 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 10 hours	
	Last 28 days - 2 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot. Discussion with the engineer responsible for recovery and repair of aircraft	

The aircraft had flown from Cardiff to Isle of Wight (Sandown). The pilot reported that before leaving Cardiff he had inspected the fuel tanks and gauges and calculated that he had sufficient fuel for the return trip. He stated, however, that it was very busy at Sandown and he had waited for a prolonged period before receiving clearance to take off for the return leg.

Once airborne, he established and maintained radio contact with Bournemouth and then changed to the Dunkeswell frequency. Shortly afterwards, the left tank fuel gauge indication began fluctuating between 'half' and 'empty' before finally settling in the 'empty' position. The pilot immediately headed towards Dunkeswell, which was only a short distance away. With the airfield in sight, the engine stopped, necessitating a forced landing in a nearby field. This was carried out successfully, but the field was later reported by the pilot to be bumpy with long grass. During the landing the nose gear collapsed but all of the occupants vacated the aircraft without injury.

The engineer who recovered the aircraft reported that it appeared to have landed successfully and run a short distance before the nose-gear encountered a ridge which caused it to collapse. The propeller appeared to have been stationary and suffered no damage. He attempted to drain fuel from the aircraft before removing the wings but was unable to obtain more than 7 litres from the total fuel system (ie from both the wings and fuselage).

The pilot has concluded that he ran out of fuel.