

Accident

Aircraft Type and Registration:	CZAW Sportcruiser, G-CZAW	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Rotax 912ULS piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	2006 (Serial no: PFA 338-14542)	
Date & Time (UTC):	17 July 2024 at 1630 hrs	
Location:	Near Sherburn-in-Elmet Airfield, Yorkshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Minor)	Passengers - 1 (Minor)
Nature of Damage:	Destroyed	
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	67 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,335 hours (of which 210 were on type) Last 90 days - 44 hours Last 28 days - 19 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The aircraft's locker cover opened in flight. The pilot could not maintain height and the aircraft subsequently struck some trees short of the airfield. A post-accident inspection revealed that the one half of the locker hinge had been secured using only sealant and without rivets, but rivets were present on the other half of the hinge.

History of the flight

The aircraft departed Sherbourne-in-Elmet for Stoney Lane Airfield in Worcestershire. Having flown approximately 5 miles the pilot heard a loud bang, and the left wing dropped, which the pilot countered with full right aileron and full right rudder. The pilot diagnosed the issue as the left-wing locker cover having opened into the airflow along its leading edge. The pilot made a "PAN" call and decided to return to Sherbourne-in-Elmet.

Subsequently the engine started to run roughly, which the pilot considered may have been a fuel issue due to the significant sideways attitude of the aircraft. Switching tanks did not resolve the issue, and the aircraft was unable to maintain height or reach the airfield. The aircraft struck some trees short of Runway 28 and the pilot and passenger sustained minor scratches and cuts.

Aircraft inspection

The left-wing locker cover had opened along its hinge line on the leading edge. Rivet holes were present in the forward half of the hinge, but there were no corresponding holes in the wing and no rivets were present. The forward half of the hinge had been held in place with what appeared to be silicone sealant; the aft half of the hinge had rivets present. It was concluded that the hinge had not been rivetted to the wing prior to delivery. This aircraft was the UK prototype, and it is likely that this was an omission during the original manufacture.

Safety Action taken by the Light Aircraft Association (LAA)

The LAA do not consider that this is a widespread issue, but they are aware of some similar issues with wing locker covers opening inadvertently and have taken the following safety action to update the Type Acceptance Data Sheet (TADS) for this aircraft to:

- Remind owners to check that the wing lockers on their aircraft have been rivetted correctly
- Remind owners about latching the lockers properly and potentially adding a rubber strip under the edge of the locker where the latch is, so the locker can be clearly seen to be sitting proud if it has not been locked.