

No: 10/92

Ref: EW/G92/08/15

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Cessna F172F Skyhawk, G-EWUD

No & Type of Engines: 1 Rolls-Royce Continental O-300-D piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1965

Date & Time (UTC): 14 August 1992 at 1920 hrs

Location: Dee Estuary, off West Kirby, Wirral

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Substantial damage that was beyond economic repair

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 40 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 126 hours (of which 33 were on type)
Last 90 days - 14 hours
Last 28 days - 4 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot planned a three sector flight from Manchester Barton, via Huddersfield (Crosland Moor) and Sleaf, returning to Barton over-flying Colwyn Bay. During his pre-flight checks the pilot confirmed, by visual inspection, that the fuel tanks were full. He had flown the same aircraft on other occasions and was aware that the fuel gauges could sometimes freeze recording incorrect fuel amounts. During the flight the fuel selector was set to "BOTH" and the fuel gauges appeared to function correctly. The weather for the flight was fine with clear skys and a 2,000 feet wind of 355°/10 to 20kt.

On the final sector the pilot had planned to fly direct from overhead Colwyn Bay to Barton through the Liverpool control zone but, due to intense air activity, he had to remain clear of the zone and fly over the coast. As the aircraft approached the Dee estuary the engine stopped. The fuel gauges, although showing different amounts, indicated that sufficient fuel was on board to complete the flight. The pilot attempted an in-flight engine start which was unsuccessful. He transmitted a "MAYDAY" on the Liverpool Approach frequency and carried out a forced landing on a sandbank in the Dee estuary approximately two nautical miles west of West Kirby. The aircraft landed successfully without

damage. After landing the pilot checked the fuel tanks visually and confirmed that the engine failure was due to fuel starvation.

A police helicopter was soon on the scene to assist and transport the pilot ashore. Attempts to recover the aircraft had to be abandoned due to the incoming tide and the aircraft was later destroyed by wave action and salt water contamination.