

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Cameron Z-400 hot air balloon, G-VBFV	
No & Type of Engines:	None	
Year of Manufacture:	2010	
Date & Time (UTC):	30 September 2011 at 1510 hrs	
Location:	Shuttleworth Park, Old Warden, Bedfordshire	
Type of Flight:	Commercial Air Transport (Passenger)	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 14
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - 1 (Serious)
Nature of Damage:	None	
Commander's Licence:	Commercial Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	44 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	2,666 hours (of which 1,500 were on type) Last 90 days - 51 hours Last 28 days - 9 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

A passenger fell while boarding the basket and broke his arm. The basket had moved as the passenger was boarding, causing him to miss his footing.

History of the flight

Prior to the flight, the pilot briefed the passengers on the procedure for boarding the balloon and the position to adopt during landing. During this briefing, the passengers practised boarding the basket and adopting the landing position. The balloon was prepared for flight and a launch restraint system was connected between the upwind side of the burner frame and a nearby vehicle to restrain the balloon prior to takeoff. When the balloon envelope was inflated and above the basket, the pilot instructed the passengers to board. The basket sides were fitted with foot holes to assist the

passengers to board the basket. Figure 1 shows these.

As the passengers were boarding the balloon basket one passenger fell to the ground and sustained a fracture to his upper arm. The ground support crew escorted him clear of the balloon and the flight continued. The passenger stated that the balloon basket tipped as he was boarding causing him to fall to the ground. Two witnesses stated that the basket moved because of a gust of wind. The pilot stated that the basket remained on the ground throughout the passenger embarkation and that he believed the cause of the accident was that the passenger missed his footing on the basket. The mean surface wind strength at the time of the incident, obtained from the Met Office, was below the maximum stated by the manufacturer for takeoff.



Figure 1
Balloon basket with foot holes