

SERIOUS INCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Lindstrand Balloons Ltd LBL180A, G-CBZU	
No & Type of Engines:	N/A	
Year of Manufacture:	2003	
Date & Time (UTC):	28 August 2010 at 0845 hrs	
Location:	Sarratt, Hertfordshire	
Type of Flight:	Public Transport	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 6
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - 1
Nature of Damage:	None	
Commander's Licence:	Commercial Pilot's Licence (Balloons)	
Commander's Age:	69 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,920 hours (of which 40 were on type) Last 90 days - 69 hours Last 28 days - 6 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and AAIB enquiries	

Synopsis

During the approach to the planned landing site, the balloon was caught in an updraft and climbed away. The pilot, unable to land in an adjoining field due to the presence of livestock, initiated a second descent over the field in which he had originally planned to land. The rapid descent resulted in the balloon basket striking the ground with some force, during which a passenger, who had not adopted the briefed landing position, received an injury to his knee. There were no other reported injuries.

History of the flight

On arrival at the takeoff site, the balloon was prepared for flight by its ground crew, assisted by five of the six

passengers, after which the passengers boarded the balloon basket. Prior to takeoff, the pilot informed the passengers about numerous aspects of the flight, including a briefing on the procedure to adopt during approach and landing. Statements made by some passengers confirmed that this included a practical demonstration of the brace position to adopt when landing, which they all had to demonstrate to ensure that they fully understood the procedure.

After being airborne for approximately 90 minutes, the pilot informed the passengers that the balloon was about to descend to land in a field and told them to adopt the briefed landing brace position, after which he continued

to concentrate on controlling the balloon's flight path. However, a passenger, in the rear compartment of the basket remained standing and continued to use his video camera.

In the final stages of the descent, the balloon was caught in an updraft which caused it to climb. The balloon overshot the planned landing site and flew towards an adjacent field, in which the pilot now intended to land. As the balloon gained height, the pilot observed livestock in that field and decided to carry out an immediate landing to reduce the risk of injury to the livestock, in line with the British Balloon and Airship Club code of conduct for farmers and pilots. The resulting descent was rapid and

resulted in a hard landing. In the video footage recorded by the standing passenger, the pilot's voice can be heard informing the passengers of the balloon's rapid descent and to prepare for a "big bump" 12 seconds prior to the landing. As the balloon touched down, the standing passenger reported feeling a sharp pain in his right knee. When questioned by the pilot, during the de-rigging of the balloon, the passenger said that he thought he had aggravated an old injury. The passenger stated that the injury appeared to improve prior to being returned to the pre-arranged drop-off point with the other passengers, after which he had increasing difficulty in walking and subsequent medical examinations revealed that he was suffering from a fracture of the knee.