

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/94

Ref: EW/G94/09/01

Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Aeronca 7AC Champion, G-BRER

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

Year of Manufacture: 1946

Date & Time (UTC): 2 September 1994 at 1000 hrs

Location: Hill Farm Airstrip, Newport, Gwent

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: General airframe damage

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 57 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 143 hours (of which 30 were on type)
Last 90 days - 20 hours
Last 28 days - 9 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Runway 23 at Hill Farm is a grass strip and, at the time of the accident, it was dry and had been mown short. The surface wind was 240°/10 kt, the temperature was +17°C and dewpoint was +12°C. The pilot had completed a solo flight and returned to the airstrip to pick up the passenger. Figures supplied by the pilot indicated that the take-off weight was 551 kg; the MTWA for the aircraft is 554 kg. Carburettor heat had been selected during the pre-flight check and had been returned to 'OFF' for takeoff. The pilot reported that all indications were normal during the initial climb, however, the aircraft began to sink and he realised that it would not clear the boundary hedge, some saplings and the sea defence bank ahead. He decided to make a forced landing and closed the throttle; unfortunately, even though he attempted to turn right and parallel it, there was insufficient ground run available to bring the aircraft to halt before the aircraft contacted the hedge. Both occupants were wearing lap and diagonal upper torso restraint and escaped without injury.

The pilot considered that the severe sink he experienced may have been caused by eddies formed on the lee side of the 25 ft high sea defence bank which was, at that point, perpendicular to the direction of the wind.