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Steve Paffett

#### Web Design / IT:

David Reeve

#### **Secretary:**

John Truman

#### Member:

Allan Mackey

#### **Editor:**

Chris Rose

#### **Contact:**

#### Post:

British Rotorcraft Association 1 Focal Point Lacerta Court Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 1FJ

#### **Phone:**

01462 683344

#### Email:

membership@ britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

#### Web:

britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

# June Newsletter 2025

#### Welcome

Welcome to the June newsletter.

In this month's newsletter...

With only three weeks to the mass gyro fly-in at Sherburn In Elmet, our Events Secretary tells us all we need to know about the event. Although not a record-breaker event, we still want as many gyros as possible to attend, so please try and come along if you can. The dates for your diary are 11th to 13th July. Please remember to PPR by email: events@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk no later than July 10th. Include: Registration, Departure field, POB and ETA please.

There's an update on the LAA online permit renewal scheme.

We have the Spamfield debrief, which was postponed to the 14th -15th June.

I review the impressive Rotax 916 powered Calidus, freshly CAA approved in the UK.

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

### Mass gyro fly-in -Sherburn in Elmet, 11th to 13th July

By Steve Paffett, BRA Events Secretary

Sherburn in Elmet and the British Rotorcraft Association are hosting a Mass Gyro Fly-in. This location has been chosen for several reasons

- 1. Accessible to more pilots than the more southerly venues previously used.
- 2. Sherburn are very excited to see the possible numbers that we are capable of achieving.
- 3. Runway 01-19 will be closed specifically to line up the parked gyro's.
- 4. Plenty of space for parking and camping.
- 5. The Café and Bar will operate extended hours and has a great menu at very competitive prices.
- 6. Toilets and Showers will be accessible 24hours
- 7. Fuel is available at a variety of pumps. Card is required
- 8. Variety of runways.
- 9. Situated in the heart of Yorkshire it is a great opportunity to explore this beautiful county.

Pilots are welcome to arrive on the Friday, camping and landing will be free to BRA members.

Please check Airfield information before setting off. Details here: https://

www.sherburnaeroclub.com/storage/ medialibrary/documents/egcj-arrival-anddeparture-procedures-1639052603RCRIG.pdf

PPR should be made by email to: events@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk no later than July 10th. Registration, Departure field, POB and ETA please.

#### Please find link to circuit patterns here:

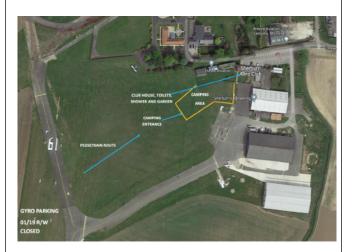
https://www.sherburnaeroclub.com/storage/medialibrary/documents/egcj-circuit-patterns-1639052602RdieR.pdf

#### Arriving by road:

Sherburn-in-Elmet Airfield is located 1.5 nautical miles (2.8 km; 1.7 mi) east of Sherburn-in-Elmet village and 5.5 NM (10.2 km; 6.3 mi) west of Selby, North Yorkshire, England.

#### Address:

The Aerodrome, New Lennerton Lane, Sherburn in Elmet, LS25 6JE



## LAA online permit renewal update

By Chris Rose, Editor

The LAA already has the online permit renewal scheme up and running for fixed wing aircraft. The good news is that they are now testing the same process for gyros. So expect to see this happening very soon!

The LAA state on their website "The new online Permit Revalidation system has been in place for fixed-wing aircraft on the LAA fleet since 15th April 2025 and now it is time to add Gyroplanes, both amateur-built and factory-built. Therefore, we are pleased to announce

that gyroplane Owners and Inspectors will be able to use the online Permit Revalidation system from 22nd July 2025.

The Permit Revalidation Process for gyroplanes will follow the same three steps as for fixed-wing aircraft, shown in the graphic below. The only differences will be small changes to the questions in line with the requirements for gyroplanes, such as asking about the rotor and rotor-head."

