



July Newsletter 2025

Welcome

Welcome to the July newsletter.

In this month's newsletter...

Our events secretary gives us his debrief on the fly-in at Sherburn In Elmet. He also draws our attention so up-coming non BRA events you might be interested in.

Do you know about the CAA Safety Sense leaflets? If not, we have a short article that draws your attention to them. And yes, there's one on gyros!

And sticking with the CAA, they have released a document about Electronic Conspicuity and it's place in the Airspace Modernisation Strategy.

Lawrence, our Membership Secretary, donates the tail of G-KETCH to a museum.

I take you down to Devon to two fabulous airfields, Bolt Head and Barton Farm.

Our Safety And Training guru, Clive Rose, looks at the parallels between motorbike riding and flying, with looking at your own state before your ride and fly.

And finally, Clive Rose is featured again talking about his biennial hour with Steve Boxall. This ties in nicely with his Rubber Side Down.

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.

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Sherburn in Elmet debrief

By Steve Paffett, BRA Events Secretary



What a place, beautifully situated in Yorkshire just a short hop from Rufforth.

The reason I picked Sherburn was precisely its location, we have had 4 very successful gatherings at Old Warden but I was always conscious and often reminded that it was very much in the south of the country.

Sherburn seemed perfect and the people and facilities there are wonderful, great ground crew, very friendly admin team, super café with very good food and very reasonable prices and Dave Salt the airfield Manager could not have been more accommodating.



Friday there were only a few of us so unfortunately they could not keep the café open, however thanks to my lovely wife Vanessa, who drove from home, we had adequate stocks of alcohol.

Beautiful weather again on the Saturday meant socialising was easy and some of us managed to fly through the peaks and over the Ladybower reservoir. Digby's café put on a BBQ for us in the evening and served up a lovely pint til well into the evening. Sunday was kicked off with a hearty fry up or some cases a healthy breakfast before we all packed our things away and headed home.



Although they will never see this newsletter, I really must thank all of the team at Sherburn in Elmet that made our weekend so easy going. Sadly despite all of that only 32 gyro's came over the weekend and only 29 on the day. Not to take anything away from those that did make it though it was a shame there were so many missing.

Those that did make it were:

- 4 from Rufforth (well done guys)
- 1 from Beverley
- 1 from Strubby (you know who you are)
- 3 from Kirkbride (great support always from there)
- 1 from Damyn's Hall
- 1 from Berrow
- 3 from Holmbeck farm (again always a big contributor to the numbers)

- Myself from Graveley
- Jim from I'm not sure where 😊
- Gerry in his 916 Calidus
- 3 more from Shobden so thumbs up to them
- Mr Noon from somewhere near Newark
- Mr Unwin from somewhere in Gloucestershire
- The lovely Mr Donnellan from Sleaford
- Mr Pugh from North Weald
- 2 from Popham (thank you JG and MS)
- 1 from Enstone, (nice to see you Julian)
- 1 from Overhope
- Offer from somewhere in Oxfordshire

Apologies to those of you I've missed.

Those of you that are not members of the BRA and were paid for by the association funds eg landing fees, you know it is only £25.00 a year and you do get some good concessions. It would be good to have you on board.

Don't forget the website

www.britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk is where you will find details of events and there is also a link to the BRA calendar which you can have as an app on your device.

Please also remember that if you are an instructor, as a member you have an ad on the site, a link to your site and you are on the interactive map so anyone can find you. Non paid member instructors are not. So again £25.00 a year is well worth it

Regards

Steve. Events coordinator.

Coming up...

