

**AAIB Bulletin No: 6/93**

**Ref: EW/G93/05/04**

**Category: 5**

**Aircraft Type and Registration:** Thunder AX10-160 Hot Air Balloon, G-BPLU

**No & Type of Engines:** None

**Year of Manufacture:** 1989

**Date & Time (UTC):** 3 May 1993 at 0730 hrs

**Location:** Heddon-on-the-Wall, Northumberland

**Type of Flight:** Public Transport

**Persons on Board:** Crew - 1                      Passengers - 8

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

**Nature of Damage:** Several tears and burns to the envelope

**Commander's Licence:** Commercial Pilot's Licence (Balloons)

**Commander's Age:** 44 years

**Commander's Flying Experience:** 795 hours (of which 230 were on type)  
Last 90 days - 24 hours  
Last 28 days - 7 hours

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

The balloon took off at 0730 hrs from Chollerford, some 12 miles west of Newcastle. The wind for take off was light and variable and the surface wind at Newcastle Airport was 4 kt with a forecast of up to 5 kt by 1300 hrs. The early part of the flight was uneventful, but after 20 minutes, the pilot noticed that the surface wind had increased to 10 kt. The aircraft was travelling in a generally easterly direction towards Newcastle and after 40 minutes the pilot assessed that the surface wind had increased to 15 kt. He began to look for a suitable landing site but was unable to locate one until he was approaching the outskirts of Newcastle. The chosen grass field was wet with a downwind slope and had high tension electricity cables mounted on wooden poles on the downwind boundary. The pilot planned to land 150 metres short of the cables but, due to turbulence on the final approach, the landing was only 100 metres short of the cables. The landing was uneventful but the subsequent drag was longer than expected due to the wind being stronger and the downslope of the wet landing surface. The basket eventually came to a halt 20 metres from the edge of the field but the collapsing envelope was blown across the electricity cables and a barbed wire fence, sustaining considerable damage. There were no injuries and the balloon's recovery team arrived within five minutes of the accident.