See <a href="https://www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk/news/gyroplanes-to-join-the-new-online-permit-revalidation-system">https://www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk/news/gyroplanes-to-join-the-new-online-permit-revalidation-system</a>

## Meet your instructor: Pauli Murphy



#### **Your Name:**

Pauli Murphy

#### The Name Of Your School:

Snowdonia Gyroplanes (I just made that up!)

#### Website:

https://gyrocopterexperience.com/caernarfon

#### Location:

Caernarfon Airport (EGCK)

#### How long have you been teaching for?

10 years Gyros (before that 1300 hours teaching in helicopters across 20 years)

#### How did you get into gyro flying?

I got into Gyroplane flying because 1/3rd of the price of, and a bloody site safer than helicopters!

#### What can you offer as a school?

I can offer PPL(G) Training in Magni M24 plus Air Experience flights in spectacular Snowdonia and Anglesey area.

## What do you see as the biggest challenges students have?

The biggest challenges for Students that I see are, quite simply, safe and competent Landings and Take Offs. However, these are readily achievable through steady practice with friendly and encouraging instruction.

## What can you comment on your teaching style?

If you're not enjoying it, why are you doing it?

#### Any other comments?

- I take great pleasure in quoting, with his permission, a Senior Pilot, and ex-military helicopter instructor, in Wales' Air-Sea Rescue Operations who declares, "The Gyroplane is the safest aircraft in the known Universe!"
- 2) For me, the privilege of watching someone else in the other seat progressively acquiring a sublimely rewarding skill is immensely satisfying, whilst my primary responsibility is to make sure we both get back down safely for lunch...and they're paying!!! Ha!!! (not for lunch, though!)

Dual Training at EGCK in G-GTFB is £195 per hour, inc. VAT while the engine is running. There are no other charges levied during Training with me. Ed: Pauli kindly shared the photo below with us of what can happen if you walk into the rotor blade whilst doing your pre-flight check. His advice; always walk around clockwise, that way you don't bump into the the sharp trailing edge!



### Spamfield debrief

By Chris Rose, Editor

The postponed Spamfield took place on the weekend of the 14th and 15th of June, the previous date being cancelled due to horrible weather.

I wasn't able to attend due to a nasty gusty crosswind at my home airfield which was outside my personal comfort zone. So this short debrief is curtesy of a BRA member who attended.

By all accounts it was a fun weekend. The weather warm, broken clouds, but very breezy. As ever, the team at Sandown gave a warm welcome to everyone, and I gather much beer was drunk!

In all, there were about 5 gyros in attendance over the course of the weekend, with some of those camping over on the Saturday night. Of course, as it's a microlight event, there were lots of those there: flexwing and 3 axis.



Photo credit: Colin Rodney

Take a look at the events section of the newsletter for the BRA fly-in at Sandown in September. Hopefully we'll see you all there.

#### 916 Calidus Review

By Chris Rose, Editor

I've been keeping an eye on the developments of the new Rotax 916 powered Calidus from AutoGyro, having first seen it when Gerry Speich flew it into the BRA Sandown event a couple of years ago. At the Popham show this year, it was on display on the RotorSport stand, and Gerry updated me that it now had CAA approvals and it was available in the UK. Fast forward a few weeks, Gerry contacted me and asked if I'd like to take it for a flight? Needless to say, I jumped at the chance, so early one Friday morning, Gerry dropped into Holmbeck, my home airfield.

Before we get to far into the review I should come clean, I'm a big Calidus fan; I've owned two and still fly one. My first was a 912 Calidus, and my current is a 914 Calidus. So, I guess I'm qualified to compare the new 916 offering to the previous models, and that's going to be the focus of this review. But before we kick off, let me explain why I love the Calidus so much...

