

Aircraft type and registration:	Luton LA4A Minor G-BDJG, (Light single engined fixed wing aircraft)	
Year of Manufacture:	1982	
Date and time (GMT):	8 June 1983 at about 1345 hrs	
Location:	2 miles west of Biggin Hill Aerodrome	
Type of Flight:	Private — air test	
Persons on board:	Crew — 1	Passengers — Nil
Injuries:	Crew — Nil	Passengers — N/A
Nature of damage:	Substantial airframe damage	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	46 years	
Commander's total flying experience:	253 hours (of which 1 hour and 15 minutes were on type)	

The aircraft, a recently completed 'home-built' machine, was on an air test for the purpose of obtaining a 'Permit to Fly'. Prior to this flight the aircraft had flown for a total of 1 hour and 15 minutes, all flown by the pilot involved in the accident. The pilot reports that, after checking the engine performance on the ground and finding it to be to his satisfaction, he commenced a take-off run on runway 21 at Biggin Hill aerodrome. At an indicated airspeed of 50 knots the aircraft was put into a climb, as had been done on the previous test flight. The pilot considers that, at a height of about 40 feet above the runway, the aircraft encountered severe wind turbulence which caused the aircraft to sink down close to ground level. Speed was allowed to increase to 55 knots, but, by the end of the runway (which is 5945 feet in length), only a small increase in altitude had been achieved. When it became apparent to the pilot that the aircraft was unable to climb, he looked for a suitable field in which to land the aircraft. The only field considered suitable was situated beyond a line of trees running across the aircraft's flight path. In attempting to land in this field, the aircraft's starboard wing struck the trees, causing it to pivot 180 degrees about its axis. The empennage and rear fuselage struck adjacent branches and were severed by the impact. The pilot, who was wearing upper torso restraint harness, escaped uninjured. The pilot afterwards reported that the weather conditions were fine, with a surface wind of 230°/15 knots, with gusts to 20 knots, and a temperature of +15°C. He considers that the aircraft climb performance was seriously impaired by gusts that created turbulence. Subsequent investigation has shown that the actual weather conditions were as reported, except that the actual surface temperature was +23°C. Thus, although it is possible that the low level wind conditions were such as to adversely effect the performance of a light aircraft, of equal significance could well be the fact that the aircraft engine did not produce the power that had been expected of it.