

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-32RT-300 Cherokee Lance II, G-BRHA	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming IO-540-K1G5D piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1978	
Date & Time (UTC):	23 June 2010 at 1409 hrs	
Location:	Earls Colne Airfield, Essex	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Propeller, engine shock-loaded, fuselage, flaps	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	61 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	675 hours (of which 511 were on type) Last 90 days - 2 hours Last 28 days - None	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

On returning from a local flight the pilot decided to conduct a Practice Forced Landing (PFL) from overhead the airfield. After completing this, he elected to continue the approach to land and in doing so omitted to select the undercarriage down. The aircraft sustained damage but the pilot was uninjured.

History of the flight

The pilot had not flown for some time, and planned a flight to the north-east of Earls Colne Airfield to conduct some general handling practice. On returning, as the weather was fine and there were no other aircraft in the circuit, he decided to carry out a PFL from overhead the airfield. He commenced the PFL at approximately 2,500 ft above the airfield, moving the throttle lever

back to idle to simulate an engine failure. Following completion of the PFL, while close to the ground, the pilot considered the aircraft to be in an ideal position to continue the approach to Runway 24, and so he elected to land rather than go around, as he had originally intended. Instead of touching down normally, the propeller and lower fuselage struck the runway surface and it became apparent that the undercarriage was not extended. The aircraft slid along the asphalt runway before veering off to the left, coming to rest in the grass area adjacent to the runway. The pilot was uninjured and vacated the aircraft via the normal exit.

The aircraft is equipped with an undercarriage warning horn which activates if engine power is reduced below

approximately 14 inches of manifold pressure and the undercarriage is not locked down. The pilot recalled hearing the warning horn activate, as expected, when he reduced power to idle at the commencement of the PFL and it continued to sound until the aircraft landed. However, as he had become accustomed to hearing the warning horn by the time he decided to land, he did not appreciate its significance.

During subsequent recovery of the aircraft by the maintenance company, the undercarriage lever was observed to be in the 'UP' position. The aircraft was placed on jacks and the undercarriage operated satisfactorily when tested.

The pilot attributed the accident to his last minute decision to land, rather than go around.