



February Newsletter 2025

Welcome

Welcome to the February newsletter.

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As some of you may have found out, our website was down for a few days, please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this has caused.

In this month's newsletter...

There's a bit of a focus on flying in Europe:

I give you the low down on what's involved in flying to France.

Rupert Stanley, BRA Treasurer, takes us touring Europe in a gyro.

And in more regular stuff...

Meet Your Instructor talks to Kai Maurer, my old instructor.

Clive Rose is back with his Rubber Side Down regular contribution with his own unique take on all things gyro from an instructors point of view. This month he tells us a couple of personal anecdotes.

We have had confirmation from the CAA that we can use the Microlight radio frequency for situational awareness.

Finally...

Don't forget the first fly-in of the year happens on the 5th / 6th April at Deenethorpe. It's not long to go, so get planning!

If you have any interesting gyro related stories, or photos, that you're happy for us to use in the newsletter, then please email them into me.

Chris Rose
ed@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

Meet your instructor: Kai Maurer



Your Name:

Kai Maurer

The Name Of Your School:

Gyro School

Website:

gyroschool.co.uk

Location:

Rochester Airport in Kent.

How long have you been teaching for?

17 years.

How did you get into gyro flying?

I had a trial flight in a fixed wing over the canyons in America. It was a turbulent day, and after nearly hitting my head on at the ceiling a few times I decided this wasn't for me. I then tried a helicopter and realised it was too expensive. When I first saw a gyro, I thought it was a bit of a toy, put together from a Mechano set. However, one flight and I was hooked. It's like having a motorbike in the sky. That was 20 years ago.

What can you offer as a school?

I can offer everything from full training to biannuals. I can provide instruction in any of the Rotorsport aircraft, and conversion from other types to these. I have access to a Cavalon and MTO Sport, but if you have your own Calidus I can teach you in that too. I can also teach on the the 915 Cavalon if you have one.

I can offer ground school and exams as part of the training, but I'm also happy to just fly, leaving the student to do the study in their own time.

What do you see as the biggest challenges students have?

It's the 2 feet before landing, and the 2 feet after takeoff.

What can you comment on your teaching style?

Teaching by numbers can get you stuck in a specific way of flying, and I feel it's important for the student to be able to adapt to situations and be flexible, making use of the gyro's versatility. A good example of this is the approach to landing, the gyro offers so many possibilities to this.

Rochester sits very close to some complicated airspace and airports. I make sure students experience everything from challenging grass strips, with only air ground radio, to full ATC airports with tarmac / concrete runways. I feel it's important students experience all these types.

I prefer to book a whole day with a student, as this allows for some flexibility should the weather or other circumstances delay things. We fly as long as the student wants to, without getting too tired.

Anything else we should know?

I have my own book available for purchase, The Gyro Quick Guide.

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Flying to France. What you need to know

By Chris Rose, Editor BRA newsletter

The following is provided as accurately as I can for the the given date of this newsletter. It is up to you to double check for yourself. If you spot a mistake please contact me and we'll publish any corrections in a future newsletter.

I'm basing this on you having SkyDemon. If you don't, there are alternative methods for flight planning and from submitting, but you'll need to research these for yourself.

France is within easy reach, albeit across a short stretch of water, and as holder of a UK PPL(G) and with a factory built gyro (Magni or Rotorsport) you can easily fly yourself there. However, there are some important things you need to know and do before you blindly set off.

You and your gyro:

The following information comes from the French authorities website:

<https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/en/public-policies/foreign-aircraft>

You: You need to have a valid PPL(G) obviously! A PMD (pilot medical declaration) is the only medical you need, however see Your Gyro below.

Your Gyro: Your gyro needs to be up to date on it's permit and service obviously! It must be a gyro with a MTOW (maximum takeoff weight) of 500Kg or less. Any heavier than this and you'll need to apply for an exemption and have at least a LAPL medical certificate.

If you need an exemption because your gyro MTOW is greater than 500Kg, you need to apply using the form found at:

https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/documents/Form_DGAC_LP6_EN.pdf

There is a fee of 50 Euro you'll need to pay for the exemption form processing. Details of how to do this are included on the form.

[Check your gyro insurance covers you to fly abroad.](#)

For the next bits, I suggest you try doing all the steps as a dummy run, way in advance, so you understand what is required. Of course, don't do the final submission of the information.

GAR (General Aviation Report):

This is not a flight plan, this basically tells customs and border police etc that you are leaving or entering the UK. You must do this or you could face a hefty fine!

