

Aircraft Type and Registration: Cameron A-210 Hot Air Balloon, G-BTCK

No & Type of Engines: None

Year of Manufacture: 1991

Date & Time (UTC): 23 October 1993 at 1630 hrs

Location: Near Dinnington, Somerset

Type of Flight: Public Transport

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 10

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - 1 Serious

Nature of Damage: None

Commander's Licence: Commercial Pilot's Licence (Balloons)

Commander's Age: 42 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 760 hours (of which 200 were on type)
Last 90 days - 36 hours
Last 28 days - 4 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot,
and enquiries by the AAIB

The Balloon departed from Dinnington at 1600 hrs on a pleasure flight. The wind was calm at the departure time. However, some 30 minutes later, the pilot noted that the wind strength over the hills was stronger, and that landing was made difficult by the adjacent hills. On touchdown, the balloon tipped over and dragged for a short distance.

The pilot reported that one passenger, a 76 year old lady, did not hear the command to get into the landing position and knocked into another passenger. She was shaken at the time, but the extent of her injury was only revealed to the pilot one week later.

The CAA require the company's Operations Manual to state that it is the pilot's responsibility to ensure that all passengers receive a pre-flight briefing, including being fully briefed on landing procedures, and that they have assumed the landing position prior to touchdown.

The passenger who sustained the injury was accompanied on the flight by her daughter, although they were in separate sections of the basket. The daughter commented that there had been some initial delay in making the decision to conduct the flight, but the latest updated weather was obtained from

Yeovilton, and the decision was made to proceed. There was apparently a quick pre-flight briefing, which the lady considered was not adequate for her mother to follow, as she required use of a hearing aid. On landing in the windy conditions, the balloon initially touched a tree top before touching down twice, prior to tipping over and dragging. The passenger's mother was apparently prevented from achieving the correct landing position by another passenger who was incorrectly positioned in that section of the basket.

An aftercast from the Meteorological Office indicated that, at the time of the accident, the surface wind at Dinnington was 020°/10 to 15 kt, with gusts to 25 kt, and the wind at 1,000 feet was 030°/20 kt. The visibility was good in the fresh north easterly airstream, with scattered Cumulus cloud at 2,200 feet and above.