The Calidus is the reason I got into gyros in the first place. I was looking at going back to glider flying, something I'd done in my teens. Given that gliding mostly requires a team of people to assemble and launch the aircraft, something I considered too much of a hassle, I was drawn to self-launched powered gliders. I had started reading the various aviation magazines, researching aircraft I could afford, when I spotted a photo of what I thought was the cockpit of a glider, but turned out to be the Calidus. So there's the first reason; the sleek fighter-jet style cockpit. Intrigued I set about looking into what a gyro was, and after one trial flight in an MTO Sport, I was hooked on gyros, and the rest, as they say, is history.

The Calidus offers you the best of all worlds, you get the amazing all-round views you only get with a tandem or single seat arrangement,

but all from the comfort of an enclosed cockpit. Being enclosed you're shielded from the elements, the noise levels are less, and their comfort makes long journeys a breeze. You can cruise happily at 90mph with no wind noise or buffeting, and without a cumbersome flying suit and helmet. You can read a map, eat a sandwich, have a drink, listen to music, all with an impressive 4 hour plus range, burning 15 to 18 litres an hour (what I get in my 914). There's also a surprisingly large amount of baggage space the Calidus, both under the seats, and either side of the passenger. This is great for camping trips or going away on tour.

Most of my flying is one-up, so I don't feel the pull of the more sociable side-by-side aircraft, and having flown both the Cavalon and the M24 I can say I don't like the more restricted view you get with them. I also seem... less involved or connected to the side-by-side gyros. My only complaint with the Calidus; the seating can be a little uncomfortable, especially for the rear seat passenger.

With my Calidus fan-boy explanation out of the way, lets get into the review...



The aircraft Gerry flew in for the day was a Rotax 916 powered Calidus, with a Woodcomp prop, and night VFR options. It pretty much has all the bells and whistles you can have, including a large Garmin G3x main display, and an auxiliary Garmin G5. The only available

options it didn't have were heated seats and adjustable lumber support. The empty weight for this aircraft is 340Kg, almost 40Kg heavier than my 914 Calidus; the weight of the heavier engine, rotors, prop, and extra avionics all add up.

If you're expecting a "new" redesigned aircraft you're going to be disappointed, the latest Calidus is essentially the same aircraft it's always been; same construction, looks, seating, and cockpit layout. The latest incarnation offers the following changes:

- Rotax 916 or 915 engines options.
- A larger 100 litre fuel tank (97 usable).
- Pre-rotation to 300rpm.
- A taller canopy.
- Night VFR option.
- More Garmin glass-cockpit options.
- Different propellor option depending on the engine.
- 8.6m diameter heavier rotor blades (grey tips).
- 560Kg MTOW.
- Shorter teeter tower for a better stick control feel.
- New improved heater controls.



The 916 Calidus retains the same seating setup the Calidus has always had.

From the outside, at a glance, you'd be forgiven for not noticing any difference to the original Calidus, but look again and the vented bulge of the left side of the engine cowling, the massive looking prop, and the fat-boy exhaust give it away.



Note the vented bulge, huge prop and spinner when compared with the 914 Calidus in the background.

The vented bulge on the engine cowling is a necessity of fitting the Rotax 916 into the relatively tight space of the Calidus lines, and provides cooling for the intercooler.



The huge spinner and blade chord of the Woodcomp prop.

The huge prop is another necessity to cope with, and make best use of, the 160HP of the 916 engine. It's a hydraulically activated, constant speed, variable pitch, KW30 Woodcomp propellor. The chord of the blades, and the size of the spinner look almost comically huge, but hint at the power the engine generates. The Rotax 915 option is

available with a fixed pitch 4-bladed prop, but there's too much power in the 916 engine for this prop option to be viable.



The large landing light of the night VFR option.

For anyone who's pushing 6ft tall, you're aware how close to the inside of the canopy the top of your head gets, I've actually banged my head off it when taxing over bumpy ground! The new taller canopy negates this issue, you've now got a good 10cm clearance. This does give the new Calidus the look of a beluga whale, but it's not extreme.



The taller canopy hinting at a beluga whale shape.



The incredible all-round view you get in a Calidus. Note the increased headroom above the pilot's heads.



Retractable sunshade.

