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take a close look at the picture and you will note that this poor bolt never stood a chance. It is a very bad idea to drill a hole through a bolt; this seriously reduces the bolt's strength.

They do say that accidents always have many causes and this, from my experience of life, is probably true. What is definitely true is that it is far less expensive to learn from somebody else's mistakes and, with this in mind, why don't you take a bit of time checking your canopy latch and the restraints if there are any. What would happen on your aircraft if the canopy came open?

Whilst exploring modified canopies, Francis brought my attention to another near disaster involving a Zenair Zodiac. Whilst I think about it, as the new author of this regular feature, this pilot would rather remain anonymous, but, for the purposes of air safety, fine citizen as he (or she) is, wanted to let as many people know as possible.....many thanks..... so, anything you tell me about, in the context of this *Safety Spot*, will be treated in confidence.....back to canopies.

For reasons far too complicated to explain here (in other words I have no idea!), the pilot (that's the anonymous pilot) had modified his canopy so that it opened forward rather than the normal sideways. And he wanted to find out how far his new canopy would open if the latch failed in flight. Being honest here, I have to say that I would have thought that it would have opened a couple of inches at most, well it does open into the prevailing airflow after all. The pilot came up with a plan for this test which involved a pull down safety cord. Remember, as you read the pilot's own account, this modified Zodiac canopy opens forward, that is there are hinges at the front.

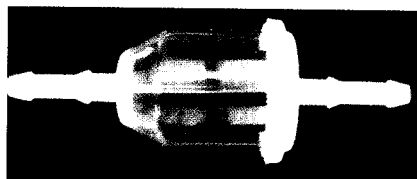
*"I commenced the test at 3500 ft and 80 Knots cruise. I secured the safety cord to the cleat at my elbow with about 1 ft of slack, and released the catch. The canopy rapidly popped up 1 ft at the trailing edge as expected. I then slowly paid out the cord from the cleat and allowed the canopy to rise to a steady state. The canopy adopted a position where the base of the canopy settled to an angle of about 35 degrees to the airflow. Full lateral and pitch control could be maintained, but forward speed dropped to about 60 knots and despite increase to full throttle, descent was about 300 ft/min. An unexpected problem now presented itself. I was descending quickly and all the strength I could muster with my right arm was only just sufficient to pull the cord down and cleat it progressively. Possibly the*

*slot effect at the front of the canopy open at the front increased the lift (and additionally the gas struts require a cord load of 15lbs static). I finally, exhausted, got it down to about six inches and returned to....."*

Phew, narrow escape!

Without sounding "please don't try this at home children," Francis has asked me to point out that this test was conducted without any knowledge of the PFA .... and does not form part of a flight test schedule.

## Fuel filters again



Nigel Beale of Skydrive (the Rotax Engine Agent) has asked me to alert readers to potential problem with one of their in-line fuel filters; the problem with this particular filter (please see the photo) is that the innards are falling to bits and this could result in unfiltered fuel getting to the engine....not a good idea. Rotax has published a Service Bulletin (SB 200907) which covers these defective filters. The service bulletin relates to the SKY27 in line fuel filter, they are easily recognised by the fact that they have eight 'windows' in the internal blue Perspex frame. Check your in line filter, if it's like this then change it before you next fly. Skydrive has only been supplying this filter since April 2007 and will be happy to supply you with a replacement if you bought the SKY27 from them. Think: "when was the last time I checked-out my fuel system"? Maintenance schedules normally call for a fuel filter bowl to be disassembled each fifty hours and the internals cleaned and

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