

Piper PA-31-350, G-GLUG, 16 January 1997

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Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-31-350, G-GLUG
No & Type of Engines:	2 Lycoming TIO-540-J2BD piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1980
Date & Time (UTC):	16 January 1997 at 1210 hrs
Location:	Biggin Hill Airport, Kent
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 2 - Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None - Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Substantial to underside of fuselage, flaps and propellers
Commander's Licence:	Basic Commercial Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	41 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,690 hours (of which 20 were on type) Last 90 days - 20 hours Last 28 days - 4 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

After an uneventful flight from Newcastle the aircraft approached Runway 21 at Biggin Hill. The weather was fine with a visibility of 8,000 metres, light winds and clear skies.

The pilot carried out a practise ILS approach and became visual with Runway 21 at 7 miles from touchdown. At the request of the ATC controller the pilot reported at 3 miles finals and was cleared to land. The controller's attention was then directed away from the approaching aircraft to a possible taxiing confliction between two aircraft on the southern and central taxiways. He did not observe the landing aircraft again until after touchdown. The pilot reported that the landing gear and flaps were selected DOWN as the aircraft intercepted the glide slope but he did not check for 'three greens' nor did he use the mirror installed on the left engine cowling to confirm visually the nose landing gear position. The sun was shining directly in the pilot's eyes during the approach interfering with his view of the instrument panel. During the flare the aircraft 'floated' for some

considerable time before settling gently onto runway with the landing gear in the retracted position. The aircraft slid for some 80 metres before coming to rest slightly to one side of the runway centreline. The controller, who observed the aircraft as it slid along the runway, alerted the airfield emergency services. The pilot and passenger, who were both wearing lap diagonal seat belts, vacated the aircraft without injury.

The pilot assessed the cause of the accident as his failure to select the landing gear down and his failure to confirm its position using the landing gear position indicator lights in the cockpit. He also reported that 'very bright direct sunlight' shining in his eyes on final degraded his view of the instrument panel indications prior to landing.