



August Newsletter 2025

Welcome

Welcome to the August newsletter.

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Before we get into the meat of it, we just want to remind you that the **BRA Sandown fly-in** is only 2 weeks away! This generally marks the end of the fly-in season for the BRA. Sandown always has a very warm welcome for us gyros, and with a cafe, fuel, camping, showers and toilets on site there's really nothing else you could ask for... except maybe the weather, but none of us can arrange that! So get the date in your diary:

September 5th, 6th, 7th
Sandown airfield on the Isle Of Wight
FREE CAMPING AND LANDING for paid-up BRA members

Now onto the usual business, albeit a short business this month...

Meet Your Instructor this month is provided by Graham Slater of GS Aviation who very kindly stepped in at the last minute.

Our Events Secretary, Steve Paffett, has details about the upcoming LAA Rally in Leicester where the BRA will be sharing a stand with Phoenix Aero.

I debrief you on a trip to Hamilton Farm in Kent, a gem of an airfield!

Clive is back with his Rubber Side Down with a tale of caution about flight planning and how a stronger than expected headwind can lead to fuel issues.

Lawrence, our Membership Secretary, would like to promote the Cardiff Airport fundraising charity fly-in. If you look back at previous newsletters you'll see that Lawrence wrote a piece on his visit to this. See the flyer at the end of this newsletter.

Chris Rose
ed@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

Meet your instructor: Graham Slater



Your Name:

Graham Slater

The Name Of Your School:

GS Aviation

Website:

www.gsaviation.co.uk

Location:

Clench Common Airfield.

How long have you been teaching for?

Started flying gyros in early 2008, completed my instructor rating in 2010.

How did you get into gyro flying?

I saw the Autogyro stand at the NEC in 2007 and spoke to Gerry who recommended Phil Harwood. I booked a 5 day intensive course with Phil in March 2008 at Rufforth. The weather was not brilliant, quite windy with snow, but I was very impressed with the capability of the MT03 to cope with this and was hooked.

I ordered a new MT03, and took delivery in May 2008, and started flying with Peter Davies who, being an old mate from Microlight days, came down to Clench and completed my dual and solo flying training.

I then had to fly for 100 hours PIC before I could start my instructor course with Marc Lhermette in Kent in late 2009, which I completed in 2010.

What can you offer as a school?

We offer training to PPLG here at Clench Common, using the Calidus, myself and David Rogerson are both Gyro and Microlight instructors.

We have two Calidus aircraft for Gyro training and a number of C42 Microlights and Eurofox aircraft for training to both NPPL M and SSEA licence with six instructors and two Examiners available.

The Flying School has been established for thirty five years with over 1000 students taught to fly over that time.

The airfield has two runways so we can cope with several wind directions.

We have our own radio frequency to enable us to communicate with inbound and outbound aircraft as we do get very busy on flying days with 70 plus Club members.

LAA Rally

By Steve Paffett, Events Secretary

The BRA will be present at the LAA Rally, which is at Leicester Airfield this year, from the 29th - 31st of August. We'll be sharing our stand with Phoenix Aero. We've featured Phoenix in previous newsletters, these are the guys bringing the GT-VX single seat gyro kit into the UK and getting it approved. So if you are at the

rally then drop by and say hi to the BRA guys, and see what goodies Phoenix bring with them.

On that note, if you're planning on going, the LAA have sent out an email in regards how LAA members will prove their membership on arrival:

Dear LAA Member

We are two weeks away from the LAA 2025 Rally!

