ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Yak-50, G-YKSO
No & Type of Engines:	1 Ivchenko Vedeneyev M-14P piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1979
Date & Time (UTC):	16 June 2008 at 0956 hrs
Location:	White Waltham Airfield, Berkshire
Type of Flight:	Training
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Propeller destroyed, engine shock loaded, lower cowling and oil cooler damaged
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	40 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	927 hours (of which 312 were on type) Last 90 days - 49 hours Last 28 days - 14 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Synopsis

Following a local aerobatic training flight, where coaching was received by the pilot from a ground observer, the aircraft landed with the landing gear retracted. The pilot candidly disclosed that, due to distractions, the 'downwind' and 'finals' checks were inadvertently omitted.

History of the flight

The aircraft was returning to the airfield, having completed a short duration flight during which aerobatic manoeuvres had been practised in a designated area to the west of the airfield. The pilot had transferred to a discrete radio frequency, to receive coaching from a ground observer, but returned to the airfield radio frequency to obtain traffic information, prior to making an approach to land.

He elected to join the circuit on base leg and heard another aircraft call "downwind". The pilot identified the other aircraft and then concentrated on slowing and descending rapidly to position behind it. Because of the limited forward visibility, he kept the other aircraft in view to ensure it had cleared the runway before he turned onto final approach. As he approached the runway extended centreline, the pilot saw the other aircraft climbing away after executing a touch-and-go landing.

He then turned onto final approach and made a radio call announcing his intention to land and shifted his attention to maintaining the correct approach speed accurately, to avoid landing too fast and bouncing on the bumpy grass runway.

The pilot flared the aircraft and, in order to achieve a smooth touchdown, flew just above the runway at low power, to allow the aircraft to slow and settle onto the runway. The aircraft then appeared to stall and the tailwheel touched down with a bump, pitching the aircraft forwards. The propeller struck the ground and disintegrated, shock-loading the engine. The aircraft slid along the runway for approximately 100 m, damaging the lower cowling and oil cooler, before coming to rest. The pilot advised the airfield radio operator of the accident and shut down the aircraft systems, before vacating the aircraft normally. The pilot was not injured. The airfield fire crew attended but there was no fire. It was noted that the landing gear selector lever was in the UP position.

Comments

The pilot candidly notes that, having carried out a training flight which required mental capacity rather than any great physical demands, he considered the landing a formality and had already started to think about the debrief. In his opinion, three 'minor' distractions occurred; joining the circuit on base leg, being high and fast and the need to position behind the other traffic. In combination, these were sufficient for him to inadvertently omit the 'downwind' checks and his focus on a smooth landing lead to the omission of the 'finals' checks.

The UK AIP entry for White Waltham, section *EGLM AD2.22 (d) – Flight Procedures*, notes that normal circuit joins are overhead at 1300 ft QFE. This information is also reflected in local airfield operating procedures. This standard joining procedure, see CAA Safety Sense Leaflet 6d - *Aerodrome Sense*, is designed to provide; better visibility and therefore better traffic separation, reduced pilot workload by allowing more time for the aircraft to be slowed and positioned for landing, and spatial position and radio call queues to prompt the completion of 'downwind' and 'finals' checks.