Neither of the these are BRA events however I have been asked to tell you all gyro's are most welcome:

HEADON:

16th August 2025

<https://www.microflight.co.uk/headon-2025-fly-in-hanger-bash/>



STOKE:

Stokefest at Medway Microlights. Also 16th August 2025

<https://www.stokemedwayairfield.co.uk/events>

LAA RALLY:

And finally, the LAA Rally is fast approaching there's chance to get discount tickets if you buy them before the 31st July. More details can be found here:

<https://www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk/entrance-fees>

CAA safety sense leaflets

By Chris Rose, Editor

The CAA publishes a range of safety sense leaflets, that are freely available to download from:

https://www.caa.co.uk/general-aviation/safety-topics/safety-sense-leaflets?mc_cid=76d5f86bdb#

The range of topics they cover are quite diverse, so you're bound to find one on any particular aspect of flying. For example, and tying in with Clive Rose's Rubber Side Down feature, there's one on pilot health. And for those of you who went off over the dams at the Sherburn fly-in, there's one on mountain flying.

I wonder how many of you knew there was one on Gyroplane Handling And Performance? If you didn't, click on the link below to download it:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/media/kcnh2lzy/20120816hsl04.pdf>

Electronic conspicuity and the CAA Airspace Modernisation Strategy

By Chris Rose, Editor

The CAA have published a document about electronic conspicuity (EC) and its place in their Airspace Modernisation Strategy:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/publication/download/25497>

EC is basically a device that broadcasts an electronic signal which gives your aircrafts position and height to other aircraft around you. They can receive this signal if they have a similar device. The point being, it minimises the potential of mid-air collisions as you can all "see" each other.

Quite a few of the gyro pilots I fly with are strong proponents of carrying / installing an EC device.

There's basically three options:

- SkyEcho
- PilotAware
- Transponders with ADSB capability

You may have heard the term ADSB, this is the EC signal that is used by commercial aircraft and adopted by many GA aircraft.

If you have a SkyEcho, ADSB is what is being sent and received. SkyEcho is perhaps the simplest and easiest to deal with, as it's a small truly portable device that requires no external battery / power supply, or subscription.

Same thing goes for transponders with built in EC, it will be utilising ADSB, although you're unlikely to have this unless you have a swanky glass cockpit instrumentation panel. It's worth pointing out that your Mode C transponder is not EC, Mode C is only received by radar systems.

PilotAware is a little different, it can receive ADSB, but not transmit it unless it's wired into a suitably equipped transponder. As a standalone unit, it only sends out its own proprietary signal that can only be received by other PilotAware devices. PilotAware has other advantages and disadvantages that's beyond the scope of what I'm trying to get across here. Visit the PilotAware website to get a full understanding of their system.

Both PilotAware and SkyEcho will require you to have something like SkyDemon in order to make the best use of them.

The document just released by the CAA may be an indication that some kind of EC may become mandatory in the UK. I'm not saying rush out and buy one of these devices because

of this document, but there are no downsides to having one, and anything to improve your visibility in the air can't be a bad thing.

G-KETCH tail goes to museum

By Chris Rose, Editor

A few weeks ago, as discussed in the previous newsletter, G-KETCH suffered a roll-over on the ground. G-KETCH is an historic aircraft, being only one of two gyros that have flown around the world. Lawrence Spiller, the current owner of G-KETCH, didn't want to see this bit of history lost, so he's kindly donated it to the Helicopter Museum in Weston-super-Mare.



Lawrence holding the tail to G-KETCH

Barton Farm and Bolt Head trip

By Chris Rose, Editor

Back in the dark that is the post Christmas gloom I'd been looking at new places to venture out to in the gyro once the weather improved. I like camping, so any airfield that allows this catches my attention, even more so

if it's in a beautiful location. I have to admit, "beautiful" is a subjective idea, and for me, Devon and Cornwall have a particular draw.

On SkyDemon I spotted a new airfield to me called Barton Farm, which looked to be smack bang on top of Exmoor. I hadn't spotted this before, so I wondered if it was a recently opened airfield. The plate looked encouraging: 800m runway. Camping facilities available. It's associated with a local inn so beer and food were a possibility. The only negatives: At 1,500ft, and on top of Exmoor, it warned that it was subject to strong crosswinds. It's only open June to September due to being water logged the rest of the year. And finally, red deer may wonder onto the runway. Note the deer - they feature later in the story!



