

LAA/AWA/19/14
28th May 2019

Montgomerie-Bensen and Montgomerie-Merlin Gyroplanes

Inspection of Lap Strap/Airframe Attachment

During the recent comprehensive refurbishment of a Montgomerie-Bensen B8MR gyroplane, the owner removed the fibreglass fairings and the fuel tank to gain access to the structural frame so it could be thoroughly inspected. With the fairing and the fuel tank removed it could be seen that the lap strap was badly damaged near its attachment to the main fuselage structure. Clearly, in the case of an abrupt stop, or perhaps even severe in-flight turbulence, this lap strap would very likely have failed.



This incident serves to both highlight the importance of creating access to inspect all hard-to-see structural items and to stress the importance of inspecting restraint system fully at the annual inspection.

LAA Engineering has recently issued an Airworthiness Information Leaflet (AIL) (LAA/MOD/G01A/003 Issue 1) requiring owners of the Montgomerie-Bensen and Montgomerie-Merlin single-seat gyroplanes to inspect the lap straps fully before further flight to ensure that they are in a satisfactory condition and not configured in a manner likely to cause 'chafe' damage in service, i.e. through contact with hard edges, or angled in a manner that prevents a direct 'pull'. For aircraft currently flying this inspection is required straight away and thereafter annually.

A copy of LAA/MOD/G01A/003 can be downloaded [HERE](#).

Further guidance on the inspection of seat belts and aircraft restraint systems generally can be downloaded [HERE](#).

Fig 1. When first devised, single-seat gyroplanes were constructed with an open frame, sometimes a light fibreglass pod was used to protect the instruments and offer some protection to the pilot. This Montgomery derivative incorporated a wrap-round fairing which both offers better protection to the pilot and (arguably) improves the aircraft's look – though this come at the cost of restricting access to important inspection points.



Fig 2. The picture above shows the lap strap that led to the fleet inspection – no further comment is required!