

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Cameron A-400, G-VBAJ	
No & Type of Engines:	4 x Stratus Quad Burner	
Year of Manufacture:	2015 (Serial no: 11869)	
Date & Time (UTC):	12 May 2019 at 0725 hrs	
Location:	Hargham Hall, Attleborough, Norfolk	
Type of Flight:	Commercial Air Transport (Passenger)	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 16
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - 1 (Serious)
Nature of Damage:	None	
Commander's Licence:	Commercial Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	59 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	2,320 hours (of which 410 were on type) Last 90 days - 32 hours Last 28 days - 5 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The balloon made a gentle landing with the balloon and basket upright. The commander asked four passengers to exit the basket and help the ground crew hold the crown line¹ to ensure a positive deflation. Passenger assistance for the deflation was not essential on this occasion but was offered to the passengers as part of the ballooning experience.

Alighting from the basket in the upright position required passengers to put one leg over the side and climb down steps inset in the side of the basket (Figure 1). One of the passengers placed his left foot in the top step but could not locate the bottom step with his other foot. He attempted to alight by placing his right foot straight down to the floor but fell. He was wearing a large boot and his left foot was stuck in the top step when he fell, resulting in a serious injury.

Prior to this the passenger had felt comfortable to exit the balloon unaided and to assist with the ground tasks. Following the accident, the operator has changed procedure to enable ground crew to assist all passengers with disembarkation.

Footnote

¹ A rope attached to the top of the balloon envelope at one end. It is used by a member of the crew to stabilise the balloon during inflation and deflation.



Figure 1

The basket steps

The British Association of Balloon Operators commented that passenger assistance is sometimes requested by the operating pilot, due to the conditions or the ground crew being unable to access the landing site in time. However, they would generally expect that commercial operators would limit passenger involvement to times when it is necessary.