

No: 6/90

Ref: EW/G90/03/21

Category: 1b

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-31-350, G-BTAX	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming TIO-540-J2BD piston engine (port) 1 Lycoming LTIO-540-J2BD piston engine (stbd)	
Year of Manufacture:	1977	
Date and Time (UTC):	24 March 1990 at 2130 hrs	
Location:	Exeter Airport, Devon	
Type of Flight:	Commercial	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 2	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to propeller tips; minor damage to underside of rear fuselage	
Commander's Licence	Commercial Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	29 years	
Commander's Total Flying Experience:	1,289 hours (of which 580 were on type)	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further enquiries by AAIB.	

The aircraft was approaching to land at Exeter airport. The handling pilot was flying under the supervision of a training captain.

The training captain reported that locally severe turbulence was encountered approximately 8 nm from touchdown. At 5 nm from touchdown he saw the pilot select the landing gear down and was then distracted by the momentary illumination of the door unsafe light. After confirming that the door was closed, he returned his attention to the approach, which appeared to be continuing normally. As the pilot initiated the flare a slight scuff was heard. The training captain immediately took control and called for full power. He carried out a go-around and entered a left-hand circuit to land. The landing gear lever was moved up and then down again, whereupon the landing gear extended and 3 green lights showed. After landing it was found that the propellers had struck the runway and the passenger step and the ADF aerial beneath the rear fuselage had also suffered damage.

The training captain later stated that he had seen no red or green landing gear indicator lights during the first approach and that the landing gear warning horn had not sounded. It was his opinion that on the first approach the pilot under supervision had not lowered the landing gear lever far enough for it to engage in the 'DOWN' detent. He also said that he thought the landing gear warning horn was serviceable but at no stage during the first approach had engine power been reduced below 12" of manifold pressure and the horn did not sound above that power setting. He confirmed that the landing gear warning circuit breaker had not been pulled out during the flight.