

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Luscombe 8E Silvaire Deluxe, G-BUKT	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Continental Motors Corp C85-12F piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1946	
Date & Time (UTC):	1 November 2007 at 1611 hrs	
Location:	Near Dolgellau, Gwynedd	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Minor)	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Aircraft extensively damaged	
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	43 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	225 hours (of which 221 were on type) Last 90 days - 26 hours Last 28 days - 7 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

Following a loss of engine power, thought to have resulted from carburettor icing, the pilot attempted a forced landing, during which the aircraft stalled and dropped into a tree.

History of the flight

The pilot departed Sleaf Aerodrome in Shropshire, with the intention of flying along the Welsh coast between Barmouth and Aberystwyth, before returning to Sleaf. He noted nothing unusual during the pre-flight inspections, which included engine oil and fuel sample checks, and the engine power checks were completed satisfactorily prior to departure.

He reported there was scattered cloud between 3,000 and 4,500 ft amsl. Eyewitnesses recalled the cloudbase being relatively low at the time of the accident.

Whilst en-route to the coast, the pilot made a few deviations to remain clear of low cloud. He drifted to the south of his planned track and, accordingly, took up a northwesterly heading, in the direction of Dolgellau. As the aircraft passed over a ridge, at approximately 2,600 ft amsl, it encountered a strong updraft. Shortly after this the engine note changed and, whilst it continued to run, it no longer produced significant power and did not respond to throttle movements or the application of carburettor heat.

Losing height rapidly, the pilot chose not to use up valuable time in transmitting a MAYDAY call, concentrating instead on flying the aircraft and finding a suitable field for a forced landing. He lined up with the chosen field, but was too high, overshot but then found himself to be very low, with woodland ahead to the left and a rough, steep, hillside to the right. With the airspeed decaying, he attempted to turn the aircraft to the right, whereupon it stalled and dropped into a tree.

The aircraft was extensively damaged and was leaking fuel, but the cabin area remained intact. The pilot, who was wearing a lap and diagonal harness, sustained only minor injuries. Eyewitnesses assisted him in exiting the aircraft.

The pilot believed that the loss of engine power was probably the result of carburettor icing. Carburettor icing is more likely to occur in the more humid conditions that exist in the vicinity of the cloudbase.