Roll on a few months, and with the recent spell of fabulous weather, I planned a trip to Barton Farm. I went with a couple of fixed wing friends and my two of my fellow gyro buddies. With PPR done for all airfields, and camping permission given for Bolt Head we all set off.

Bolt Head, or Salcombe / Bolt Head to give it its full title, I'd been too a couple of times already, and I decided to use this as a base to camp at whilst I went too check out Barton Farm. Even though Barton farm is North Devon, and Bolt Head is South Devon, it's only a 30 minute flight between them.



Bolt Head deserves its own paragraph - it's a long grass strip on top of the cliffs above Salcombe. Its claim to fame is the cold war nuclear bunker that sits "hidden" in a jumble of overgrown brambles behind the hangar there. Sadly, the bunker is not open to the public, and it can feel a bit creepy camping next to it, especially when the local wildlife triggers the security alarm which blasts out over speakers "Warning, private property, you are being monitored" in the dead of night! There's only a small toilet as far as facilities go, but it's very clean and even has hot water. A 45 minute walk downhill takes you into Salcombe where you can get beer and food, however the walk back uphill can be a bit daunting... depending on how fit you are and how much beer you've had. They don't always allow camping, so check with them, and all circuits are strictly to the south - do not fly overhead or come in from the north. See their plate for the local flying exclusion zone.

Neither Bolt Head or Barton farm have fuel, so you need to do a bit of planning to make sure you have enough fuel to get in, and more importantly, get out. Dunkeswell or Exter are your closest airfields that I know with fuel, with Dunkeswell being the more GA friendly. Filling up at Dunkeswell would give me about 3 hours duration for when I came to leave Bolt Head, more than enough to visit Barton Farm, and get back to Dunkeswell to fill up again. So that is what I planned. I could even potentially get all the way back home, but I felt that was stretching the fuel reserve in my Calidus.



Tents and aircraft parked just to the left of the large concrete "box" of the nuclear bunker at Bolt Head.

We all met up at Dunkeswell, the fixed wings being faster were there well before us. After eating lunch, and topping off the fuel tanks we set off on the short 30 minutes or so flight to Bolt Head. Once again, the fixed wings beat us there, and I could hear them calling final over safety com whilst I was still about 10 miles out. The no-fly zone on the plate to the north means the approach into the strip is along the cliffs rewarding you with awesome views of the sea on one side, and the beauty of the Devon countryside on the other.

Long final from the east takes you over the top of the Kingsbury Estuary at the foot of the cliffs, with Salcombe and its harbour off to the right. It's one of my favourite "finals", if a little unnerving flying towards the cliff on which the airfield sits.

With all of us safely down, we went about pitching the tents and discussed where to go for food. I'd only ever been down into Salcombe, but one of the fixed wing pilots suggested a pub in the village of Hope Cove, a longer walk to the west, but not too far. I don't think any of us realised what this would entail!

With Google maps as our guide we set off along the costal path which went up and down, some the slopes quite steep and more suitable to hiking boots. And it went on and on like this! A good hour or so later we arrived at Hope Cove, in dire need of food and beer after the hiking expedition we'd just been on. Have moaned about this, I should point out that the walk was stunning despite the slopes, and Hope Cove had a charm about it that represents the best of small seaside villages.



Somewhere ahead, there's a village! But there's a very hilly costal path to get to it!

We had all ignored the fact we'd have to walk back to Bolt Head, with the fixed wing pilot who suggested it saying that he'd gotten a taxi back from there before... or at least that's the impression I got. So, I never gave it any further thought as I settled into my food and drink at The Cove bar. I clearly need to question fixed wing pilots more carefully before accepting their word...



The quaint seaside village of Hope Cove.

As closing time fast approached we started phoning local taxi numbers. As we went down the list the following picture formed: they either didn't answer or they didn't have anything available. Oh ****! With the last phone number, the realisation we'd have to do the walk back set in. Luckily it was a full moon, so we'd clearly see the treacherous costal foot path slope that would inevitably kill us. Every cloud has a silver lining.