Whilst we're on canopies, there's a now a retractable sun shade in the roof of the canopy, something I very much like. I have the "painted roof" on the canopy of my current Calidus, and it can make the rear seat feel a little claustrophobic, plus it can get in the way of the view up and rearwards. With the new retractable sun shade you have the option of

stowing it out of the way when you don't need it.

The two Garmin displays were the obvious differences in the cockpit, the only traditional dial was for the trim / rotor brake pressure.

There was a large Garmin G3x display in the middle, and a smaller G5 off to the right.

The G3x acts as the main display for all the engine instrumentation, rotor speed, and fuel levels, as well as your primary flight instruments and moving map.

The G5 is a the back up for the primary flight instruments for the night VFR option. If you're not interested in the night VFR option, the large G3x becomes an option, however Gerry explained they were ditching traditional altimeter and ASI gauges, and switching over to the G5 as standard. Apparently, low cost traditional gauges are becoming harder to source, so the small G5 display is a good alternative. It also has the additional feature of an artificial horizon, and I know pilots who consider this an excellent safety feature just incase you unintentionally fly into low visibility.



The Garmin G3x is your main display in the centre, the smaller G5 off to the right is your backup auxiliary. You can spec the Calidus to have just the G5 to act as ASI, Altimeter and VSI.

The G3x also acts as the control for the Garmin GTX 45R ADS-B transponder, so without the

G3x you'll be back to the Funke transponder and your own ADS-B solution of choice. Gerry did say that they are looking at a Trig transponder which has ADS-B built in.

It was interesting to learn that you can get the engine instruments as traditional gauges with the 916 engine, although it requires some clever electronics behind the dash to convert the CAN bus data into signals that can drive the gauges. Without the G3x, this is how you get your engine gauges, and it frees up the space where the G3x was to fit your own tablet for navigation. There's several different instrument panel options, so there should be something too suit everyone's tastes, needs, and budget.

The other obvious "instrument" was the large blue knob to control the Woodcomp propellor. You can turn the knob to get fine adjustment over the prop pitch, or press in the centre button and push / pull the knob for a quick large adjustment.



The Woodcomp prop pitch adjustment knob.

The not so obvious were the new heater controls; gone is the push/pull, fixed temperature, fixed speed "on" or "off", now there are two knobs: a knob for "on" and adjustable fan speed, and a knob to control the temperature. Gerry says they are also experimenting with canopy demister vents driven by the new heating system blower. If they can get this demister to work then that

would be an excellent feature, as anyone who's flown a Calidus on a cold damp morning will have experienced the canopy misting up, normally just as you're lining up.



Note the new heater controls to the right of the Garmin G5. You now have fan speed and temperature.

The brake / flight switch has also changed, it is now an "electrical" switch, rather than the pneumatic "mechanical" one. The switch looks pretty much the same, but the pneumatic switching part is now done remotely from the instrument panel.



Familiar flight / brake switch, but it's now "electric".



Instrument panel visor of the night VFR option.

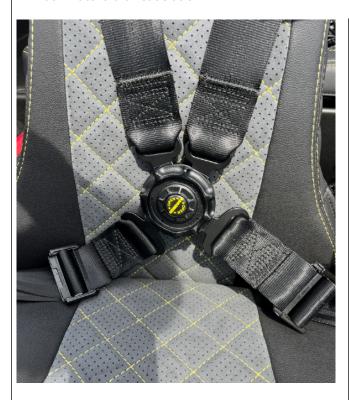
I liked the black painted interior, and I did wonder if the instrument panel visor of the night VFR option would help with keeping the suns heat and glare off my iPad, and prevent it shutting down, something I'm sure a lot of you would have experienced, regardless of what gyro you fly.

Now onto the flight test...

I asked Gerry to take me up first as a passenger; I wanted to see how the aircraft performed flown by someone who knew how to fly it and make best use of the increased engine power.

