

AAIB Bulletin No: 11/94

Ref: EW/G94/09/12

Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-24 Comanche, G-ARHI

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming O-360-A1A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1960

Date & Time (UTC): 27 September 1994 at 0917 hrs

Location: Swansea Airport

Type of Flight: Private

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 1

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Propeller and the underside of the fuselage

Commander's Licence: Commercial Pilot's Licence with Instructor Rating

Commander's Age: 55 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 10,800 hours (of which 6 were on type)
Last 90 days - 177 hours
Last 28 days - 46 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot
plus telephone enquiries

The pilot was not instructing at the time of the accident; he was flying for private purposes together with a friend. The friend, who also had extensive experience as a flying instructor, occupied the front left seat but was on board the aircraft as a passenger. The two friends had flown together on several previous occasions and the passenger would probably have become accustomed to the pilot's habit of saying out loud his after-landing checks before actioning them one at a time.

The pilot landed the aircraft in the normal manner. As the aircraft's speed was reducing through approximately 50 kt he was about to raise the flaps when the passenger suddenly reached across and selected the landing gear switch to the 'UP' position. The pilot immediately re-selected 'DOWN' but his action was too late to prevent the gear from retracting and the aircraft came to rest on its belly.

The bulk of the passenger's flying experience had been acquired on Cessna 150 aircraft which have fixed landing gear and electrically operated flaps controlled by a paddle type switch which moves in an 'UP/DOWN' sense. The Comanche's flaps are manually operated by a lever but the retractable gear is controlled by an 'UP/DOWN' switch. The passenger had intended to assist the pilot by raising the flaps for him but inadvertently raised the landing gear instead.