Your GAR is submitted online at:

<https://www.submit-general-aviation-report.service.gov.uk/welcome/index>

You need to know the date and time (in UTC) for your departure and arrival. You need to submit the GAR at least 2 hours prior to your flight.

You're going to need the ICAO code for your departing airfield and your home airfield. If these doesn't have one, you can enter the latitude and longitude.

You'll need to enter your aircraft details, and the details of you and any passenger, so have your passport details to hand before filling in.

You used to be able to do this through SkyDemon, but this is no longer possible, though strangely the button for this is still there.

You should also email or get in contact with the airfield you are landing at or leaving from in France as they may also need to know the details on the GAR.

Flight Plan:

You must file a flight plan, for both your flight out of, and into the UK. This tells the authorities about your trip, mostly for safety, so if you open a flight plan, and don't close it, they will assume

you gone missing and potentially start a search and rescue operation for you. You should file a flight plan at least an hour before for your flight. You also need to stick to the departure and arrival times in your flight plans. If you need to, you can delay or edit your flight plan.

SkyDemon will submit this for you once you've entered your route. Note you need to fill in your aircraft details in SkyDemon, if you've never done this, then now is a good time to fill all this in. Once you have plotted your route, look in the Warnings tab and you'll see a prompt that you need to file a flight plan. You can click on the spanner icon to start this process.

Having submitted your flight plan, you will need to "open" it. This is generally done through the tower at your departing airfield if they have this option, or you can do it once airborne. For example, on leaving the UK you can ask London Information to open it, or when leaving France, ask the appropriate French equivalent of London Information. Best to do this before heading off over the water!

Once you land in France, you must close your flight plan. Failing to do so might trigger a search and rescue operation for you. You can get your landing airfield tower to close it for you if they have that option, or you can phone to close it. The number is +33 810 437 837.

You can also close your flight plan within SkyDemon, as well as edit and delay it. See the Manage Filed Flight Plans menu option within SkyDemon.

When you land back in the UK, there is no need to close your flight plan. There is no harm in closing your flight plan though, either through SkyDemon, or phoning 01489 612792, especially if the airfield your landing at is air ground only or non radio. You can also try using London Information. If you were intending to land back at an airfield with a tower, and they were expecting you, and you land elsewhere, then it would be sensible to call them, just incase they raise an alarm.

There's a useful video on YouTube by SkyDemon on Flights Plans:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8lYTHt5cuE>

Other necessities:

Take your pilots license.

Take your radio license if this is separate to your pilots license.

Take your medical certificate.

Take your passport.

Carry a copy of the rules of interception - this is what you must do if intercepted by another aircraft.

Take your aircraft permit.

Take your radio license from Ofcom.

Take your permit maintenance release certificate. This is the bit of paper that your engineer should have supplied when your aircraft had it's annual service.

Take your aircraft insurance certificate.

Basically, if you get stopped and investigated, they're going to want to see proof that you and your aircraft are fit to fly and legal.

Other things to consider:

Life jacket - this is self explanatory.

Get a personal locator beacon (PLB). If you go down in the water you'll be glad to have this. Don't forget to register it, you can do this online here:

<https://www.gov.uk/register-406-beacons>

Learn the French circuit radio calls. Airports like Le Touquet and Calais will understand and reply in English, but small airfields in France may not. The French regional information services will use English, so you'll be ok there and you shouldn't worry about using them.

A waterproof document pouch to put all your important paperwork in is another good idea.

Other Sources Of Information:

The BMAA have an excellent webpage all about flying to abroad:

<https://www.bmaa.org/information-library/flying-abroad>

The only thing I have spotted with the BMAA information that I feel is "wrong" is that they say you don't need to do a GAR when leaving the UK. However, the GOV.UK website says you do. See:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-aviation-operators-and-pilots-notification-of-flights/general-aviation-report-guidance-accessible>

For flight plans, see the following CAA safety sense leaflet:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/publication/download/12669>

I've found it easiest to fly out of and into the UK using an airfield that is used to handling flights like this. In my case, I use Rochester. It's a friendly airfield and has fuel, so it's a good place to top up before setting off across the water.

Le Touquet and Calais are pretty used to handling UK GA flights, so I'd suggest going to one of these as your entry and exit point into France. They also have customs / passport facilities.

If you have any information on flying to or from other European countries then please let us know. Given that we'd be publishing this as part of the BRA, we need to know the actual source with links for the information.

