

**No:** 12/92

**Ref:** EW/G92/09/16

**Category:** 5

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** Cameron A-120 Hot Air Balloon, G-SKYP

**No & Type of Engines:** None

**Year of Manufacture:** 1991

**Date & Time (UTC):** 5 September 1992 at 1840 hrs

**Location:** Field near Ludgershall, Wiltshire

**Type of Flight:** Public Transport

**Persons on Board:** Crew - 1                      Passengers - 5

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

**Nature of Damage:** Damage to envelope, basket, scoop and flying wires

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

**Commander's Age:** 52 years

**Commander's Flying Experience:** 214 hours (of which 9 were on type)  
Last 90 days - 82 hours  
Last 28 days - 11 hours

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

The balloon launched on a pleasure flight from Salisbury at 1730 hours, and carried out an uneventful flight until a final high approach over Ludgershall. The weather at the time was good, with good visibility and a 7 kt surface wind. The commander of G-SKYP was following another balloon into the same field, and was in RTF contact with it. The pilot of the other balloon passed a warning of electricity cables in the vicinity of the landing area. The commander of G-SKYP identified two sets of cables, but the balloon collided with another set of cables a short time later. This set of three wire low level cables had been initially masked by a row of houses during the balloon's approach, and were made more difficult to detect by being set against the backdrop of a dense wood at the far end of the landing site. The balloon made two contacts with the cables before finally landing, with a shower of sparks falling onto the basket and onto the surrounding stubble in the field. The power to the cables tripped out automatically.

Minor fires that had been ignited by the shower of sparks were extinguished using three portable halon extinguishers, one from the balloon and the others from the attending ground crew vehicle. There were no injuries, and all occupants were safely evacuated from the basket. Local emergency services

were quickly at the scene, but were not required. Minor burn damage was also caused to passenger clothing and to the commander's flying equipment.

The normal equipment for the balloon comprised of one small halon fire extinguisher. In the absence of any ground crew vehicle equipment, this would not have been adequate to deal with the situation that developed here. The operating company has therefore elected to equip each of its balloons with a second fire extinguisher of larger capacity, and a fire blanket.