Westland Scout AH1, G-BXRL

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/98	**Ref: EW/G98/07/28**	**Category: 2.2**
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Westland Scout AH1, G-BXRL	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rolls-Royce Nimbus MK.10501 turboshaft engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1966	
Date & Time (UTC):	15 July 1998 at 1130 hrs	
Location:	Hambleton Hall Hotel, Leicestershire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 - Passengers - 2	
Injuries:	Crew - None - Passengers - None	
Nature of Damage:	Substantial to tail rotor, drive shafts and tail skid	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence (Aircraft and Helicopters)	
Commander's Age:	53 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	4, 468 hours (of which 16 were on type) Last 90 days - 26 hours Last 28 days - 12 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The helicopter was operating into a clearly marked hotel landing site with several mature trees close by and a three foot iron fence adjacent to the landing area on its southern edge. The pilot approached into wind in a north-westerly direction and came to a hover over the landing area. He instructed a crew member, seated in the rear seat, to confirm that the tail rotor was clear of the iron fence and lowered the aircraft onto the ground. As there was a slight downward slope from north-west to south-east, the pilot lowered the front of the skids onto the edge of the landing area before allowing the rear of the skids to contact the ground to complete the landing. As the rear of the skids contacted the ground, the pilot felt a severe vibration accompanied by an audible knocking. He immediately took-off again as he thought that the vibration was caused by the main rotor being at the forward limit of its travel causing it to contact the droop stops. However, the vibration did not reduce and the pilot decided to abandon the landing at the site and land elsewhere. While clearing the site in a right turn, the tail rotor struck a tree before a successful landing was made a short distance away. Subsequent inspection of the aircraft revealed damage to the tail rotor and tail skid but no evidence was found at the landing site to indicate where the initial damage had occurred.

The pilot considered that the initial damage may have been caused by a dead branch being blown into the tail rotor by the helicopter's downwash during the hover.