

Luton LA4A Minor, G-ATCJ

AAIB Bulletin No: 1/2002	Ref: EW/G2001/11/09	Category: 1.3
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Luton LA4A Minor, G-ATCJ	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Volkswagen 1600 (Peacock) piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1975	
Date & Time (UTC):	10 November 2001 at 1515 hrs	
Location:	Moggerhanger, Bedfordshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to fabric of wing, propeller, cowling and one wheel knocked off on landing	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilots Licence	
Commander's Age:	53 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	188 hours (of which 54 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 11 hours	
	Last 28 days - 1 hour	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

History of the flight

The aircraft had departed from a farm strip at Top Farm, Cambridgeshire, in order to conduct a flight test as part of its annual Permit to Fly renewal. Having completed the performance checks with a climb, cruise at 2,500 feet and descent to VNE (never exceed speed), the pilot decided to

conduct a practise forced landing into a microlight landing strip. At about 1800 feet agl he applied carburettor heat and closed the throttle, whereupon the engine stopped. He then decided that it was not safe to continue with the approach into the microlight field, because of water at the northern end of the landing strip, and so he turned away towards another field. However, his approach to this field was then obstructed by a high hedge and he therefore turned right to land in an adjacent field. By this stage the aircraft was too low to complete the turn and landed heavily on the right wheel which collapsed, causing the aircraft to 'nose-over'. The pilot reported that the field was deeply rutted with heavy mud and winter wheat.

He attributed the cause of the engine failure to carburettor icing.

Weather information

The pilot reported that at the time of his flight the wind had been 220° / 7 kt, with unlimited visibility and no significant weather, just a thin layer of cloud between 1700 feet and 2500 feet; the air temperature had been 4°C.

The Meteorological Office at Bracknell provided an aftercast for the area from METAR observations taken from 1450 hrs to 1520 hrs, and reports from local airfields. At 1515 hrs, the air temperature was 8°C with a dewpoint of 4°C, giving a humidity at the surface of 76%. No vertical temperature profile was available, however the cloudbase varied between 1800 feet and 2500 feet and so the humidity would have increased from the surface up to the cloudbase.

When these conditions were assessed against the carburettor icing chart in CAA General Aviation Safety Sense Leaflet 14A - Piston Engine Icing, it indicated that moderate to serious carburettor icing could be expected at the prevailing temperatures and humidity levels.