

AAIB Bulletin No: 2/93

Ref: EW/G92/11/07

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Luton LA4A Minor , G-BBEA

No & Type of Engines: 1 Volkswagen 1600 (Peacock) piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1975

Date & Time (UTC): 8 November 1992 at 1000 hrs

Location: Baylham, Suffolk

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Failed landing gear axle, broken propeller and engine shock loaded, mainplane leading edge damaged

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 44 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 148 hours (all on type)
Last 90 days - 16 hours
Last 28 days - 5 hours

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

The aircraft was being used for a local pleasure flight when, about 10 minutes after take-off and whilst flying level at about 1,500 feet, the engine started to misfire. The pilot's normal practice was to select hot air to the carburettor at frequent intervals to avoid carburettor icing, but even with hot air selected continuously the engine would not run cleanly.

The pilot had elected to return to his home airfield but, as the engine continued to misfire and he was approaching a main road with a wooded area beyond, he decided to carry out a precautionary landing in a field. Having circled the field at about 500 feet agl and established that it was suitable, with a grassy stubble surface, the pilot landed the aircraft. Immediately after touchdown the left wheel came off, the undercarriage leg dug into the ground and the aircraft inverted. The pilot, who was uninjured, turned off the fuel and magnetos and escaped unassisted.

A subsequent examination of the wheel showed that the axle had broken at a weld. The weld, which had been mainly obscured from inspection by the brake backplate, appeared to have been of questionable quality, with evidence of considerable corrosion.