

No: 1/91

Ref: EW/G90/10/15

Category: 1c

Aircraft Type and Registration: Socata TB20 Trinidad, G-BNXX

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming IO-540-C4D5D piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1987

Date and Time (UTC): 12 October 1990 at 1735 hrs

Location: Wellesbourne Mountford Airfield, Warwickshire

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Both wings require replacement

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 55 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 561 hours (of which 235 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and subsequent telephone enquiries

The pilot based his aircraft at Wellesbourne Mountford and, when he flew out of there on the same Friday as the accident, he had been told that runway 18 / 36 would be closed for surfacing for two or three days. The 598 metre runway 05 / 23 remained available, but was divided into two separate halves by the work in progress at the intersection with runway 18 / 36. The usual Saturday market was to take place in the southwest corner of the airfield and, when the airfield closed on the Friday night, a pedestrian barrier had been placed across runway 23 at the intersection.

Wellesbourne airfield requires prior permission to have been granted for out of hours arrivals and the airfield manager states that he was not aware of any such request for the Friday night. Nevertheless, after the airfield had closed, when he heard radio calls from G-BNXX (XX) to "Wellesbourne Traffic", he responded repeatedly, using the radio in his office, but was unable to make contact with the aircraft. As a consequence of the time taken by these repeated attempts, when the manager left his office the aircraft was on short finals and there was insufficient time for him to turn on the airfield lighting. Although the manager's transmissions were heard by another ground station, the pilot of XX states that he did not receive them.

The wind was calm and the weather was CAVOK so, having transmitted "Downwind" and "Finals" radio calls, the pilot made a normal touchdown on the threshold of runway 23. Application of the brakes caused the left mainwheel brake slave-cylinder piston to eject and the aircraft to swing sharply to the right, clipping the barrier and a nearby boundary post. The pilot states that the aircraft would have stopped within the runway length available, had the brakes not failed.

Subsequent investigation revealed that both brake pads were very worn and the left one had no remaining friction surface, leaving the metal backing plate to bear directly onto the brake disc. The excessive travel required of the piston had allowed its escape from the cylinder. The brake pads had been renewed 37 hours recorded flying time prior to the accident and, with normal use, could be expected to last for about 50 hours flying time.