

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Jodel D117, G-BBPS
No & Type of Engines:	1 Continental Motors Corp C90-14F piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1957
Date & Time (UTC):	9 August 2009 at 1040 hrs
Location:	Westfield Farm Airstrip, Hailsham, East Sussex
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to propeller and left wing
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	69 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	732 hours (of which 600 were on type) Last 90 days - 4 hours Last 28 days - 1 hour
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Synopsis

After landing, whilst the pilot was applying the brakes, the aircraft began to swerve off the airstrip. The pilot attempted to regain control by reverting to rudder pedal steering, however the tail wheel had become unlatched and was castoring. The aircraft continued off the airstrip and struck a fence.

of pedals which he could not operate simultaneously. Directional control on the ground is achieved using either differential braking or the rudder pedals which are linked to a steerable tail wheel. The tail wheel will become unlatched from the steering mechanism when it passes through a certain angle, resulting in it castoring.

Background

Westfield Farm Airstrip is approximately 580 m long and orientated 06/24. The weather at the time of the accident was good with a southerly wind of between 5-10 kt, which the pilot reported was variable in both strength and direction. The pilot commented that on the Jodel D117 the brakes and rudder are operated by different sets

History of the flight

The pilot had completed a short local flight and was returning to land at the airstrip from an easterly direction. He stated that he completed a normal approach and flare and after a short float made a gentle touchdown. After touchdown he initially used the rudder pedals for directional control but, concerned that the aircraft was

not slowing sufficiently, switched to using the brakes instead. The aircraft then began to swerve to the left causing the pilot to return his feet to the rudder pedals. By this time, the tail wheel had become unlocked resulting in a loss of capability to steer the aircraft via the rudder pedals. The aircraft continued to swerve to the left, departed the airstrip and the left wing collided with an adjacent wooden fence. The propeller also struck the fence causing the engine to stop. The pilot was uninjured and after making the aircraft safe was able to vacate unaided.

Comment

The pilot believes the aircraft began to swerve due to the direction and strength of the wind. Differential braking would have been available to try and regain control but, as he did not normally use the brakes after landing, it was a more natural response for him to have reverted to the rudder pedals instead.