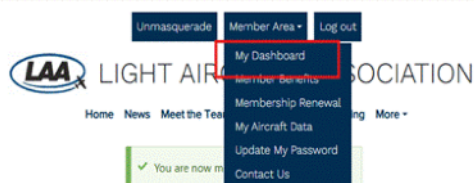
We have been asked by Members to indicate how you will prove membership upon arrival:

PROOF OF MEMBERSHIP:

Please login to your membership on our website: <https://www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk/>

Once on your Member area, please go onto

'My Dashboard' on the Member Area drop down list:



Once on your dashboard, at the bottom of your membership page is 'Download Card':

Hi Lady Rose Flower
Your member number is 20000.
(Shareholder No)
Membership type: Under 30 Member
Membership expiry date: 31 October, 2025

My Address

Street Address	Street Address 2	Street Address 3	City	Country	County	Postal Code
Pickle Manor	Puggle Estate		Pickledome	United Kingd	Winchester	MX19 2BS

My Contribution(s)

Total Amount	Type	Date	Receipt Sent	Status
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My Membership(s)

Type	Member Since	Start Date	End Date	Status
Under 30 Member	19-Oct-2024	01-Oct-2024	31-Oct-2025	Current

[Download Card](#)

If you click on this, it will download a membership certificate for you to print and bring along.

ENTRY TO RALLY

If you pre-book your entry ticket, please bring the Order Confirmation email (see example below) you received from the LAA to the main gate on arrival as proof of booking:

Order #1181 confirmed



Light Aircraft Association <office@laa.uk.com>

If there are problems with how this message is displayed, click here to view it in a web browser.

Order Confirmation

Order #1181 details

Title	Unit price	Quantity	Total price
Member Entrance Ticket - Valid for all 3 days including Airside	£25.00	1.00	£25.00

Shipping method

Shipping to UK
Subtotal £25.00
Shipping £0.00
Total £25.00

Thank you for your order!

If you'd like to unsubscribe and stop receiving these emails [click here](#).

If you show this to the staff at the entry gate, you will be handed your wristband/s.

Kind regards

LAA

Hamilton Farm visit

By Chris Rose, Editor

Hamilton Farm, just outside of Ashford in Kent, is one of those airfields you've never heard of, but after going you'll be going back to. Having said that, my story starts off with a cautionary tale from my first visit that made me hesitate before returning.



A couple of years ago we (my group of gyro buddies) were set to go down to Perranporth in Cornwall, but as is frequent in such plans, the weather gods had other ideas. So, short of a destination, and with camping gear ready, we searched on at the map for an airfield we'd never been to, and that allowed camping. We came across Hamilton Farm, and as luck would have it, the weather between us, and it, was good for a couple of days. Or so we thought.

With PPR done, we set off into bright, hot, and sunny skies, and made the relatively short flight from Holmbeck to Hamilton Farm. All of us were 2-up and heavy with campaign gear, but we figured that the flight over would burn off a fair amount of fuel during the 75 minute flight.

The plate for Hamilton Farm shows a 630m long runway orientated 22/04. The north east end has high trees at the start of the runway, and the south west end slopes up. Keep this in mind for the rest of the story.

The wind favoured landing 04, which avoided coming in over the trees, but still seem to necessitate avoiding a couple of random tress on final. Nothing too scary and we all like a bit of a challenge when landing don't we?

Taxing off the runway halfway down we found the large grass parking area and we were greeted by the owner and his brother.

He explained there was no cafe, but there was a local phone number for a cafe that would deliver breakfast. The brother offered to take

one of us on the back of his motorbike to the local Tesco to get some provisions for the afternoon. The owner would then run us to the pub in the evening so we could get dinner and get a taxi back. You really can't get better service than that - what an amazing and generous bunch the Hamilton Farm team are!



We woke the next morning to the kind of calm humid skies that threaten thunder. This wasn't in the forecast! It was supposed to be like this in Perranporth, not Kent! We checked the met, and decided we needed to depart pretty sharpish after breakfast to beat the storms that were now predicted to build up later in the day.

There was little to no wind, just a light breeze, unhelpfully blowing across the runway. The air was sticky and hot. None of us were exactly light. We opted for 22 as this meant avoiding taking off over the high trees at that end. Two of us waited on on the taxi way whilst the first gyro, an MTO Sport, back tracked and turned round to line up. They got airborne just before the halfway point where we were waiting, going past us at a couple of feet off the ground. I watched them climb, but very slowly, following the up-slope at the other end of the runway, and with relief, make it safely over the hedge. Then it was my turn.

