Piper PA-34-200-2 Seneca, G-BCDB

AAIB Bulletin No: 9/97 Ref: EW/G97/05/15Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-34-200-2 Seneca, G-BCDB
No & Type of Engines:	2 Lycoming IO-360-C1E6 piston engines
Year of Manufacture:	1974
Date & Time (UTC):	25 May 1997 at 1119 hrs
Location:	Bristol Airport
Type of Flight:	Private
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 - Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None - Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	General damage to underside of fuselage; damage to propellers and possible engine shock load
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence with IMC, Night
	and Instructor Ratings
Commander's Age:	70 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,359 hours (of which 15 were on type)
	Last 90 days - 6 hours
	Last 28 days - 3 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot was carrying out an ILS approach, in VMC, to Runway09 at Bristol Airport. The aircraft was vectored to the intermediateapproach at 3,000 feet amsl; the pilot felt that he had been vectoredclose to the airfield and so he selected 25° rather thanthe usual 10° flap in order to facilitate a more rapid descentwhen he was turned onto final approach. During this descent,power was reduced and, as expected, the landing gear warning hornsounded.

The pilot reported that when the aircraft established on the localiser,it was only slightly below the glide slope. He was told to changefrequency to 'Tower' but received no reply to his first call;the frequency was reselected and contact established. By thistime the aircraft was significantly above the glide slope andso the he reduced power to increase the rate of descent; the landinggear warning horn again sounded until the glide slope was regainedsome time later. The pilot was so preoccupied with regainingthe glide slope that he omitted his final checks which he normallydid at 1,000 feet.

The warning horn again sounded as he closedthe throttles in the flare but he had become used to hearing itand by the time the significance occurred the aircraft had madecontact with the runway.

The pilot, in a frank and comprehensive report, said that he hadunder 5 hours instrument flying on the Seneca. He trained atBournemouth Airport and was used to being established on the localiserabout 2 nm before intercepting the glide slope. The morehurried approach at Bristol coupled with the radio problem whichled to the aircraft to be well above the glide slope, left himwith little spare capacity to cope with the change to his normalroutine.