Just as we were about to start our walk into certain doom, the barman came rushing out and said he'd drive us back to Bolt Head for a suitable donation towards the petrol costs. There was five of us so two trips would be required. Maybe the bar just wanted rid of the 5 pilots loitering outside accosting locals about taxi numbers, but whatever the reason was, we were very grateful.

As he drove us at break-neck speeds around the country lanes, he informed us that aside from being a barman, he was also at college studying logistics, and substituted his income by working at Magic Mike (look this up on Google if your wife / girlfriend doesn't already know!). None of these occupations included fast driving as a skill and I wondered if the costal path might have been safer! Needless to say we all got back to our tents safely and we were grateful for the kindness of strangers.



Gyros in the full moon at Bolt Head.

The next day the plan was to fly to Barton Farm to have lunch at the inn, before returning to Dunkeswell to fill up for the remainder of the flight home. The fixed wing guys wanted to go via Plymouth for a sight seeing tour from the air and set off before us. After they left, us three gyros backtracked the runway together and lined up to take off towards the east. I went first.

The sky was pretty much devoid of clouds, so I was bit surprised to see a patch of cloud rolling in over the top of the cliffs couple of miles ahead. Knowing that overflying to the north was not permitted, I eyed the billowing white expanse with caution - I'd have to fly over it if I was going to continue eastwards away from the no-fly zone. It was too low to fly under, but I could see the inland edges of it so I decided to carry on and climb, with the intention of flying over it until I could turn north towards Barton Farm. I radioed back to the other two gyros to explain what I could see and what I planned on doing. As I got closer to the cloud bank I could see it was broken up at the edges and I could see down through it, so I relaxed back in my seat and enjoyed the rare experience of being "on top" of cloud.

With a stiff tailwind from the south, progress was a good, but I realised we'd be landing with a crosswind at Barton Farm. I thought back to the warning on the plate, "subject to strong crosswinds", and I was glad I had the fuel

duration to head to Dunkeswell should it be necessary.



Spotting the cloud bank on climb-out at Bolt Head.



Luckily it was broken around the edges.

With 10 miles to go I heard the first of the fixed wings making blind calls in the circuit at Barton Farm. They'd beaten us again, despite their tour of Plymouth!

Then I heard "Going around". Maybe it was just a low pass to check the terrain? Maybe it was the crosswind? It was followed shortly by another "Going around". Now I was concerned. After a further two calls of "Going around" I began to consider my options, but I was now only 5 miles away so I called my position on the radio. The other fixed wing pilot replied saying there were deer on the runway, and the first aircraft was trying to shoo them away. I listened intently. This time there was no call of "Going

around", and with relief I heard the second fixed wing make it in ok too, so I carried on to join via the overhead.

Barton farm sits just below the crown of a hill and the east/west runway slopes gently down at either end. It slopes noticeably downhill across the runway towards the south. The slope across the runway looked a little tricky, but at least the wind wasn't from the north where it would potentially cause rotors. Thankfully, the deer were nowhere to be seen. I could see the two fixed wing aircraft parked in the parking area just off the middle of the runway to the south so I was clear to make my approach.

Despite the windsock showing it was quite a stiff crosswind, I didn't notice any issues on the downwind or final from the west. The landing went uneventfully apart from the gyro wanting to run off to towards downhill side of the runway and having to gauge the rising slope as it crested the hill. None of it was too daunting.

The runway and parking area were all well maintained and very smooth, or they were when we went. This was something that impressed me being so remote and at the top of a hill on Exmoor.



Looking uphill across the runway from the parking area. You can clearly see it slopes sideways!



Another view of the sideways sloping runway at Barton Farm.



Parking area at Barton Farm.

With all the aircraft safely parked up, we headed out of the field and downhill to the village of Simonsbath, a Short 30 minutes walk away. I hadn't seen anywhere to pay the landing fee, so I hoped the inn would know.

