

Aircraft type and registration: Reims Cessna FRA150M G-OSND

No & Type of engines: 1 Continental Motors Corp O-240 E piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1975

Date and time (UTC): 20 December 1987 at 1145 hrs

Location: Iltney Farm, Hundon, Maldon, Essex

Type of flight: Private (pleasure)

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — 1

Injuries: Crew — None Passengers — None

Nature of damage: Substantial — to engine frame, propeller, nose-gear, right wing and fuselage

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 29 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 95 hours (of which 82 were on type)

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

The pilot carried out his pre-flight external check of the aircraft and measured the fuel remaining in the tanks as 7 gallons (U.S.) a side. This was by use of a dip-stick produced by the club. He calculated that he would have 2 hours endurance with a projected flight time of 1 hour. The CFI checked the record of flight of the aircraft subsequent to its last refuelling and authorised the flight. Unfortunately a flight conducted immediately before the subject one had not, at that time, been entered in the record of flights.

The engine was started at 1035 hrs and the aircraft took off from Southend at 1045 hrs. After finding an area clear of cloud at the lower levels, in the vicinity of Walton on the Naze, the aircraft climbed from 1,500 feet to 3,000 feet and 4 loops were executed. The aircraft then headed back towards Southend and, over Osea Island, made contact with Southend Approach Control. The aircraft had descended to 1,300 feet to remain clear of cloud and was crossing the south bank of the Blackwater river. The pilot was about to initiate a climb when the engine lost power, picked up again, then lost power completely.

The passenger observed that the fuel gauges were reading between $\frac{1}{8}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ full and the pilot initiated a Mayday call at 1146 hrs announcing his intention of making a forced landing. Two fields were chosen and an approach made in a northerly direction. The first two fields were rejected because of the presence of sheep, and the glide was stretched to a third field in line with the first two, and a flapless landing carried out. The brakes were applied but the nosewheel dug into soft ground, and collapsed causing the nose to dig in. This in turn caused the main wheels to rise and the right wing to drop and contact the ground before the aircraft

came to rest. Upper torso restraint was being worn by the occupants and held throughout. There was no fire.

On receiving the Distress Call, Southend ATC promptly alerted the emergency services having noted the QDM and radar range of the distressed aircraft. An aircraft in the circuit was despatched to the area and located G-OSND. The occupants were recovered to Southend by helicopter at 1240 hrs.

Post accident investigation and enquiries have established that on recovery the aircraft's fuel tanks were found to be empty.