

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/93

Ref: EW/G93/07/20

Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Luscombe 8A Silvaire, G-BSWA

No & Type of Engines: 1 Continental A65-8 piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1946

Date & Time (UTC): 17 July 1993 at 1715 hrs

Location: Barford St Martin, Wiltshire

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Substantial to both airframe and engine

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence with IMC Rating

Commander's Age: 53 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 204 hours (of which 103 were on type)
Last 90 days - 24 hours
Last 28 days - 13 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

After flight on 11 July 1993, the aircraft was refuelled to the base of the fuel filler neck and not flown again until the day of the accident. On the day of the accident, the pilot flew from Compton Abbas to Cranfield where he made two local flights. The total flight time for these flights was 1 hour 55 minutes and the aircraft was not refuelled before take off for the return flight to Compton Abbas. When passing to the west of Salisbury at a height of 1,500 feet, the engine RPM fell to flight idle. The pilot applied carburettor heat but as the engine did not respond, he transmitted a distress call on the Compton Abbas frequency and carried out a forced landing in a field of standing crop. The height of the crop was greater than the pilot had anticipated leading to the landing flare being too high. The aircraft suffered considerable damage in the subsequent heavy landing but both occupants escaped serious injury and were able to evacuate the aircraft unaided. The total flight time since the aircraft had last been refuelled was 3 hours 5 minutes.

The pilot had been led to believe that the endurance of the aircraft on a full tank of fuel was about 4 hours, but subsequent calculations based on the actual fuel uplift relating to the most recent flights indicated that the safe endurance was nearer to 3 hours.