ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-28R-200 Arrow II, G-ELUT
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming IO-360-C1C piston engine
Year of Manufacture:	1974
Date & Time (UTC):	17 September 2006 at 1202 hrs
Location:	Old Sarum Airfield, Wiltshire
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Damage to fuselage underside and propeller tips
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	57 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	423 hours (of which 203 were on type) Last 90 days - 14 hours Last 28 days - 5 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further enquiries by the AAIB

Synopsis

The aircraft landed on its belly and slid along the grass runway because the pilot omitted to extend the landing gear.

History of the flight

The aircraft was on a cross-country flight from Goodwood to Old Sarum. The weather was good with no cloud and visibility greater than 10 km. The pilot joined the Old Sarum circuit by descending on the 'deadside' (non-active part of the circuit) and joining on the crosswind leg for a right-hand circuit to land on Runway 24 (grass). Once established 'downwind' he carried out his normal 'downwind' checks but forgot to lower the landing gear. There was one aircraft ahead of

him in the circuit and he was aware of another aircraft behind him. Once established on 'final' he carried out his 'final' checks which included confirming: fuel pump ON, landing light ON, propeller rpm 'full forward' and full flaps, but he forgot to check for three green 'landing gear down and locked' lights. At this point the aircraft ahead of him had landed and vacated the runway.

At a height of approximately 50 feet the pilot heard "GO ROUND" over the radio, followed shortly thereafter by another call of "GO ROUND, GO ROUND". The pilot checked the runway ahead and it was clear so he assumed the call was for the aircraft behind him. He proceeded with the landing and the aircraft touched down gently

on its belly, slid across the grass surface, and then left the runway to the right before coming to rest. The pilot and his passenger were able to exit the aircraft normally. There was no fire.

Report from the airfield radio operator

The radio operator on duty, who was in the tower of the airfield at the time of the accident, reported that the accident occurred on a busy day. He heard the pilot of G-ELUT report on 'final' but when he looked up at the aircraft and noticed no visible landing gear legs, the aircraft was already very close to the ground. He called for the aircraft to "GO ROUND" and when he saw no change in its flight path he repeated "GO ROUND, GO ROUND", but at this point the aircraft was just 30 feet from touchdown. He reported that if he had had another 10 seconds to react, he could have looked down at his data strip for the aircraft's registration and said "UNIFORM TANGO GO ROUND". He also reported that when he knows that there is a retractable-gear aircraft in the circuit, he has a practice of looking for the landing gear when the aircraft is on final. In this case he was not aware that G-ELUT had retractable landing gear because the aircraft's full type designation PA-28R-200 was not

given by the pilot during his initial call to the airfield (the 'R' in 'PA-28R' indicates 'retractable').

Discussion

The accident occurred as a result of the pilot omitting to lower the landing gear and forgetting to check for three green 'down and locked' lights and an opportunity to avoid the accident was missed when the pilot believed that the "GO ROUND" call from the radio operator did not apply to his aircraft. However, responsibility for ensuring that the landing gear is down and locked rests with the commander of the aircraft.

The aircraft's automatic gear extension system in G-ELUT had been disabled and the pilot did not recall hearing the gear warning horn. The pilot stated that it was his normal practice to say "THREE GREENS" over the radio when he made his 'final' call, but on this occasion he omitted this check as well. Routinely saying "THREE GREENS" when making the "final" call can serve as a reminder to the pilot to check for 'three greens'; it also alerts the radio operator or tower controller that the aircraft has retractable landing gear. Workload permitting, they can then visually check that the landing gear is extended.