

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Fournier RF4D, G-AVKD	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Volkswagen Rectimo 4AR-1200 piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1967	
Date & Time (UTC):	31 January 2006 at 1500 hrs	
Location:	Lasham Airfield, Hampshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Propeller broken, engine tested for shock load	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	55 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	429 hours (of which 155 were on type) Last 90 days - 11 hours Last 28 days - 4 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and additional enquiries by the AAIB	

Synopsis

The aircraft landed on a grass runway with the main landing gear retracted. The pilot believes that he became 'out-of-phase' with the gear position and selected UP when he intended to select DOWN.

Description of the landing gear mechanism.

The Fournier RF-4 uses a manually-retractable single mainwheel with fixed outriggers and a tailwheel. The wheel is raised and lowered by a lever on the right side of the cockpit (see Figure 1): the lever is vertical when the gear is fully down and the pilot moves it aft and down to retract the wheel. In either the UP or DOWN position a locking lever on the right side of the centre console is engaged to lock the wheel in that position.

This locking lever is released by a small lever at the front of the mechanism. Thus, to select UP, the pilot retracts the detent, moves the locking lever aft and then pulls the Raise/Lower lever aft until it is lying almost horizontally alongside the seat. The UP lock is then engaged.

History of the flight

The pilot had recently returned to the syndicate which owned the aircraft after an absence of several years. During a local flight, he noticed that his map had been trapped underneath the landing gear Raise/Lower lever, so he released the landing gear lock, which allowed the single wheel to swing freely down under gravity and the lever to move forwards, releasing the map. He then

recalls locking the landing gear but does not remember moving the Raise/Lower lever to retract it first.

During the downwind checks, he believed he had lowered the landing gear, but, upon touchdown on the grass strip, it was evident that it was retracted. The aircraft came to rest with minimal damage. In a prompt and frank statement, he concedes that he had probably

flown with the gear locked down and, when it came to extend it before landing, he simply operated the Raise/Lower lever to reverse its previous position, even though this retracted the gear. He pointed out that the positions were not labelled, but doubts whether this would have prevented the error.

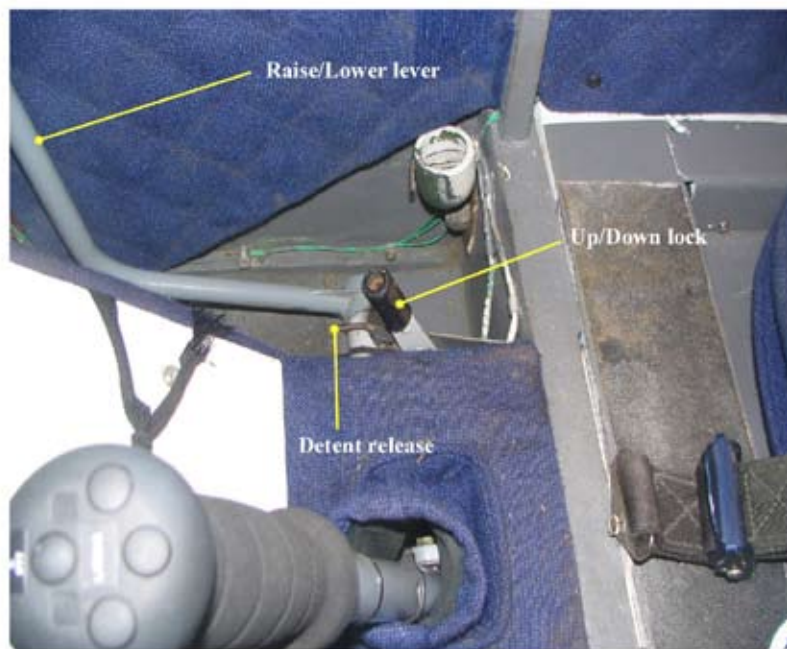


Figure 1

Landing gear controls, G-AVKD