

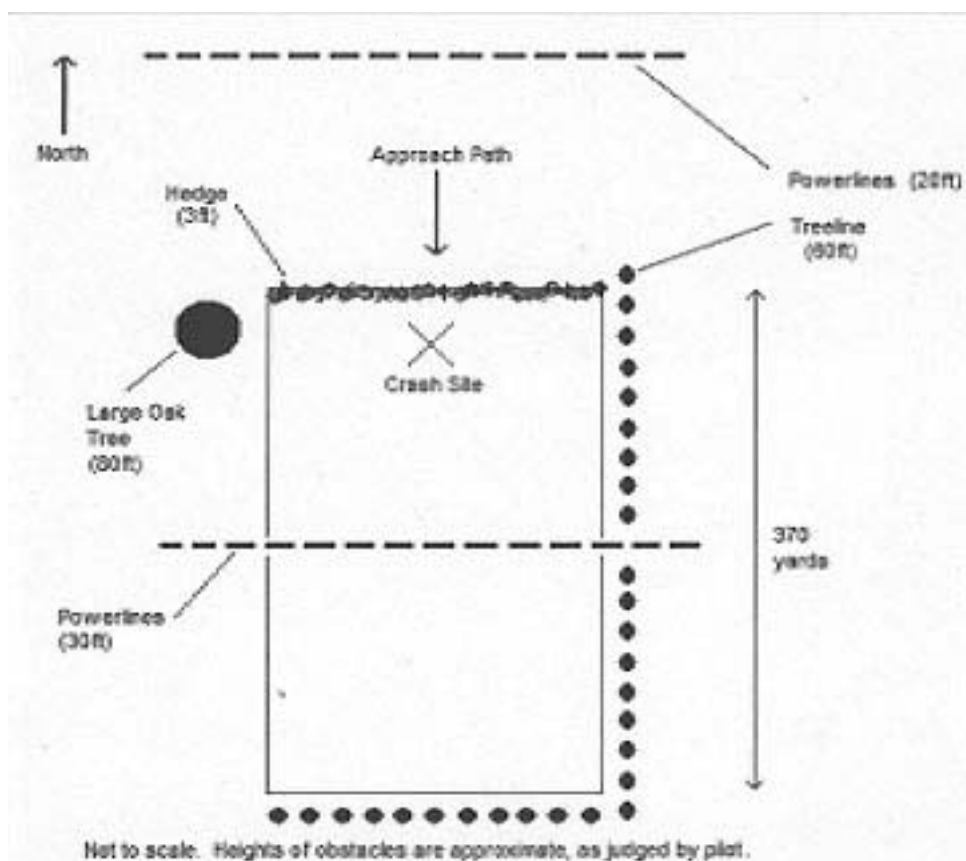
Luscombe 8F Silvaire, G-AKUF

AAIB Bulletin No: 9/2003	Ref: EW/G2003/05/27	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Luscombe 8F Silvaire, G-AKUF	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Continental C90-12F piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1947	
Date & Time (UTC):	25 May 2003 at 1245 hrs	
Location:	Private landing strip at Guestling, near Hastings, Sussex	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Bent propeller and landing gear. Fuselage beyond economic repair	
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	44 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,599 hours (of which 347 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 19 hours	
	Last 28 days - 17 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

History of the flight

The Silvaire is a late 1940s piston-engined high-wing monoplane with two seats, fixed main landing gear and a tail wheel. The landing run of this aircraft type is approximately 400 to 500 feet with a take-off run of 800 to 900 feet. To clear a 50-foot obstacle, these distances increase to around 1,500 feet for takeoff and 1,850 feet for landing.

Having departed Cardington near Bedford, the pilot was attempting to land in a field surrounded by obstacles. A 3-foot high hedge ran along the northern edge of the strip, along the southern and eastern edges there were 60-foot tree lines and on the north-west corner grew an 80-foot oak tree. Power lines of height 20 feet were present north of the hedge lying across the approach while 30-foot power lines ran over the strip roughly halfway along its length. The disposition of these obstacles is shown on the diagram below; all the heights quoted were estimated by the pilot.



Because it was to be his first visit to this strip, the pilot walked the site a few days before his flight, ascertaining that the strip was around 370 yards (1,110 feet) long and was aligned north to south. He had previously flown his aircraft into fields of this length, and another Silvaire had recently landed at this site.

The pilot made two passes at around 200 feet agl to assess the position of the power lines. On the third approach he flew over the first set of power lines and was lined-up on a southerly course for the gap between the trees on the east side and the oak tree to the west of the landing area. Close to touchdown unexpected sink was encountered and the aircraft began to undershoot. The pilot tried to compensate by opening the throttle, but the engine was slow to respond. The main wheels clipped the top of the hedge, followed by the tailplane. The wheels dug into soft ground short of the landing area and the aircraft nosed over on to its back. Restrained by a 3-point harness the pilot was uninjured. He kicked open the left cockpit door and escaped through it.

Conclusions

The pilot thought that the slow engine response was due to it having cooled during the last circuit, and that with the wind from 220° at 5 knots he was downwind of the large oak tree at the time the increased rate of descent was observed, suggesting this may have produced the sink. He also believed that the nearby tree line to the east gave him a false impression of speed, thereby leading him to a low and slow situation because he was tending to use visual cues rather than the airspeed indicator to judge his speed.