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European touring by gyro

By Rupert Stanley, BRA Treasurer

It's been a dull damp winter and you are longing for warmer sunny days to get out in the gyro again. You have been to all the cafes at your local airfields within comfortable bladder distance. Maybe you have been for a hop over the water to the Isle of White. But now what? I was in this situation a few years ago when I read an article in the microlight magazine about a group set up to go touring in Europe. This is not a few paying affair with an instructor leading everyone, more a loose group set up to work together, fly together and socialise at the stops along the way.

My initiation was a weekend in France. People in the group explained the paperwork required and I flew alongside an experienced pilot who did the radio work. Subsequently we did a big tour of France, going down to the Med (Montpellier) and into the lower alps (Gap Tallard and Annecy). Last year, the plan was to fly to northern Spain, but the weather conditions limited us to Bordeaux.



Calais

The group breaks up into different flying speeds, in my M24, I cruise at about 75-80mph

which is a good speed for the faster flexwings and slower 3 axis microlights.



Bordeaux



La Rochelle



Loire Chateau

This year, the plan is to fly to Germany and possibly over to Czech. Dates, 6-16 June, subject to weather etc. If you are interested, subscribe to the email group by sending to this address: wfaec+subscribe@groups.io and introduce yourself.

So, what do you need?

For navigation, you need SkyDemon or something similar. SkyDemon will submit your flightplans so makes it very easy. For the channel crossing, you don't strictly need to have an immersion suit/life jacket, but you would be pretty silly not to fly with one. I reckon the channel is pretty well patrolled, so have never taken a life raft. Coming back into the UK, you need to submit a GAR and SkyDemon can no longer do this, but there are other services that do for a small fee or you can struggle through the government website without cost.

A transponder is probably not absolutely necessary, but it really does help and it is nice to think that someone can track you as you cross the channel.

For flying in France, my understanding is that your UK licence and UK medical are acceptable, provided you fly nothing heavier than a 500kg MOTM machine. In practice, nobody has ever asked. It is very handy to have a Total fuel card.

For other countries, I believe you need a Class 2 medical and generally need to apply for a permit/exemption. For Germany, the last time I applied, there was no fee.

When you get back, you can apply for a refund on the fuel duty for the fuel you left the UK with



Are you going to do it?

If you have never been over the channel, I am happy to fly alongside and guide you through the process. I am also happy to answer any questions: rupert.stanley@googlemail.com

Further updates

If you have any information about flying abroad that you feel pertinent, or regulations in other European countries, then please email the newsletter editor so we can start to compile this information and post it on the BRA website.

Rubber side down

By Clive Rose, BRA Safety And Training

Write about what you know, isn't that what **they** say? So I thought I'd start this article with a few anecdotes about cock-ups and how to avoid them. From someone who knows!

A long time ago at an airfield far, far away, a very wise man once said "There are two types of Magni: those that have been flown with the Rotor Brake on; and those that haven't. Yet!" On newer Magnis the Rotor RPM Gauge remains blank until you release the Rotor Brake. So, you have no excuse. But older Magnis didn't have the lock-out/switching solenoid/gizmo* (delete as appropriate) to link Brake and RPM so, if you didn't follow your pre-flight checklist, you could pre-rotate with the Rotor Brake still engaged. Stick back at 130, release the Wheel Brake at 200 and off you go. If you were too busy in the RRPM Build-up to notice the torque reaction requiring steering input, the first indication of your error might be the discoloured paintwork around the drum Rotor Brake. Bugger!

Ahah - I hear Rotorsport Pilotes chorusing "You can't do that in an MTO/Cav/Calidus". Well... I haven't done it in an enclosed Rotorsport but I can assure you, if you try hard enough it's quite possible in the MTs. I can't remember if it only happens when there's residual pressure in the pneumatics, when the stick is not fully forward or if you have to be wearing odd socks (Dean!) but I know of numerous MTs whose rotors have been spun-up with the Trim switch set to Brake.

My one and only infraction was at Sandown with my long-suffering wife in the back seat. [I'm sure I've spoken about Distraction in a previous RSD...] 200 RRPM, stick back, release the handbrake and off we go. Crikey that stick's heavy. Trim back some more as we accelerate down the runway. If it wasn't for my manly physique I may not have been able to pull the stick back against the opposing forces of excessive trim AND the Rotor head pivoting around the pitch bolt but we took off into the Airspeed Buildup phase - me still trimming back - before I decided more tea was called for, radioed "aborting take-off" and landed ahead. As we exited the runway, I reached forward to set Flight-Brake and discovered my error.