My Calidus has always been fairly good at getting airborne quickly, so I didn't anticipate any issues, but I was conscious that the conditions were going to reduce the

performance. As soon as the rotors were pre-rotated up to speed I went to full throttle, and like the MTO Sport, I was airborne about halfway down the runway, keeping the nose low to follow the rising ground. It felt like the gyro just didn't want to climb compared to normal, but none the less we were well above the hedge at the end of the runway and finally climbing out safely.

The last gyro to get airborne was a Cavalon, or at least it tried to get airborne. Being the heaviest out of all of us it struggled. They aborted a couple of attempts before taxiing back to the park and dumped all their camping gear. The owner of Hamilton Farm was once again incredibly generous, and arranged for a courier to ship this to them the next day. Only then did they finally get airborne and make their way back to Holmbeck.

So, with lessons learnt, we all said we'd think twice about going back 2-up and heavy unless the wind direction and weather were more favourable.

And that brings us on to the next visit a few days ago...

Since my last visit I'd heard Hamilton Farm had opened a cafe and it was getting excellent reviews, So I've been keen to go back, both to sample the new cafe, and to exorcise the memory of the bum-clenching takeoff from the previous visit.

Once again, it was a beautiful day, and eager not to waste the weather we set off back to Hamilton Farm. This time we were all 1-up, and we were only going for lunch. The wind was favouring 22, so the approach was going to be in over the trees, and more importantly, it was going to be taking off not over them! It did mean there was a slight head wind for much of the journey, so I'd most probably need to stop somewhere on the return to top-up. Hamilton Farm's plate on SkyDemon says they have fuel,

but they don't, so don't expect there to be any! I was in an MTO Sport this time, so I didn't have the luxury of the large fuel tank of the Calidus, nor it's efficient fuel burn.

The flight there was as good as it gets, and it took me over my old training ground of the Hoo Peninsular, near Stoke airfield, in the Thames Estuary. This large, flat, mostly unpopulated, area of marshland was a favourite place of my instructor, Kai Maurer, to teach his students. This was before Southend airport established its CTA over much of it. It's also steeped in history and you can still see the ghost outlines of the First World War explosives factory and storage area, and remains of various coastal defences that predate this.



Remains of the explosives factory and storage area on the Hoo Peninsular

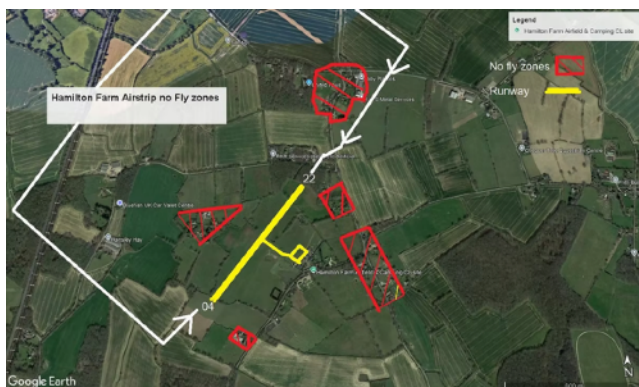
Once over the Hoo Peninsular you cross the river Medway Estuary and its mudflats and myriad of small islands. There's the carcasses of ship wrecks to be spotted, like the rib cages of whales half exposed from the mud, and more remains of coastal defensive buildings - presumably they would have protected the entrance to the Medway.

5 miles out from the overhead I started making my blind calls on safety com. There was no other circuit traffic on the radio. From the photo below, you can see Hamilton Farm doesn't exactly stand out in the landscape, and it more depends on how long the grass is either side of the runway if it's obvious at all. It wasn't until I was almost directly over it that I spotted it!



