

Follow-up Action on Occurrence Report

ACCIDENT TO DENNEY KITFOX MK4, G-BZIB, AT SMEETON WESTERBY ON 13 JUNE 2003
(FORCED LANDING AFTER ENGINE STOPPED DUE TO FUEL STARVATION)

CAA FACTOR NUMBER : F20/2004
FACTOR PUBLICATION DATE : 15 April 2004
OPERATOR : Private
CAA OCCURRENCE NUMBER : 2003/03695
AAIB REPORT : Bulletin 3/2004

SYNOPSIS

(From AAIB Report)

The aircraft was being flown on one of a series of test flights, which were required before it could be issued with a Permit to Fly. The aircraft had been airborne for 15 minutes and, having completed some handling tests, was returning to Leicester Airport at 1,500 feet QFE when the engine stopped. The commander selected what he considered to be the only suitable field for a forced landing, knowing that it contained a standing cereal crop. He did not attempt to restart the engine or transmit a radio call because he decided that his priority should be to fly the aircraft.

With the aircraft flying just above the level of the top of the cereal crop its speed reduced and it started to sink. As the mainwheels contacted the crop, which the crew estimated stood two and a half feet tall, the aircraft pitched forward and came to rest inverted after travelling a further 30 to 40 feet. The pilots released themselves from their harnesses and exited the aircraft through the doors, which had already sprung open during the accident. All three emergency services attended the scene but there was no fire and the occupants of the aircraft were uninjured. The commander had particular praise for the four-point shoulder and lap harnesses, which he believes had saved both him and his fellow pilot from injury.

Subsequent examination revealed that the engine failure was the result of fuel starvation caused by debris in the fuel pipe and fuel pump. The debris was identified as a rubber jointing compound, which had been used to connect rubber fuel pipes to metal hose nipples during construction. During a previous ground run this substance had been responsible for a blockage in the fuel system causing the engine to stop. The commander, who is also a PFA inspector, had advised the owners to remove the jointing compound from the fuel system following the ground run. In hindsight he considers that the fuel system should have been replaced, but without the use of rubber jointing compound on the rubber to metal joints.

FOLLOW UP ACTION

The one Safety Recommendation, made by the AAIB following their investigation, is reproduced overleaf, together with the CAA's response.

Recommendation 2004-10

The Popular Flying Association should issue a technical instruction, which contains advice on the suitability of rubber jointing compound and alternate methods of achieving fuel tight joints in aircraft fuel systems.

CAA Response

This recommendation is not addressed to the CAA.

CAA Status - Closed