

Europa, G-PEGY

AAIB Bulletin No: 7/2003	Ref: EW/G2003/03/20	Category: 1.3
INCIDENT		
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Europa, G-PEGY	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 914-UL piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2000	
Date & Time (UTC):	19 March 2003 at 1411 hrs	
Location:	Leeds/Bradford Airport	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Damage to right wheel fairing and brake pipe, right wing and left door	
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	71 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,345 hours (of which 36 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 3 hours	
	Last 28 days - 0 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The aircraft was departing from its home base for a flight to Wombledon on the North Yorkshire Moors. The pilot carried out the pre take-off checks while at the F3 holding point on Taxiway F. He was using a newly amended checklist which he had customised from the manufacturer's manual. He normally carried out the pre take-off checks from memory using a suitable mnemonic. On this occasion he elected to use the checklist because he thought that this might be more reliable and it is regarded as good practice.

The aircraft was cleared to line up on Runway 32 and takeoff. The pilot, who was sitting in the left seat, had purposely not closed his door fully while taxiing to allow some ventilation. He commented that the temperature rise in a Europa is considerable in bright sunshine. The door was of a gull wing design and it was possible to put the locking lever into the closed position while leaving the latching bolts resting on the outside of the door frame. This created a narrow gap for air to enter the cockpit.

One or two seconds after the aircraft had become airborne the pilot's door opened to its full extent. The aircraft rolled and yawed to the right, touching down and clipping a runway edge light as it departed the runway at 90° to the direction in which it was taking off. The aircraft travelled a further 30 yards through rough grass before coming to a stop. The pilot and his passenger vacated normally.

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There was damage to the right wheel fairing and brake pipe, the right wing and the left door strut mechanism.

In a frank report the pilot concluded that the accident was caused by his failure to ensure that the door was fully locked when carrying out the pre take-off checks. He commented that this was the first time that he had used a checklist in this aircraft, rather than memorising the checks. He regarded this as a factor but not an excuse.