

Aircraft type and registration: Cessna 150 G-AYUC (light single engined fixed wing aircraft)

Year of Manufacture: 1971

Date and time (GMT): 3 June 1985 at approximately 2000 hrs

Location: Otley, near Market Rasen, Lincolnshire

Type of flight: Private

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — 1

Injuries: Crew — 1 (fatal) Passengers — 1 (fatal)

Nature of damage: Aircraft destroyed

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 39 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: Approximately 80 hours

Information Source: AIB Field Investigation.

The Cessna took off from Sturgate airfield, Lincs, at 1810 hrs with the pilot and one passenger on board for a flight in the local area. The aircraft was seen by witnesses departing towards the east after an uneventful take-off. No positive sighting of the Cessna was reported thereafter, however, a high wing light aeroplane was observed flying around Louth, 11 miles to the east of the crash site, at about 2000 hrs.

Sturgate does not operate an air traffic service during evening flying and so the aircraft was not reported overdue to the Police and ATC services until 0118 hrs. Overdue action was taken but it was not until 0830 hrs the following morning that a farmer found the wreckage in the corner of a field adjacent to some mature woodland. There was no evidence of a distress call being transmitted on any frequency during the fuel endurance limit of the Cessna.

Examination of the wreckage revealed no pre-existing defect in the aircraft or its systems. After the impact an intense fire had occurred, indicating that the aircraft had plenty of fuel on board at the time of the crash. Examination of the propeller showed that it was turning slowly at impact, but there was no indication that the engine was producing power.

The terrain in the area of the crash was typical of the edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds with multiple slopes and ridges. The aircraft had crashed 60° nose down in a wings level attitude, heading 175°M, 80 yards to the south of a small ridge running East to West.

No person in the area of the crash, recalled hearing a light aircraft at the most likely time of occurrence. However two fisherman, who had been fishing on a lake about 1 mile from the crash site, recalled seeing a fire in the corner of the field at about 2000 hrs. At the time they attributed the fire to burning rubbish as they were not aware that an aircraft was overdue.

The weather in the area was deteriorating throughout the time of the flight. There was a north easterly surface wind advecting in moist air from the North Sea, and low stratus and mist were

becoming more frequent as the evening progressed. People living near the crash site reported blowing mist and poor visibility on the Wolds. A weather aftercast gave the temperature at 1000 ft as +13°C and the presence of visible moisture indicated a relative humidity of 100%. Such conditions can give serious carburettor icing at any power setting. However, examination of the air intake system showed that cold air was selected.

The pilot's log book was destroyed in the post-crash fire, but from the flying club records he last flew for 20 minutes on 24 February 1985 and for 1 hour 10 minutes on 8 March 1985. He had completed his PPL training in October 1980.