

**ACCIDENT**

<b>Aircraft Type and Registration:</b>	Ultramagic SA N-250 balloon, G-VBFA	
<b>No &amp; Type of Engines:</b>	None	
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	2006	
<b>Date &amp; Time (UTC):</b>	23 May 2012 at 2000 hrs	
<b>Location:</b>	13 nm north-west of Plymouth	
<b>Type of Flight:</b>	Commercial Air Transport (Passenger)	
<b>Persons on Board:</b>	Crew - 1	Passengers - 12
<b>Injuries:</b>	Crew - None	Passengers - 1 (Serious)
<b>Nature of Damage:</b>	None	
<b>Commander's Licence:</b>	Commercial Pilot's Licence	
<b>Commander's Age:</b>	52 years	
<b>Commander's Flying Experience:</b>	1,109 hours (of which 720 were on type) Last 90 days - 19 hours Last 28 days - 8 hours	
<b>Information Source:</b>	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

**Synopsis**

Following a firm but otherwise normal landing, a male passenger complained of pain in both legs which prevented him moving. The 62-year old passenger was subsequently taken to hospital and found to have suffered a serious injury to each leg. There were no other reported casualties.

**History of the flight**

Before flight, the passengers were given a safety briefing by the pilot, which included a chance to practise the landing positions within the balloon basket. The balloon took off normally in 8 to 10 kt of wind, and made a slow climb to 5,000 ft. After about 30 minutes, the pilot descended the balloon to 1,000 ft and then to 500 ft to check the wind, which was 13 kt.

The pilot reminded the passengers of the landing positions, telling them that the wind strength had not reduced as much as had been anticipated or forecast, and that they should hold on tightly and expect a fast landing. A landing field was identified and the passengers instructed to adopt landing positions. The balloon made a "positive" landing before dragging a little and lifting off again to a height of approximately 6 ft. The subsequent landing was gentle, after which the balloon dragged again until the basket slowly tipped over and the balloon deflated.

The pilot became aware that a 62-year old male passenger appeared to be injured and was complaining of pain in his legs. As the pain prevented him from

moving and the injury appeared serious, the pilot telephoned for an ambulance. Two paramedic vehicles arrived and assisted the passenger until an ambulance attended and transferred him to hospital.

### **Injury**

The pilot was later told that the passenger had suffered a broken bone at the top of his shin in both legs, and that after surgery was confined to a wheelchair whilst

the injuries healed. The pilot considered that the injury was unusual for a firm but normal landing in an estimated wind of 8 kt. There were no other reported casualties.

### **Passenger comment**

The passenger reported his impression that the landing was “extremely severe” and commented that the impact occurred very shortly after the call to brace.