

No: 2/85

Ref: EW/G84/09/11

Aircraft type and registration: Pitts Special S2E G-BKTC (light single engine fixed wing aircraft)

Year of Manufacture: 1984

Date and time (GMT): 22 September 1984 at 1426 hrs

Location: Halfpenny Green Airfield

Type of flight: Private

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — 1

Injuries: Crew — None Passengers — None

Nature of damage: Broken tail wheel assembly, minor damage to rudder, defective crankshaft oil seal. Small crack in canopy.

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 30 years

Commander's total flying experience: 1922 hours (of which 55 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by pilot

During a circuit detail, two normal touch-and-go landings were made. On the third landing, a scraping noise and some 'kicking' sensations were detected coming from the rear of the aircraft. An overshoot was initiated during which a call was received by Air Traffic Control (ATC) from a holding aircraft, stating that the tail wheel assembly of G-BKTC appeared to be broken. Another circuit was flown, during which ATC confirmed that the crash crew were in position.

After a normal approach, touch-down was made at as low a speed as possible and the aircraft was kept on the runway with judicious use of the brakes. However, whilst slowing through approximately 40 mph, smoke was noted coming from beneath the aircraft. This was initially assumed to be coming from the brakes, and as the aircraft slowed down it was steered to a stop on the grass at the side of the runway and the engine shut down. It was then noted that the smoke was getting thicker and coming from the engine. The canopy was jettisoned, the aircraft cleared, and the crash crew extinguished a small fire in the engine bay.

Inspection of the aircraft showed that the tail wheel assembly had failed and the front crankshaft oil seal was leaking allowing considerable oil to drop onto the hot exhaust system leading to a minor fire. The fire caused no damage.