Safety Regulation Group
Safety Investigation and Data Department

Follow-up Action on Occurrence Report

ACCIDENT TO A321-200, F-GTAA, AT LONDON HEATHROW AIRPORT ON 8 FEBRUARY 2001

(LEFT WINGTIP STRUCK RUNWAY ON LANDING)

CAA FACTOR NUMBER	:	F6/2003
FACTOR PUBLICATION DATE	:	15 April 2003
OPERATOR	:	Air France
CAA OCCURRENCE NUMBER	:	2001/00793
AAIB REPORT	:	Bulletin 3/2003

SYNOPSIS

(From the AAIB Report)

The aircraft was landing on Runway 09L after a scheduled public transport flight from Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport. The commander was the handling pilot. The aircraft configuration was Flap Full, following a manually flown approach with the Flight Directors on and manual thrust. The crew had noted the arrival Automatic Terminal Information System (ATIS) information 'V' timed at 1350 hrs, which gave a surface wind from 010° / 13 kt, variable in direction between340° and 040°, visibility 25 km, cloud Few at 1,800 feet, Broken at 2,000 feet, Overcast at4,000 feet, Temperature +5°C, Dew Point +2°C, QNH 999 mb.

The Heathrow Tower controller cleared the aircraft to land at 1453 hrs and passed the surface wind as 020° at 10 kt. No windshear had been reported by landing aircraft up to this time and only light turbulence was experienced during final approach. The commander reported that as the aircraft descended below 200 feet, there was a sudden loss of airspeed of about 10 to 15 kt. In response to this, thrust was increased in order to maintain the airspeed at VAPP + 10 kt. At about 100 feet, the leftwing dropped unexpectedly. The commander then applied opposite roll sidestick input and opposite rudder. There followed three divergent cycles in roll. During the third cycle, full left sidestick input was achieved on one occasion. The roll oscillation culminated in the left wing tip striking the runway just prior to the left main landing gear touchdown.

At this point, the commander assessed that the landing could not be safely completed so he elected to execute a go-around. He applied additional thrust and the aircraft became airborne again immediately and climbed away.

After the go-around, the aircraft was positioned by radar vectors for a second approach to Runway 09L. During the downwind leg, the flight deck crew were advised by a passenger that the left wing tip had suffered tip strike damage and the winglet was bent out of its usual position. The handling characteristics of the aircraft were not noticeably affected by the damage. The commander elected to carry out the subsequent approach using Flap 3. The aircraft landed uneventfully at1510 hrs.

The aircraft taxied to the parking stand and the passengers were deplaned normally. There were no injuries sustained during the event. No debris from the incident was deposited on the runway surface.

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FOLLOW UP ACTION

The one Safety Recommendation made by the AAIB following their investigations is reproduced below, together with the CAA's response.

Recommendation 2003-08

It is recommended that the CAA encourage all operators using Operational Flight Data Monitoring programmes to include the application of large manual control inputs as part of the automated parameter exceedance monitoring process.

CAA Response

The CAA accepts this Recommendation.

In a forthcoming Flight Operations Department Communication (FODCOM) to be published in April 2003, the CAA will encourage all operators using Operational Flight Data Monitoring (FDM) programmes to include the application of large manual control inputs as part of the automated parameter exceedance monitoring process.

The CAA hosts a United Kingdom FDM meeting which is attended by the majority of UK AOC holders that already have FDM programmes. At the next meeting, programmed for June 2003, the CAA will highlight this incident and Safety Recommendation 2003-08.

CAA Status - Open