



NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2008

Welcome to the 3rd newsletter of 2008. Some bright and sunny days are tempting the unemployable / part-timers out onto the hills to risk the spring thermals, but it's still too cold and rough for me.

February Meeting and Curry Night

There was no formal meeting, but a good turnout for the curry night. I look forward to reports on the evening, as I wasn't there and no-one has proffered any photos!

Other News

Safety Reminder

Flyers are reminded that this is traditionally the most dangerous time of the year when low airtime pilots head out into rough spring thermals. Although in Australia, reports of Innes Powell's terrible accident should be taken as a salutary reminder that even the most experienced can be caught out by fickle winds and suffer severe injuries from what seems a relatively low height – for those not on Yahoo Group, he is reported to have piled in from 15' after a gust caught him resulting in a removed vertebra, rib and unconfirmed levels of paralysis.

Alan Hughes follow-up on last month's article

Hi folks - I thought I'd better elaborate a little on the comment in the Feb newsletter on my concern re: "traffic control" at the Frostbite comp in Jan.

No doubt my concern seems a bit "pissy" at first glance - the PG pilot probably wonders why I shouted at him, and others on the hill may wonder too. The reason I wanted to discuss this was not to have a go at any individual pilot, but to raise awareness amongst one discipline (PG in this instance) of the effect they can, unwittingly, have on the other. So, what happened then?

The HG pilot (me) was on finals, well behind the hill, and about 50-70ft up. The PG pilot landed at the front of the hill, well clear of the HG pilot. Well clear, no danger of collision, so what's the problem??

The problem is the turbulence caused by the PG landing upwind of the HG, particularly on a hill like Freathy that is notorious for rotor behind the ridge. The HG pilot has no option but to fly through this turbulence at low level, and at a very vulnerable stage of the flight. Why not abort the landing, pull on speed, turn out, and fly through? Oops, there's a PG landing right in your fly-through path...!

As it happens, in this instance, there was no problem... but there could have been!

And normal rules of the air don't cover it - the "lower pilot has right of way" quoted in the newsletter technically gives the PG pilot, who was lower, but not committed to having to land, right of way over the HG pilot, who was higher, but well behind the hill and on a committed landing approach. HG pilots typically turn back for landing at 100ft - 200ft (or even more) above the hill.

So, no big deal, but I just wanted to raise awareness! Happy landings, Alan