

Emergency landing: "We're lucky to be alive"

Inge Hansen | 2nd Jul 2016 5:39 PM



SAFE LANDING: The Tiger Moth plane made an emergency landing to the right of Funnel Bay after encountering an unknown issue this afternoon. Photo contributed. Contributed

"I'M STILL pretty upset about it" said Steve Bell, the passenger aboard a Whitsunday Tiger Moth Adventure plane forced to make an emergency landing at Funnel Bay this afternoon.

At 2.30pm, the 70-year-old plane encountered unknown issues which forced pilot, Nick Rorison to land on the shores just off Funnel Bay.

Mr Bell said everything beforehand had been running smoothly.

"We'd just taken off from the (Whitsunday) airport and we'd done the safety check and everything," he said.

"We were heading to about 4000 feet and Nick called the airport and said we were commencing aerobatics.

"He (Nick) turned (the craft) left and stalled the plane and as we were descending, Nick started the engine again and there was a weird noise."

Without any panic evident, Mr Rorison told the airport they would be making their way back, Mr Bell said.

"I knew there was something amiss when we had to head back," he said.

"The sound of the engine when Nick started it the second time was different to the sound it made when we first took off."

Unable to make it to the airport runway, Mr Rorison had to make an emergency landing at Funnel Bay.

With no time to make it to the tarmac, the craft came down on a mud flat hitting the sand and nearby rocks.

"We're lucky to be alive," Mr Bell said.

"When we hit the rocks it damaged the engine and the undercarriage was totalled."

Chief Pilot of Whitsunday Tiger Moth Adventures, Peter Hearnshaw commended Mr Rorison's efforts.

"Nick did an excellent job of landing and getting himself and Steve safely on the ground," he said.

"Thankfully there were no injuries."

Investigations are underway to find out why the craft had to make the emergency landing.

Extracted from: <http://www.whitsundaytimes.com.au/news/were-lucky-be-alive/3055781/> on 03/07/16 at 18:41:03