

ACCIDENT

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| Aircraft Type and Registration: | Luscombe 8E Silvaire Deluxe, G-BTCH | |
| No & Type of Engines: | 1 Continental Motors Corp C85-12F piston engine | |
| Year of Manufacture: | 1948 (Serial no: 6403) | |
| Date & Time (UTC): | 22 December 2013 at 1315 hrs | |
| Location: | Popham Airfield, Hampshire | |
| Type of Flight: | Private | |
| Persons on Board: | Crew - 1 | Passengers - None |
| Injuries: | Crew - None | Passengers - N/A |
| Nature of Damage: | Damage to wings, propeller and wing spar carry-through structure in cabin | |
| Commander's Licence: | Private Pilot's Licence | |
| Commander's Age: | 64 years | |
| Commander's Flying Experience: | 555 hours (of which 389 were on type) Last 90 days - 0 hours Last 28 days - 0 hours | |
| Information Source: | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot | |

Synopsis

The pilot was attempting to hand-swing the propeller to start the engine after refuelling the aircraft. When it fired, he became aware that the aircraft was starting to move and ran towards the open cockpit door. However, he slipped over and was unable to prevent the aircraft from moving away and striking some hangar doors at slow speed. The pilot cited a number of causal factors for the accident.

History of the flight

The pilot had driven to Popham with the intention of undertaking some local flying. However, he saw that there was insufficient fuel onboard for what he planned to do and so would need to visit the fuel pumps. He was unable to start using the aircraft battery but did so successfully using external power and then taxied to the fuel pumps. As he arrived, he found another aircraft already on the concrete slab which served as a hardstanding for aircraft refuelling and he lined up and waited behind it. The parked aircraft was facing east as opposed to what the pilot understood was the more normal westerly orientation, but he also parked G-BTCH facing downwind in what he described as "relatively strong but also gusty" wind conditions after he had taxied onto the slab.

Having refuelled the aircraft to about two thirds full, he attempted to start the engine but there was again insufficient battery charge and he got out of the aircraft to hand-swing the

propeller - a procedure with which he was very familiar, having performed it often. He set the parking brake and cracked the throttle open the usual amount before the first of several attempts to start the engine. When it finally fired and kept running, he walked around the wing strut towards the left door but became aware that the aircraft was starting to move. He now ran towards the open door but slipped and fell to the ground; by the time he got up, he could only watch as the aircraft moved away towards some closed hangar doors. It struck a door with its right wingtip at an estimated speed of 5 mph, which yawed the aircraft to the right, causing the propeller and then the left wingtip to strike the door and frame.

After securing the aircraft, the pilot reported the damage to the hangar owner, but there had been no injuries or other third party damage incurred. He stated that he did not feel that, when the engine had started, it had run up to an abnormally high rpm but rather that a number of other factors had conspired to cause the accident:

- He should have chocked the wheels, knowing that the cable-operated disc brakes fitted to this elderly aircraft were not particularly effective. The group-owned aircraft did not routinely carry chocks.
- Parking with the aircraft facing downwind and with the door open, acting as a “sail”, probably allowed a gust of wind to start it moving on the relatively low rolling-resistance concrete surface. There was also a slight downslope in the easterly direction.
- Although he described the concrete surface as “damp and slimy”, he was of the opinion that he could have been wearing more suitable footwear than the leather-soled shoes he had worn on the day.
- Although the aircraft was known to have battery charging problems and was scheduled to have its worn generator replaced with an alternator at the next annual inspection, the aircraft should have been taken out of service until this work had been done.

A detailed account of the events provided by the pilot together with a photograph and comments from the Light Aircraft Association (LAA) appeared in the April 2014 edition of the LAA magazine *Light Aviation*.

BULLETIN CORRECTION

Following publication of this report, the subsequent correction will be issued in the September Bulletin. The online version of the report was corrected on 22 July 2014.

In the **History of the flight** it was stated that the pilot had flown to Popham Airfield. This is incorrect; he had in fact **driven** there.