As it's my home airfield, I'm very familiar with how my Calidus performs flying in and out of it. It's a 500m long grass strip, orientated 29 / 11, with a pronounced up-slope for the first 40m from the 29 numbers. On the day, winds were favouring 29, definitely more of a crosswind, with gusts around 20mph, so this was going to be a good test in non-perfect conditions: first the up-slope, then the gusty cross wind.

The 4-point safety harness was a little fiddly to get connected up, myself being used to the car seat belt setup found on most AutoGyros. I guess it looks more impressive, and comes with the added benefit of a quick release / easier extraction in the event of an accident. The good news is that you can still have the car seat style if you want.



Quick release 4 point safety harness.

I asked Gerry to do a takeoff that would really show the power of the 916 engine, this meant pre-rotating to 300rpm. At the hold, Gerry went through the checks, pointing out that with the fuel-injected 916 there weren't mags, instead you had "lanes", but the check procedure was pretty similar, switching each lane off in turn. The prop was set to fully fine, making sure the "blue knob" was pushed all the way in. Then we lined up.

As Gerry pre-rotated to 300rpm, he pointed out he was keeping the stick over to the right to relieve stick pressures. Other than that, there was nothing unusual about the pre-rotation experience, perhaps just a little more noisy than I was used to. Then it was stick back, with the usual close encounter of your bits from the stick in the rear seat, and we were moving. The rear seat of the Calidus is not suited to occupants with beer bellies as you won't be able to get the stick all the way back.

I was expecting more of a "shove" into my seat than actually happened, the sudden surge the Rotax 914 can give you was missing, instead there was more of a continuous sense of acceleration. As we rounded the top of the upslope I was expecting the gyro to leap into the air, but instead the gyro got airborne gently, and we gathered speed down the runway until we pulled away not far from where I'd expect to be airborne in my 914 Calidus. It was all a little anticlimactic until what we'd just done dawned on me; some quick calculations in my head and I realised we were about 540Kg takeoff weight. I'm never wheels off the deck that early, even one-up, and here we were climbing away as if I was in my 914 Calidus one-up.

I glanced over Gerry's shoulder trying to make out the Garmin displays to get an idea of the vertical speed, but I couldn't make them out from where I sat, they're layout nothing like what I'm used to. Gerry said we were climbing at 1,500ft/m, again pretty impressive considering our weight. The specs for the aircraft give 6.6m/s (1,287ft/m) climb rate at MTOW under standard test conditions. Chatting to Gerry later, he told me he's seen over 2,000ft/m when he's been one-up, thought caution is needed as you're very nose high and almost sat on the prop.



Staring over Gerry's shoulder trying to get a good view of the fabulous Garmin displays.

Gerry settled into the cruise and said we were doing 90 knots (100mph) and the fuel burn was 21.5 litres an hour. He explained that when he flew he set the engine rpm and prop so that he got the fuel burn he wanted, this felt a bit of an

alien way of thinking to me, but I've not flown a variable pitch propellor before. I know friends who've got the IVO prop talk about using the manifold pressure to indicate when they're getting the most efficient performance out of the engine, but Gerry explained there wasn't a manifold pressure gauge with the 916 we were flying. With my simplistic 914 Calidus, if I cruise at 100mph one-up I get about 15 litres an hour fuel burn, two-up and at MTOW it starts to push 20 litres an hour. So 20.5 litres at 540Kg takeoff weight seems pretty good.

Gerry asked if there was anything I particularly wanted to do, and I requested he go to VNE, keen to feel what 140mph was like. Again, it was all pretty anticlimactic; it seemed that no sooner had I finished asking, he was saying that we were at VNE, 120 knots (140mph). My 914 Calidus shakes and rattles considerably at anything over 110mph, so I was at least expecting some big increase in vibration and noise. There was nothing, no perceptible change, it all felt very... effortless. He pointed out though that the fuel burn had jumped to 43 litres an hour, so if you're going anywhere quickly, it's good to know you've got the bigger 100 litre fuel tank!

The landing was pretty standard, nothing interesting to report there.

