



Air Accident Investigation Unit Ireland

FACTUAL REPORT

INCIDENT

**Cameron N-105 Balloon, G-SSTI
Mountallen, Arigna, Co. Roscommon
24 September 2013**



**An Roinn Iompair
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt**

**Department of Transport,
Tourism and Sport**

FINAL REPORT**Foreword**

This safety investigation is exclusively of a technical nature and the Final Report reflects the determination of the AAIU regarding the circumstances of this occurrence and its probable causes.

In accordance with the provisions of Annex 13¹ to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, Regulation (EU) No 996/2010² and Statutory Instrument No. 460 of 2009³, safety investigations are in no case concerned with apportioning blame or liability. They are independent of, separate from and without prejudice to any judicial or administrative proceedings to apportion blame or liability. The sole objective of this safety investigation and Final Report is the prevention of accidents and incidents.

Accordingly, it is inappropriate that AAIU Reports should be used to assign fault or blame or determine liability, since neither the safety investigation nor the reporting process has been undertaken for that purpose.

Extracts from this Report may be published providing that the source is acknowledged, the material is accurately reproduced and that it is not used in a derogatory or misleading context.

¹ **Annex 13:** International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Annex 13, Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation.

² **Regulation (EU) No 996/2010** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 on the investigation and prevention of accidents and incidents in civil aviation.

³ **Statutory Instrument (SI) No. 460 of 2009:** Air Navigation (Notification and Investigation of Accidents, Serious Incidents and Incidents) Regulations 2009.



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In accordance with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, Regulation (EU) No 996/2010 and the provisions of SI 460 of 2009, the Chief Inspector of Air Accidents on 24 September 2013, appointed Mr Paddy Judge as the Investigator-in-Charge to carry out an Investigation into this Incident and prepare a Report.

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Cameron N-105, G-SSTI	
No. and Type of Engines:	Not applicable	
Aircraft Serial Number:	3238	
Year of Manufacture:	1994	
Date and Time (UTC ⁴):	24 September 2013 @ 07.10 hrs	
Location:	Mountallen, Arigna, Co. Roscommon N 54° 04' 08", W008° 04' 55"	
Type of Operation:	General Aviation	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 2
Injuries:	Crew - 0	Passengers - 0
Nature of Damage:	Damage to power lines, none to balloon	
Commander's Licence:	CPL(B) ⁵ , issued by the UK CAA	
Commander's Details:	Male, aged 67 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	14,750 hours, of which 2,750 were on type	
Notification Source:	Balloon Rally Co-ordinator	
Information Source:	AAIU Report Form submitted by the Pilot	

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⁴ UTC: Universal Time Co-ordinated. All timings in this report are quoted in UTC; to obtain the local time add one hour.

⁵ CPL(B): Commercial Pilot Licence – Balloon.

SYNOPSIS

The basket of the Balloon contacted a 220V AC electricity power line while attempting to land following a short flight. The cables of the power line touched, sparked and broke. The Balloon, which was not damaged during the occurrence, continued across a river and landed successfully shortly afterwards. There were no injuries.

1. FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.1 History of the Flight

The Balloon was taking part in the 2013 Irish Hot Air Ballooning Championship (also known as the 'The Irish Meet') at Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim. It lifted off at 06.50 hrs from the Drumshanbo area with three persons on board, the Pilot and two others, with a downwind destination. It tracked west towards the Arigna River, to the west of Lough Allen.

The Pilot reported that prior to a normal planned landing he observed a set of electricity cables 30 metres (m) to the left and parallel to the approach track. However, the basket contacted another pair of 220V AC cables, approximately 4 m high. They were only observed immediately prior to contact. This was probably due to the poor relief or contrast provided by the river in the background. On contact, the cables were pushed together, sparks were observed and the cables broke.

The Pilot stated that the approach was continued for several more metres in order to cross the river and that a final landing was completed in a partially restricted area adjacent to a road. During the subsequent deflation, the envelope caught upon a telephone pole but no further damage resulted. The "retrieve crew" arrived on site shortly afterwards and contacted the electricity supply company. Its representative then arrived and was directed to where the breakage had occurred. The persons directly affected by the loss of electricity were informed that repairs were in hand.

The Pilot reported that the forecast wind velocity for that time was a light easterly wind 110°/8-10 knots (kts) with good visibility and that his groundspeed at the time of the occurrence was less than 10 kts.

1.2 General Information

G-SSTI is a hot air balloon that utilises a twin burner fuelled by propane gas. This Cameron N-105 model has a Maximum Take-Off Weight (MTOW) of 953 kg (2,100 lb). The estimated weight at the time of the accident was 561 kg. The standard weight of the envelope is 113 kg (249 lb). When inflated, its volumetric capacity is 105,000 cubic feet and it is 19.0 m (63 ft) tall with a diameter of 18.6 m (61 ft).



It was manufactured in 1994 and had accumulated 268 hours flying. The EASA⁶ Certificate of Airworthiness, issued by the UK for G-SSTI, was valid until 5 November 2013.

The Pilot was the holder of a valid Commercial Pilot Licence issued by the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). His balloon rating and Class 2 Medical Certificate were valid.

2. AAIU COMMENT

The Pilot stated that the probable cause of the occurrence was that he had not seen a low power line during the approach to land, probably due to the poor relief provided by the background.

3. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

This Investigation does not sustain any Safety Recommendations.

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⁶ **EASA:** European Aviation Safety Agency

In accordance with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, Regulation (EU) No 996/2010, and Statutory Instrument No. 460 of 2009, Air Navigation (Notification and Investigation of Accidents, Serious Incidents and Incidents) Regulation, 2009, the sole purpose of this investigation is to prevent aviation accidents and serious incidents. It is not the purpose of any such investigation and the associated investigation report to apportion blame or liability.

A safety recommendation shall in no case create a presumption of blame or liability for an occurrence.

Produced by the Air Accident Investigation Unit

AAIU Reports are available on the Unit website at www.aaiu.ie



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