

Europa, G-EESA

AAIB Bulletin No: 3/97 Ref: EW/G97/01/02 Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Europa, G-EESA
No & Type of Engines:	1 NSI EA-81-100 piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1996
Date & Time (UTC):	10 January 1997 at 1150 hrs
Location:	Kemble Airfield
Type of Flight:	Private (Training)
Persons on Board:	Crew - 2 - Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None - Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to propeller, engine cowling, flap brackets and underside of fuselage
Commander's Licence:	Basic Commercial Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	49 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	5,467 hours (of which 109 were on type) Last 90 days - 29 hours Last 28 days - 8 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft was being flown in the circuit at Kemble as part of a PPL conversion onto the Europa. The instructor comments that the circuit, final approach and landing on Runway 13 were normal but very shortly after the aircraft touched down the undercarriage retracted and the aircraft quickly came to a halt on the runway, close to the centreline. There was no fire and the student and instructor had no difficulty in vacating the aircraft, having turned off the ignition and fuel.

The Europa is fitted with a large retractable mainwheel on the fuselage centreline, a steerable tailwheel coupled to the rudder pedals and outriggers mounted on the wings. The mainwheel is mounted in a swinging arm arrangement and the wheel is retracted and extended by movement of the landing gear retraction lever. This lever moves in a slot, with detents at each end and there is a safety latch at the extended position to ensure that the retraction lever will remain in the 'extended' detent.

After the mishap, the aircraft was lifted off the runway. The main wheel was easily extended and locked down, with no apparent damage to the mechanism.

The instructor and student give consistent and candid accounts of the incident. They both recall that, at the landing, the undercarriage was in the extended position but that it had not been checked or confirmed as latched in that position. The student goes on to comment that, in retrospect, the workload on final approach was higher than he had expected and that, as a Private Pilot's Licence holder with some 150 hours, this was the first aircraft he had flown with a retractable undercarriage. The instructor comments that the accident serves as a reminder to check that an undercarriage is not only selected down but **checked** as indicating its locked down condition, in this case by the position of the small mechanical latch.