

Safety Bulletin No 6

June 2016

For several reasons it is a relief to introduce a much shorter bulletin. There are only two reported incidents raised on the forum and one incident reported by email which will be discussed in the next bulletin. The incidents discussed below have a degree of commonality in that they both involved landings (one slope and one top) in tricky conditions. The purpose of this exercise is for us to learn from others' misfortune or misjudgment. Both pilots provide a statement of the lessons to be learnt but this is not necessarily definitive. The reports should be read critically and pilots should come to their own conclusions. Thanks, as always to Tim Oliver and James Jackson for their openness

I signed off the last Bulletin with the words; 'And even as I am about to click on 'send' a forum notification arrives in my inbox. So, what's Tim been up to now? Well, the full story is at <http://www.cumbriasoaringclub.co.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?f=20&t=3900>

In essence, on 6th May Tim was flying on Yoke and found deteriorating conditions.

"... conditions had changed marginally for the worse. The wind became much lighter but thermals rolling up the slope were narrow, broken and occasional quite fierce. It generally made for pretty unpleasant flying. We could not find anything decent to get some altitude to allow us to get away. Between thermals pilot found it tough to stay up and began slope landing. I made a slope landing about 50 feet from the top, waited about 5 minutes and then took off in a small snotty thermal that soon broke up. After another 10 minutes aloft everything dropped away again as I was crossing the face from east to west. I was over a rocky part of the slope but assessed that I could make it over that to the same grassy area of slope that I had landed on previously. I stayed in close. I didn't want to move away from the hill as this would likely result in having to head for the bottom – it had taken one and a half hours to walk up!

In the still air I was moving across the slope face quicker than I would have liked, but was confident I could run off the speed. I touched down and ran a few steps. In my mind I was already nicely down. At that point my wing was wrenched upward, faster on the side closest the hill. That was unfortunate and fortunate at the same time. The bad luck was that the wing dragged me down the slope face, the good luck was the wing flipped completely over and 'flew' downward onto the slope face stopping abruptly. In the half second between touch down and coming to a final messy stop, I had rolled once then stumbled down the slope, my right shin impacting a rock in the process".

"Here's what I think - Knowing that the conditions were now quite difficult with strong, broken thermals coming up the face I should not have attempted the slope landing at that level at all. The wind died while

I was on the east side of the slope, which meant I had to cross a rocky section of the slope to attempt a slope landing on the steep grassy slope beyond. That meant approaching across the rocky part while close in. I could easily have come down short and landed among the rocks – not clever. The safe option was to pull away from the slope head out into the valley and seek out some lift there, prepared to accept that it might lead to a bottom landing.”

There is little that can be usefully added to Tim’s own thoughts, he went for a tricky and relatively risky option rather than the safer option with a high chance of a tedious bottom landing.

A secondary safety issue emerged from the incident, that it is a good idea to carry a 1st aid kit and to know how to use it. Tim had gashed his leg but was able to treat it prior to flying down to be stitched. He provides details of the pack:

It is an Ultralight 0.5 pack from Adventure Medical Kits.

The content were as follows

3 2" x 2" gauze pads

1 3" x 3" gauze pads

1 roll surgical tape

5 assorted plasters

3 antiseptic wipes

2" wide bandage

1 phial of compound benzoin tincture u.s.p (can be applied to minor cuts as a styptic and antiseptic)

2 antihistamine tablets

4 Ibuprofen tablets

2 sachets antiseptic ointment

2 insect bite wipes

1 tweezers

The pack is about 5" x 6" in size and weighs 99gms - less than a sandwich, just a thought!

James Jackson confesses to an error made at Buttermere Moss.

<http://www.cumbriasoaringclub.co.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?f=20&t=3920>

“Oops! Got a shock top landing at Buttermere Moss on Sunday afternoon in windy conditions. Touched down running like an Olympic sprinter but not fast enough! Dragged off my feet I was lucky to have a firm hold on one break and kill things quickly.

Lesson? Well there was a few but the main one was a school-boy error. Super confident that I’d done this landing ‘a hundred times before’ I hadn’t checked my up-wind leg and landed in my ‘usual direction’ –

towards the lake. This was the down-wind leg! Need I say more?"

Again, there is little to add to James' assessment. Effectively, having had a brilliant climb to 4000ft and with lots of pilots enjoying themselves in the air he had become over-relaxed on his landing approach. It is worth adding though that conditions were strong. Several experienced pilots had chosen to walk down and in Ali Guthrie's words:

"If I'm honest I found the conditions at Buttermere quite rough, hence my move to Clough. Clough was equally windy but, with less in front of the hill to disturb the wind, was much more pleasant to fly in.... or at least I thought was. In short I thought the conditions on Buttermere were quite testing".



... and a nice picture of the day on The Moss courtesy of Andy Row.

Satellite Emergency Beacons

There has been a significant amount of interest expressed in this subject particularly with regard to pilots getting into difficulty on XC flights. The problems have been the variety of instruments available, the complexity of the competing technologies and the fragmented nature of the discussion as it ebbs and flows in response to particular events and accidents. Geoff Moss has written an article, **Satellite emergency beacons – a look at Personal Locator Beacons and Satellite Emergency Notification devices**, which is available on line in the **Knowledge Base**. It is excellent. It demystifies the subject in a manner that is comprehensive and comprehensible both to the technophile and luddite.

<http://www.cumbriasoaringclub.co.uk/kb/satellitebeacons.html?t=52198&postdays=0&postorder=asc&start=0>

Well that's it for Bulletin 6. Material has already arrived for No 7 and I am in the process of packing for the annual vol/sail extravaganza to the Western Isles under the leadership of Cap'n Rick 'Black Sam' Livingstone, an event which traditionally has the potential to fill several safety bulletins.

Fly lots, fly safe.

CSO