Something else I clocked was that there was nothing at the airfield, just a windsock, so I wonder if "Camping facilities available" meant you had to walk to the inn for toilets, or would they would do something special if you booked camping? I had hoped to meet the owner so I could ask them about it, but they were nowhere to be seen.

The Exmoor Forrest Inn in Simonsbath was lovely, definitely somewhere I'd consider staying at instead of camping. I thought it'd make quite a nice weekend away with the better half if I came back. We had arrived just at the start of the lunch shift so it was pretty quiet. They stuck us on a group table, and the food and drinks were served pretty quickly. The menu was pretty extensive and it wasn't your

typical pub food, so the foodie side of me was impressed.



Outside and inside the lovely Exmoor Forrest Inn.



The excellent menu at the Exmoor Forrest Inn.

The only we issue we had was paying the landing fee. I'd text the owner asking where to pay it, but I still hadn't received an answer by the time we went to leave. The bar staff didn't know either. I eventually called them, and he said "Oh yeah" as if it just dawned on him that there were no provisions made for this. He'd been busy on the farm and said to just leave the money behind the bar and he'd drop in and pick it up. Stupidly I forgot to ask him about the camping!

All we had to do now was the walk back up the steep hill to the aircraft, a walk you definitely wouldn't want to do if the ground was wet as half of it is across farm fields. The cows in the adjacent field followed us, maybe they were just amused by 5 unfit guys walking up a steep hill and wanted to see how it ended.



The long post-lunch walk back up to the aircraft.

We briefed that the gyros would takeoff before the fixed wings, backtracking together like we had Bolt Head, and I'd take off first again. It seems that I'm the sacrificial offering to the flying gods - if I make it then the gods are pleased and the others will then safely follow.

Lining up, the sideways slope of the runway ahead now looked uninvitingly steep! Half way down the runway was the parking bay on the down-slope side with the two fixed wings parked up and waiting. If I didn't get this right I could see myself slipping off towards the parked aircraft! Being one-up and light, even with the slight uphill runway, I was comfortably up before the parking area without any drama. I breathed a sigh of relief once there was no danger of me slipping off sideways towards the parked fixed wings. A quick radio call back to the other two gyros confirmed they were both airborne now, and so we made our way back to Dunkeswell for fuel before continuing home.

I haven't yet made it back to Barton Farm, but it's definitely on the list to return to. Next time I'll enquire what "Camping facilities available"

means, or if I'm feeling generous I might even treat the other half to the relatively luxury of staying in the Exmoor Forrest Inn.

Rubber side down

By Clive Rose, BRA Safety And Training

You will remember we have Rocket Scientist Richard to thank for the title of this regular(-ish) contribution. But the term Rubber-Side Down is actually used more often in motorcycle parlance, to underline the primary objective of each ride.

I know from flying that every day is a school day, never more so than when we fly with an Instructor. So, in recent months I've undertaken an Institute of Advanced Motorists Course with the aim of enhancing my safety on 2 wheels.

There's a large crossover between flying and biking communities not only in who flies and rides, but also in our training. The IAM advocate a very similar Human Factors acronym to self-check that you're ready to go riding - the I AM SAFE checklist.

- **I**llness - Do I have an illness or symptoms that might affect my ability to ride?
- **A**ttitude - How do I feel about this journey?
- **M**edication - Am I taking any medication that might affect my performance?
- **S**leep - Am I suffering from lack of sleep/fatigue?
- **A**lcohol - Have I had a drink? Am I still affected by alcohol?
- **F**ood - Am I hungry or thirsty? Could low blood sugar or dehydration affect my judgement?
- **E**motion - Am I angry, depressed, or stressed? Could this affect my decision-making?

There are plenty of imperatives to go flying, I don't need to list them. But none of them trumps the imperative to be fit to fly. If you wake up full of the joys of Spring from a great night's uninterrupted sleep, you're only a Full English away from starting your Planning with the right Mental Attitude. Don't stress that no bugger has bothered to cook it for you – you have plenty of time to pour milk over some Shredded Wheat to bring things back on track.

