

Spring is around the corner, although the plants in my garden think that it has already arrived. So too have **Spring Thermals** which tend to be small in diameter, rough edged, punchy and strong. This will make the air that you will be flying in very active and lumpy. When combined with a winter lay off (how many days have been flyable in the last 3 months?) which means that you will be rusty, the mixture is potentially **DANGEROUS**. Take great care on your first flying day when you eventually get your glider out of the bag, rigged and ready to fly.

Once in the air remember to **“CLEAR YOUR TURNS”**

As when driving a car or crossing the road, it is vital to look before you make your move. So before pulling on a brake handle (PG Pilots) or moving your bar to turn your glider (Hangies), look around to check that the immediate airspace is clear.

Whilst on the subject of **Observation**, there have been more software developments over the Winter with electronic conspicuity. I use FlySkyHy and Rene has introduced a “buddy” system. On your screen you can see your mates and whether they are going up or down. This information might be very useful to you in finding your next thermal. However please remember that when flying, a “heads up” approach and keeping a good local lookout will be far safer than “eyes down” and concentrating on your instruments.

When you are looking around, being alert and observant, and concentrating on your central vision, also try to be aware of what is happening in your peripheral vision. Subtle movements there of birds, other gliders and smoke direction may give you clues of thermal activity and lift.

Intense observation is also very important when landing out. You should be able to work out the wind direction and strength, make sure that you have a suitable clear landing area (abroad, beware of wildlife sanctuaries and what may be in them) and be 100% certain that there are no power lines or other aerial obstructions.