

Aircraft type and registration: Vickers Armstrong Supermarine Spitfire Mk IX T G-LFIX (light single engined fixed wing aircraft)

Year of Manufacture: 1944

Date and time (GMT): 5 March 1986 at 0904 hrs

Location: Southampton airport

Type of flight: Private (pleasure)

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — 1

Injuries: Crew — None Passengers — None

Nature of damage: Propeller blades destroyed, damage to flaps and underwing heat exchangers

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 49 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 1679 hours (of which 55 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and AIB Field Investigation.

The aircraft, a two seat Mk 9 Spitfire, was arriving at Southampton Airport to take part in the Spitfire 50th Anniversary Celebration planned for that day. It had performed a low level run in along runway 20 followed by a pull-up into a tight left hand circuit in preparation for landing. The pilot and passenger reported that at 300 feet on the approach the landing gear was indicating down and locked (single green light) and that after a gentle touchdown, the main gear collapsed. The aircraft slid to a stop in an upright attitude slightly to the right of the runway centreline and some 100 m past the threshold.

As the aircraft was salvaged the two main landing gears were free to lower and lock down and it was towed on its wheels into a nearby hangar.

Subsequent examination of the landing gear system did not reveal any mechanical or hydraulic defects which might have prevented the gear from lowering or to lock down.

In addition, a functional test revealed that the system operated correctly with a positive up and down lock being achieved by each main gear and with the correct associated cockpit indication.

The precise position of the main gear, just prior to touchdown, could not be positively established but evidence from photographs and several witnesses revealed it to have been close to, or in, the retracted position.

No undercarriage warning horn system was fitted to this aircraft, the one originally installed having been removed in, approximately, 1946.