

No: 4/89

Ref:EW/G89/01/07

Category: 1b

Aircraft Type and Registration: Cessna 421B, G-BBOB

No & Type of Engines: 2 Continental Motors Corp GTS10-520-H

Year of Manufacture: 1974

Date and Time (UTC): 19 January 1989 at 1210 hours

Location: 10 nm NW of Blackpool Airport

Type of Flight: Business

Persons on Board: Crew -1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Severe fire damage to starboard engine cowls, bearers and accessories

Commander's Licence: Commercial Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 64 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 14,270 hours (of which 2500 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft was in the cruise at FL110 with engines set at 31 inches of manifold pressure and 1700 RPM when the starboard pressure dropped slightly, to about 29 inches. The pilot tried to restore pressure by opening the throttle, though to no effect, and progressively increased RPM to 2300 suspecting that the waste-gate might be stuck or "bootstrapping". The engine suddenly lost all power and switching to the main tank with the booster pump "ON" failed to restore power. There was a sound like a "mild backfire" and the pilot saw a sheet of flame coming out of the starboard engine cowling. The pilot shut the engine down, feathered the propeller and initiated a diversion to the nearest airfield, Blackpool. The fire took a considerable time to go out. The pilot increased airspeed to 200 kts and the fire finally extinguished at about 3000 ft when the aircraft was 5 miles out on final approach. A normal landing was successfully carried out. The starboard engine exhaust crossover pipe at the front of the engine had burst, damaging the oil pipe serving the constant speed unit and causing the fire in the engine bay.

The pilot reports that prior to the flight he had opened the cowls and examined the engines. He had seen no evidence of overheating damage to the exhaust pipes as might have been caused by over-leaning of the mixture control. However, the crossover pipe, where the failure occurred, could not be examined without the cowls being removed completely.