We learn by our mistakes, don't we!

Today's final anecdote involves the legendary Gary 9-Fingers (G-9F to his mates!). He and I flew to Sywell many moons ago to collect some friends for local flights. Conversation spilled over-schedule and we departed too close to the incoming weather, which intercepted us 10 miles south of Northampton. A horseshoe shaped shower (and that's not easy to say with these teeth in!) was quite insistent we didn't continue our flight south, instead diverting us to Cranfield where we spent a jovial hour in the dry; their charming fire crew plying us with tea and biscuits and quite-rightly taking the piss. G-9F was P1 so it was **obviously** his fault. Of course, we were both to blame for losing sight of the time, when we should have mitigated the risk by either leaving much earlier or flying somewhere else. It really is so much better to be Down Here wishing you were Up There than vice versa.

My one and only weather divert (as a passenger). I was never so grateful for G-9F executing a perfect landing Rubber Side Down!

Gyros can use Microlight radio frequency

We've had confirmation from the CAA that gyros can use the Microlight radio frequency for situational awareness. In an email to the BRA we were told:

"129.830 & 129.835 are the recreational channels reserved for Microlights in UK, 129.835 is specifically allocated for Inflight Situational Awareness (IFSA) but in reality either channel could be used. I would consider a rotorcraft to fall in the category of a microlight, I do not see a need for the BRA to have their own dedicated channels."

Obviously, you still need to be using the usual appropriate radio frequencies for whatever flying you are doing, but this could be useful if you're flying as a group and making use of the dual watch feature of your radio.

Upcoming events:

You can find the BRA calendar which details all our events, and many others you might be interested on our website. You can find in in the [Events](#) section of our website. Click on the Events Calendar button.

If you have any events you'd like added to our calendar, then please feel free to send an email to: events@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

Keep checking back as we'll soon be adding new official BRA events for 2025!

Spring Fly-in And Camp, Deenethorpe

April 5 - 6

Fly-in and camp at this gyro friendly airfield with a huge runway. Toilets and cafe on site. The BRA sponsored event for members is Free. As many circuits as you like and camping are all free. Mogas is available in 20ltr cans at cost. We will also have exclusive use of the Marquee. Great venue and plenty of time to get it in your diary.



Popham Microlight Trade Fair And BRA AGM

May 3 - 4

Always a very popular event on the Gyro calendar, held at Popham Airfield, Winchester, Hants is the Microlight Trade Fair where annually, manufacturers and organisations present the new and the best in GA. This year it is Saturday 3rd May and Sunday 4th May 2025.

Last year was disappointing as the then new organiser was not aware of the Gyro community and our pitches were all over the place. We have been assured that was a one off and that all gyro related organisations will be in the same area.

As we have in previous years, the BRA will be holding its AGM at 13:00 on the Saturday 3rd May, so if you are interested in where we are, joining the committee or proposing change, then please come along and get involved.



Spamfield, Sandown Isle Of Wight

May 23 - 27

One of the GA's most popular events held annually at Sandown Airport on the Isle of Wight. On the last Bank Holiday Weekend in May this really is an unmissable opportunity to Fly, Eat, Drink and be Merry. Camping, Showers, Great Food and Drink and only a short taxi ride to some of the best beaches in the South.

Free landing and camping for BRA members.



Kirkbride Fly-in

May 24

An open invitation to all to experience the beautiful Cumbrian location that is Kirkbride. The Airfield host this event annually and each year more things to see, do and experience are added. Chris Jones Gyroplanes is based there and I'm sure he would love to see on the day.

Free landing for BRA members.



Mass Gyro Fly-in, Sherburn in Elmet

July 11 - 13

The BRA are excited about at the opportunity of hosting an event further north. This Mass Gyro Fly-in is more accessible to members than any event we have ever held. Sherburn in Elmet are really looking forward to hopefully smashing the official gyro record of 71. This as many of you will know was set in 2022 at Old Warden in Bedfordshire, we are though well aware that that is far too far south for many of you to come.

Landing and Camping will be free to BRA paid up members so if you haven't joined us yet please do. We look forward to seeing you and enjoying North Yorkshires beautiful scenery and great hospitality.

Arrive Friday onwards. Event dates 11th - 13th July 2025



For Sale:

Got a gyro to sell? Or maybe a gyro related item? Please contact:

events@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

They will put your items on the BRA website For Sale area until you tell us it's sold. It will also appear in this newsletter for one issue.

Advertise your gyro for sale here for free!

(Or any other gyro related items)