Piper PA-34-200T Seneca II, G-BGFT, 7 March 1996

AAIB Bulletin No: 6/96 Ref: EW/G96/03/03Category: 1.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-34-200T Seneca II, G-BGFT

No & Type of Engines:2 Continental LTSIO-360-EB1A piston engines

Year of Manufacture:1978

Date & Time (UTC):7 March 1996 at 1504 hrs

Location: Filton Airport, Bristol

Type of Flight: Aerial Work (Training)

Persons on Board: Crew - 3 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Damage to propellers, flaps and underside of fuselage

Commander's Licence: Airline Transport Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age:59 years

Commander's Flying Experience:11,079 hours (of which 1,543 were on type)

Last 90 days - 82 hours

Last 28 days - 35 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The aircraft was engaged on an Instrument Rating training flightfrom Oxford Kidlington. The instructor was supervising a studentpilot who was conducting an NDB approach to Runway 09 at Filtonunder simulated asymmetric power. It is the company standardoperating procedure, during this type of approach, to lower thelanding gear when passing the Final Approach Fix as the finaldescent to Minimum Descent Altitude (MDA) is commenced. On completionof the approach, it was intended to conduct a touch and go landing.

The instructor reported that the student was having a degree ofdifficulty in controlling the aircraft and achieving the correctapproach path. The instructor did not notice that the studenthad not lowered the landing gear at the appropriate point. Afterlevelling off at MDA and transferring to visual flight, the student'shandling was still causing the instructor some concern, to theextent that he took over control of the aircraft for the landing. The landing gear remained retracted throughout, the aircraftlanded gently on its underside and slid to a halt. There wasno fire and the occupants

vacated by the normal means. Subsequentinspection of the landing gear operating mechanism did not revealany unserviceabilities.

The landing gear warning horn did not sound during the final phaseof the approach as the throttles were retarded for landing. Thewarning horn system is activated by microswitches associated withlow power throttle position. These are normally set up to activatethe warning horn at a throttle position which corresponds approximatelyto a manifold pressure just below that used for the training asymmetricflight zero thrust setting. It is not possible to check thissetting until the aircraft has been repaired.