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Dear

I hope you are still enjoying your Airborne XT912. Although it has become impossible to import aircraft from Australia due to the very poor rate of exchange – a new XT912 would have to be around £43,000 today - I am still looking after the fleet here in UK. The purpose of this letter, which I have copied to all Airborne pilots in UK and Ireland and also to the BMAA Safety Officer, is to remind you of certain requirements in the Operators Handbook and pre-flight inspection in general.

One of the fleet lost a batten from the right (starboard) side wing, which because it was the last one towards the wing tip (#10) and because at the time it was being flown at a speed very close to the VNE of 85kts induced a very high rate of roll to the left. The pilot reduced speed and regained control and landed safely and discovered the missing #10 batten on inspection.

I am passing no judgement. My only concern is for your continued safety. Remember, I still fly G-XTEE the first Airborne XT912 that I imported in 2004 which now has 800+ hours on its log and which has just passed its annual inspection without any issues.

The battens, as you know, are held in place by plastic fittings that are inserted into pockets on the trailing edge of the sail. They are threaded into the batten and winding the fitting in or out of the batten will decrease or increase the tension applied by the batten to the sail. The fittings should only be unclipped by first depressing part of the clip to release it from the body. It is possible, with force, to unclip without depressing it but this damages the retaining edges of the clip. Batten tip fittings that have become damaged in this way or any that do not firmly and audibly 'click' into place **should be replaced with new ones**. The batten end fitting when located into the sail pocket should make an angle of approximately **45 degrees** with the axis of the batten. Anything less will mean that the batten is not correctly tensioned in to the sail and risks the batten being lost. Any that cannot retain this level of stress and unclip must be replaced. Do not screw them into the batten until they do stay clipped as they are not tight enough and need replacing.

Please ensure that you pre-flight inspect the wing. **Section 4.3 of the Pilot Operating Hand Book** is a complete procedure and should be followed without deviation or exception. Ensure that it becomes a ritual and do not let anyone else interrupt you. If they do, ask them not to do it again and then start from the beginning.

At the point of your CHIFTWAP pre-take off do a visual check down the trailing edges of the wing. If any batten clip is not correctly positioned it will stand out clearly. If any are out of place, **don't take-off** – stop and fix it or replace it.

Finally, take very good care of your wing. Unlike the common UK practice of parking flexwings at right angles to the wind and with the up wind wing tip on the ground I suggest that you park your XT nose into wind and hold the base bar back against the seat side tubes with a strap – or by using the rear seat belt. It is very, very stable like this. Wings should only really touch the air – not the ground – not the hangar doors or anything else. Make sure you keep to the maintenance schedule as defined in the Streak 3B maintenance manual. It is available online to download from the Airborne website (http://www.airborne.com.au/pages/manuals_ml.php) so you can have a copy on your pc as well as at the airfield.

If you want any spares (such as batten clips) just drop me a mail to grahamjwebster@gmail.com. I will arrange shipment at cost as there is not enough business to worry about trying to make a profit from it.

Happy landings

Graham Webster
Airborne Australia in UK
Australia in UK