

## Europa Classic, XL and NG Aircraft

### Fuel Filler Pipe Inspection

A recent incident, where fuel was seen leaking from a de-rigged Europa aircraft, led to the discovery that the rubber fuel filler pipe on the aircraft had structurally failed, become porous and was breaking up internally, releasing particles of rubber into the fuel system.

In this case the fuel filler pipe had been sealed off behind a fibreglass cover by the aircraft's original builder and had therefore not been inspected for many years.

For some time before the complete failure of this component the owner had been plagued with repeated fuel filter blockages, the final blockage leading to an engine failure shortly after take-off, after which the aircraft was grounded.

It is an annual requirement for aircraft operating under an LAA administered Permit to Fly that the fuel system is fully inspected. It is possible that the fuel filler pipe may look in good order during a cursory in-situ inspection, however, the lessons learnt from this recent incident is that, often despite its outward appearances, the inside of a pipe may be in poor condition.

LAA Engineering has discussed this particular issue, and its wider implications, in the December 2017 edition of Safety Spot; the online version of this article may be downloaded [HERE](#).

To ensure that there are no other Europa aircraft operating with potentially suspect fuel filler hoses LAA Engineering has published an Airworthiness Information Leaflet (LAA/MOD/247/011 issue 1); a copy of this Leaflet can be downloaded [HERE](#).



Fig 1. Picture shows the fuel filler pipe *in situ*, note that in this example the pipe was completely hidden inside the fibreglass enclosure.



Fig 2. When the 'hidden' fuel filler pipe was removed from the aircraft it effectively disintegrated; it should be noted that the pipe looked from the outside to be in good condition (except, in this example, it was leaking fuel)