ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Luton LA4A Minor, G-AYSK
No & type of Engines:	1 Continental A65-8F piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1971
Date & Time (UTC):	8 September 2006 at 1505 hrs
Location:	Barton Aerodrome, Manchester
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Minor) Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Severe damage to propeller, engine and forward fuselage, slight damage to wings
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	70 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	410 hours (of which 28 were on type) Last 90 days - 1 hour Last 28 days - None
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Synopsis

After starting the engine the pilot taxied the aircraft to the appropriate holding point where he positioned the aircraft into the light and variable wind to complete the engine power checks. The engine stopped abruptly. The pilot, having closed the throttle, exited the aircraft to 'hand swing' the propeller. When the propeller was swung the engine started immediately and the aircraft moved forward. The pilot held onto the left wing strut in an attempt to steer the aircraft towards an open area. The aircraft tracked in an arc to the left and the pilot was eventually forced to let go of the strut. The aircraft became airborne and stalled into an open area of the airfield.

History of the flight

The pilot arrived at the airfield to carry out a flight in the local area. He pulled the aircraft out of its hangar, onto the grass area adjacent to the tower, and chocked both main landing gear wheels before carrying out the pre-flight checks. Having donned a flying suit and protective helmet, the pilot started the engine.

The surface wind was from the south-east at 6 kt; the weather was CAVOK with a temperature of 19ºC. The runway in use was 09R which has a grass surface. The pilot was cleared to taxi to holding point Bravo 3 where he intended to carry out the pre-takeoff and engine power checks.

On reaching Bravo 3 the pilot turned the aircraft into the light wind and then closed the throttle. Although the pilot expected the warmed up engine to run at tick-over, it stopped abruptly. Another aircraft was parked directly ahead, approximately 150 ft away. The pilot contacted ATC and obtained clearance to re-start the engine in his present position. He ensured that the throttle was closed and switched both magnetos to OFF before climbing out of the aircraft. He pulled the propeller to compression, selected the impulse magneto to ON and then swung the propeller. The engine started, ran to a high rpm and the aircraft moved forward accelerating towards the aircraft parked ahead. The pilot was unable to switch off the magneto or enter the cockpit but held onto the wing strut, which caused the aircraft to turn to the left. He attempted to continue to turn the aircraft to the left in order to point it at the wooded area on the south-west side of the airfield. Despite his efforts he lost his grip, the aircraft became airborne and then climbed steeply, banking to the right. It entered what witnesses described as a loop before crashing inverted in an area of rough ground on the south-western edge of the airfield.

Conclusion

The pilot believes that whilst exiting the aircraft after the engine had stopped his left leg may have contacted the top of the throttle lever thus opening the throttle. He did not feel this contact due to the padded clothing that he was wearing.

Whilst the pilot had checked the magneto settings at each stage of the propeller swinging process, he had not checked the throttle position. He concluded that in order to prevent such an incident recurring, it is essential to confirm that the throttle is set in accordance with the recommended starting procedure before swinging the propeller. When possible the main landing gear should also be chocked.