Aerial view of Hamilton Farm - not as obvious as you might think it would be

It's best to read the airstrip information on their website which calls for an overhead join at 1,500ft AMSL. Note that there are noise abatement areas all around the airfield.



The circuit pattern from the Hamilton Farm website

I carried on through the overhead slightly and descended dead-side, before joining crosswind over the 04 numbers. Downwind took me out away from the noise abatement areas before turning base and final over the trees. The trees are 15m high, so timing the descent over the top of them so as not to arrive too far down the runway was the only challenge. It was all totally safe, but the tops of the trees felt uncomfortably close as I crossed over the tops of the last row before the start of

the runway. I felt chuffed with myself as the gyro came to a stop just before the taxiway entrance at the midpoint of the runway. If I'd overshot the entrance I would have had to carry on and turn round at the other end as the runway wasn't wide enough to turn around in.

The taxi way is quite long and narrow, and with the long grass either side it felt a bit like travelling down a narrow country lane, albeit one with a grass surface and not tarmac. Eventually it opens out into a large fenced off area for aircraft parking.



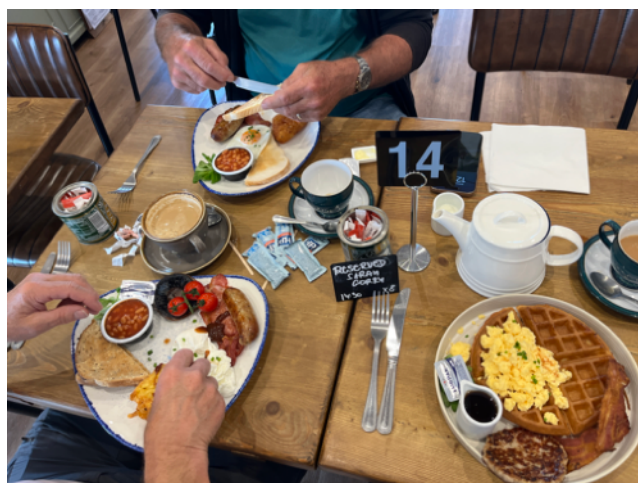
Parking area



"Control tower"

With the other two gyros parked up, we went to sign in at the "control tower" - a couple of containers painted in camouflage, and a fake (I presumed) boat radar shining around on top.

The new cafe is definitely well worth a visit. There's plenty of seating inside and a nice outside area too. The menu is very good and reasonably priced - I had the American breakfast (a huge waffle, eggs, sausage Pattie, and bacon) with a cup of tea, and this came to about £14. The place seemed pretty popular with the locals too, and they have their very own campsite clientele who come for the fishing lakes.



Inside and outside the cafe and its excellent food

With lunch over it was time to head back home. A quick check of the fuel level and I came to the conclusion that I might be ok to get home with what I had left, but I figured I'd be running on fumes. Not wanting to risk anything (always the wise option), I decided I'd drop into Rochester to get fuel despite knowing it'd be an expensive landing fee, let alone fuel cost. The other two gyros had enough fuel, and there was no point in them needlessly paying the landing fee for Rochester, so they were going to go straight back.

I did try calling Damyns Hall to get PPR and check on their fuel status, but I couldn't get an answer. So Rochester it was - at least they answered their phone. I guess the money goes towards something good!

Sadly, the takeoff was uneventful, I mean sadly in the sense that there were no issues this time so it's a boring end to this story. 1-up, and now very light on half tanks, the MTO Sport was in the air and climbing nicely well before the midpoint of the runway / taxi way entrance.

Flying away towards Rochester I was thinking over how I could bring my partner back here to camp again. I think I'll come back when the wind is down the 22 runway and favouring the treeless takeoff it provides. Yes there's a bit of an up-slope at the end, but as long as you remember that the ground is climbing as you

are and not worry when it feels like you're not gaining height as fast as you like, then I can't see any issue. Just as long as you don't eat too much food at the wonderful cafe. If only for the cafe it's worth coming back to, the camping is just an added bonus.

