

No: 2/85

Ref: EW/G85/01/04

Aircraft type and registration: Cameron 0-77 G-BDNZ (hot air balloon)

Year of Manufacture: 1976

Date and time (GMT): 5 January 1985 at 1045 hrs

Location: Field at Marsh Benham, between Newbury and Hungerford

Type of flight: Private (pleasure)

Persons on board: Crew — 1 Passengers — 1

Injuries: Crew — None Passengers — None

Nature of damage: Envelope torn

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence (Balloon)

Commander's Age: 44 years

Commander's total flying experience: 55 hours (all on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The balloon was about to take-off when a gust blew it downwind, with the basket about 3 feet agl. The safety officer assisted the balloon into the air by lifting the basket and the balloon started to climb. At between 6 and 12 feet the balloon brushed against a tree in the centre of the field and, unbeknown to the pilot, the rip line was snagged and partially pulled opening 2 panels. The pilot burned continuously in order to gain height to clear the high trees at the border of the field.

However, with the 2 rip panels open the balloon did not gain sufficient height and the basket collided with the tops of the trees. The rip line snagged again causing total loss of lift. The balloon sank into the trees and ended up with the basket at an angle of 45° some 20 to 25 feet from the ground.