



AVIATION EXPERTS BAFFLED AFTER BRITISH AIRWAYS A380 LANDS AT HEATHROW WITH A SQUARE TYRE

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An astonishing picture has emerged of a square-shaped tyre on a British Airways A380 that touched down at London's Heathrow Airport.

Aviation experts have been left baffled by the misshapen deflated wheel, which was part of the landing gear on a flight that arrived from Hong Kong on Friday.

The Civil Aviation Authority described the incident as 'curious', a serving pilot admitted he wasn't sure how it could have occurred and even an aviation safety expert from the Royal Aeronautical Society described the square tyre as 'a bit mysterious'.

The captain of the Airbus A380-800 received a loss of tyre pressure warning on take-off.

Following the indication, the crew made the decision to continue the flight and reportedly called ahead to London to request a tow tug as a precaution in case the aircraft could not taxi to the gate under its own power.

After the 13-hour flight the double-deck, wide-body Airbus landed safely on runway 09L and made its way to the gate without assistance.

According to the Aviation Herald, crew were left puzzled when an inspection revealed that the right outboard body tyre had deflated on four corners, rather than just at the bottom, as is usual.



Patrick Smith, author of best-selling book *Cockpit Confidential*, told MailOnline Travel that he was not certain how the tyre had become square.

He said: 'The photo appears genuine, but I'm unsure how such a thing would happen, exactly.'

'The tyre deflated and the subsequent rotation caused it to fold in on itself in four symmetrical segments.'

A Civil Aviation Authority spokesman said: 'It is a curious one. Not seen anything like it before.'

One serving airline captain said that the tyre probably detached from the wheel on landing when the brakes were applied, but stressed that the aircraft was never in danger.

He added: 'To lose one is no big deal.'

Even aviation safety expert Kumar Mysore, from the Royal Aeronautical Society, said that the

event was a 'bit of a mystery'.

He told Mailonline Travel that the reason for the square shape was very probably a quirk of the way the weight is distributed onto the wheels in an A380.

He said: 'It is a bit mysterious. It's a safe aircraft, but it's an interesting phenomenon.'

'The deflated tyre would have been round when the aircraft touched down, it would not have rotated on four square edges as the picture would have us believe. The round wheel would have rotated on the flat ground, with the deflated tyre wobbling around the wheel.'

'The tyre has taken this shape after the aircraft came to a halt.'

'The aircraft weight is on the wheel - made from a well-designed light but strong aluminium alloy. You can see that the wheel is not damaged at all, as it is designed to take this weight.'

'The effect of the weight on the deflated tyre is the same as when you squeeze a rubber ring toy with different intensity, it can turn into a different shape.'

'In an A380, for this particular situation, it happens to be squarish. In a 747, for instance, the load of the aircraft does not give rise to this particular shape.'

He added: 'The reason for the deflation could have been overheating brakes over-pressurising the tyre and making it burst - though that's unlikely as the pilots receive a warning if the brakes are too hot - or a foreign object on the runway at Hong Kong cutting into the tyre. In all these cases pilots are well trained to handle the situation safely.'

A spokesperson for British Airways said: 'Our flight landed normally last Friday with one of its 18 tyres deflated.'

'The A380, in common with other large commercial aircraft, is designed to be perfectly safe when landing with a deflated tyre.'

'Our engineers quickly changed the tyre and the aircraft went back into service.'

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