You can find the Hamilton Farm website here:
<https://www.hamiltonfarmairstrip.co.uk/>

Rubber side down

By Clive Rose, BRA Safety And Training

The term "Friends With Benefits" means one thing in life, quite another in aviation. You've heard how the Time Bandit got his moniker. This month I'd like to recount how he taught us the importance of taking the wind into consideration during planning. A prime example of the The 6P's. In this instance: Prior Planning Prevents The Need To Buy Fuel Cans At Your Destination.

He decided to pop down to the Isle of Wight. Bembridge has a lot to recommend itself - a hard runway, The Propellor Inn, and a lovely walk down to the beach where the Wonky Café offers great food. Not a patch on our beloved Sandown, but this is Time Bandit's story, so stick with it.

He planned his return route (pretty much straight North-South-North), worked out his timings and his fuel requirements, and set off. He flew all the way there into a strong headwind which not only extended the outward journey, but also severely depleted his fuel.

If you have a soft drink in The Propellor Inn these days, you're bound to be accosted by a local telling you about the Gyro Pilote who didn't have enough fuel to get home. Happily, one of the locals gave Time Bandit a lift to the nearest fuel station where he (TB, not the local -

there are limits!) bought a couple of 5-litre cans, brimmed them with unleaded and decanted them into his aircraft. He didn't fancy having them rattling around in the cockpit on the way home, so he left them at the Propellor Inn.

Now, those of you who've been trained always to think of The Next Event in flying, will be ahead of us, here. On the return journey, Time Bandit got to enjoy the benefit of a stonking tailwind; arriving back at base with 10 litres more than he expected in the first place.

These days we rely on SkyDemon to give a good estimation of the wind direction and strength in the upper air. You'll be marking up your chart, too (obvs!), so take a moment to mark timings along your route for each waypoint. If it takes you longer to reach them, stop for a cuppa at one of your en route alternates and suss-out why. These questions are always more easily answered on the ground.

So... Aviation "Friends With Benefits"? The more friends we have, the more we can take the piss out of each other and benefit from their (ahem!) experiences. I'm seeing Time Bandit in a couple of weeks, when I must ask him how he managed to land at Bembridge in what must have been an interesting crosswind.

Importantly, he landed Rubber Side Down. As must we all.



cardiff airport

maes awyr caerdydd

Fundraising 'Fly-in'



**All money raised will go to our
chosen charities:**



Come and join us at Cardiff Airport for our fundraising charity fly in!
Saturday 20th - Sunday 21st, September 2025 | 09:00 - 18:00 LT

To request PPR please email:
generalaviation@cwl.aero

Open to all aircraft 2000kg and under, fixed wing and rotary.

Landing with 24 hours parking - £20
 Landing with 48 hours parking - £30
 Up to an MTOW of 2000kg

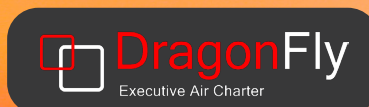
Fuel available on request, mobile bowser.

What to expect on the day:

- Onsite restaurant with viewing terrace, beer garden & BBQ.
- Classic Car Event on Saturday 20th.

A 5 minute walk to Rhose International train station for:

- Barry Island (15 Minutes)
 "Home of Gavin & Stacey"
- Cardiff City (35 Minutes)



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!

Sandown, Isle Of Wight, BRA Gyro Fly-in And Camping

5 - 7 September

If you were disappointed you couldn't make Spamfield, then put this one in your diary! The BRA makes its annual pilgrimage to Sandown airport on the Isle Of Wight. The gyros always get a warm welcome and Sandown go out of their way to cater for us.

With camping, showers, toilets, cafe, beer, and fuel on-site, what else can you ask for? Ok, we can't guarantee the weather, but as long as it's flyable, you assured to have a fab time.

**FREE CAMPING AND LANDING for paid-up
BRA members**



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.