

**AAIB Bulletin No: 9/95**

**Ref: EW/G95/06/25**

**Category: 3**

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** Lindstrand LBL 105A, G-BVDO

**No & Type of Engines:** Hot Air Free Balloon

**Year of Manufacture:** 1993

**Date & Time (UTC):** 30 June 1995 at 2040 hrs

**Location:** Howe Wood, Watlington, Oxon

**Type of Flight:** Public Transport

**Persons on Board:** Crew - 1                      Passengers - 4

**Injuries:** Crew - None                      Passengers - None

**Nature of Damage:** 16 panels damaged below first horizontal load tape

**Commander's Licence:** Commercial Pilot's Licence

**Commander's Age:** 48 years

**Commander's Flying Experience:** 248 hours (of which 65 were on type)  
Last 90 days - 14 hours  
Last 28 days - 3 hours

**Information Source:** Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The balloon took off from Aylesbury at 1900 hrs. After being airborne for about 40 minutes, the pilot noticed that the wind had increased to about 6 to 8 kt with gusting. For the next 30 minutes, his attempts to land were frustrated by wind changes and gusting. A warning was then received by radio from other balloonists regarding severe gusting that was being experienced. Shortly afterwards, the pilot also experienced gusting which was strong enough to distort the balloon envelope, and the wind direction varied randomly. By this time, the balloon had been airborne for about an hour and a half and it was crossing over an area of dense woodland extending for several miles. It was not possible to land in any of the clearings because of the wind conditions.

By this time, the two fuel tanks were both below 10% contents. The flight was continued for a further ten minutes at about 30 feet above the trees. The left burner was out with a little pressure remaining in the right. The basket contacted the tree tops, and the remaining fuel was burnt in order to cushion the descent through the trees. The balloon landed next to a fallen tree on sloping ground with a 30° incline. The basket remained upright and there were no injuries.

The pilot considered that the wind changes were due to the early approach of a forecast cold front, and that a landing at the first signs of significant wind variations would be prudent in the event of similar circumstances in the future.