While you're training, your Instructor will be using the non-contact Vulcan Mind-meld to check you've arrived at the airfield in the right headspace. But, armed with your licence after qualifying, it's all down to you.

I try to make light of the challenges we face to indulge in our hobbies but the serious point is that we have IMSAFE/I AM SAFE checklists for a reason. Even before you get to the airfield, consider this your own DI. It's all part of the Proper-Preparation-Prevents-Piss-Poor-Performance maxim that keeps us Rubber Side Down.

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Biennial double hander

By Clive Rose, BRA Safety And Training and Steve Boxall

I had the great pleasure last week to fly my Biennial Training Hour with Steve Boxall. Pleasure and Biennial probably sounds like an oxymoron, but whether for Pleasure or for Training, every day is a school day in aviation so why not look to enjoy it? And to learn from it.

My request to Steve was that we practice emergencies which, I like to think, I know how to execute but, like you, perhaps, I seldom practice on my own.

I swear I saw a "careful what you wish for" glint in Steve's eyes as he launched into our pre-flight briefing. And this must surely have been present in the back seat as he put me through my paces.

I don't want to give too much away but suffice to say I've never had a more challenging Engine Failure After Take-Off and it's a long time since I've had an Engine Failure to Spot Landing when I was expecting an Overhead Join.

Steve reminded me of the imperative to execute the take-off steps in the correct sequence (this is my abbreviated list):

- Release pre-rotator
- Stick back
- Release wheel brake
- Add power
- Check and Verify that Rotor RPM is increasing as you accelerate along the runway.

I have fallen out of the habit of reciting these (and other) steps during take-off, so this was a valuable reminder.

On reflection, I realise I have also fallen out of the habit of talking through my pre-landing Downwind Checks:

- **L**anding lights, Lookout, Location
- **I**nstruments (power, height, speed)
- **F**uel sufficient for go-around and both pumps on
- **E**ngine Ts & Ps in the green
- **S**afety – pilot and passenger secure for landing

It's all very well to demonstrate through your actions that you are executing these checks but your Examiner/Passenger will be much happier if you talk through the processes as you perform them.

Steve was very kind in his debrief but I know my flight was the worst he'd experienced so far that morning. It was his first, so at least I set the bar low for his next customer!

My takeaways?

- Steve was kind enough to issue a revalidation signature for another 2 years flying.
- Maintain the habit of talking through your actions, even when you're flying on your own.
- When you fly a different Type, remind yourself of the differences beforehand – your Examiner shouldn't have to remind you of them.
- At Popham, expect sink on short final for 21!

I enjoyed it so much I'm going to be booking Training Hours more often and, if I get to fly Steve's pride and joy again, remembering to keep it Rubber-Side Down!

Steve Boxall's side of the story...

Setting Our Own Standards

Before our flight, Clive mentioned that he had let his instructor rating lapse. His reason? He felt he wasn't flying often enough to consistently bring his "A-game" to student training. That kind of self-awareness and integrity is something I admire. As it turned out, he then flew to a standard I'd be delighted to reach myself.

We all know about the formal requirements – self-declared medicals, two-year revalidations, and the 90-day rule for carrying passengers. These rules define the legal *minimum* standard for flight. But, as I often point out, it's entirely possible (and completely legal) for a gyroplane pilot to:

- Not fly for nearly two years.

- Hop into an aircraft type they barely flew years ago.
- Complete three quick circuits.
- Have an undiagnosed or undeclared medical issue.
- Then take a passenger on a challenging flight.

All within the letter of the law.

We're lucky to have the freedom and flexibility that our regulations provide. But that also means we carry the responsibility to self-assess – honestly – our own fitness, proficiency, and currency. It's up to each of us to hold ourselves to high standards and not wait for someone else to tell us we're falling short.

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.



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.