

AAIB Bulletin No: 3/95

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Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-28-161 Cherokee Warrior II, G-BPRY

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-320-D3G piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1984

Date & Time (UTC): 14 February 1995 at 1140 hrs

Location: East Midlands Airport

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Distortion and denting of aircraft right wing and damage to rear of a van

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 63 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 252 hours (of which 77 were on type)
Last 90 days - 10 hours
Last 28 days - 3 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

After landing on Runway 27 and vacating the runway at rapid exit turnoff 'Charlie', the pilot discovered that the southern taxiway was obstructed by two vans belonging to workmen who were repairing the surface of the tarmac. The vans were parked one on each side of the taxiway with the rear of one van approximately abreast of the front of the other van. From the pilot's perspective, the van on his left was parked with its wheels on the hard surface adjacent to the northern edge; the van on his right was parked just on the south side of the taxiway centreline. Initially the pilot stopped the aircraft and waited but the workmen carried on working and seemed to ignore his predicament. After a short while one workman, who was standing on the centreline between the vans, 'waved' the aircraft through the gap and the pilot decided to manoeuvre the aircraft carefully through what seemed to him to be a wide enough space. Whilst moving forward and watching the 'signalling' workman, the pilot felt a dull thud on the port side and discovered that the aircraft's right wingtip had struck the rear of the van parked on the left side of the taxiway. After impact, the offending van was pushed clear and the aircraft taxied back to the apron.

Candidly the pilot attributed the cause of the accident to his becoming distracted by the workmen whilst manoeuvring through a narrow space. According to the airport's ATC staff, work on the taxiway lighting had been underway for some three months with an agreement between all concerned that the workmen would remain on the south side of the 23 metre wide taxiway thus allowing ample space for light aircraft to taxi past them using the northern half of the taxiway. At the time of the accident, new contractors were at work and they did not abide by the agreement established by their predecessors. Since the accident, the taxiway is closed by ATC when work is in progress and aircraft are allowed past the work area only in the presence of a member of the airport's engineering staff.