I asked Gerry to do one more takeoff, this time from the top of the slope at the 29 numbers. If I was one-up, this is where I'd normally line up as you get a better view of the runway ahead, and it avoids accelerating up hill at the start. Once again, the 916 Calidus was comfortably off the ground, well before the wheels would normally come unstuck on my Calidus.

I'm guessing, and going on the information friends observing the takeoffs told me, that we were off the ground about 50m to 100m sooner than I normally would be in my 914 Calidus, all pretty impressive given the weight we were at, and the less than ideal wind conditions.

Then it was my turn to fly it...

I wanted to do a normal, or what I consider a normal, takeoff for two-up and heavy; prerotating to 200rpm at the 29 numbers and making use of the up-slope part of the runway so I had the maximum usable length in front of me. Pre-rotating went without any drama, but I wasn't expecting how heavy the stick felt. I've flown Magnis, and my own Calidus is heavy on the stick forces, but this felt heavier than any of these. I was wary about applying full power, expecting the gyro to yaw or feel twitchy with all that power, but it didn't. It all felt very... manageable and controlled, as I fed the power in.

Once airborne it all felt very familiar except for trying to figure out the Garmin displays; I missed the obvious ASI and altimeter you get with traditional dials. But the Garmin's did look very slick.

What can I say? It flew nicely. No big surprises. The stick forces heavy but not uncomfortable. It felt very stable. Speaking with Gerry later, and asking about the stick forces, he said he thought the pitch bolt was maybe a little too tight, and I'm assuming the heavier blades may have something to do with it. He wasn't sure if the aircraft had the "clamps" fitted to the control cables, like they have in the current Calidus and Cavalon fleet, to reduce the "slack" in the cables, and help damp down the vibration transmitted down to the stick from the rotors. The clamps can make the stick feel heavier.

I spent a little time trying to figure out the relationship between the prop pitch adjustment, the engine RPM, the airspeed, and fuel burn. That definitely requires some getting used to, and rather than waste time trying to figure it out there and then, I opted to try going

to VNE. VNE came up pretty quickly, again I was shocked about how stable and effortless it all felt, just a slight increase in cabin vibration. You wouldn't know if it wasn't for the ASI showing 120 knots.

My landing wasn't so good, but that was my fault. We were a bit high, and wary of the engine response, our heavy weight, and the potential gusts, I got things slightly wrong resulting in a bit of an awkward landing.

For my next takeoff, I repeated for myself what Gerry had done earlier, going from the top of the slope at the 29 numbers. This time I wanted to wind the rotors up to 300rpm, but as I got to 270rpm I felt the gyro start to slide forward on the grass with the wheels locked, brakes full-on, so I decided to leave it there and pull the stick back. Feeding in the power in I was expecting the gyro to leap into the air more than it did, it felt just like a normal takeoff, albeit a shorter one.

Once airborne Gerry explained that to make use of the higher pre-rotation you need to understand you're already effectively behind the power curve with; high rotor rpm, high power, and slow speed. So you need airspeed to accelerate the aircraft forwards (just like in the air), so push the stick forwards a little (not all the way!) to reduce the rotor drag and accelerate to above Vmin, say about 50-60mph, and then pull the stick a little back again and away you go.

My final landing was much better, this time opting for a flatter powered approach.

So what's my conclusion?...

#### Pros:

- It's a very stable gyro to fly.
- Going to VNE is effortless.
- Impressive takeoff performance.

- Being able to get the most efficiency from the engine by adjusting the prop.
- The improved canopy height.
- The foldable canopy sun visor.
- The Garmin displays look very cool.
- The improved heater controls.
- Other than the Woodcomp prop, servicing costs are similar to a 914 Calidus.

#### Cons:

- The stick feels heavier.
- I had wanted a better seating arrangement, but I understand that this is still a Calidus, and to do anything more would basically mean an entire major redesign, and in effect that would mean an entirely new gyro.
- To make use of the higher speed you're burning almost twice the amount of fuel.
- Additional servicing costs of the Woodcomp prop.
- Price! The 916 Calidus is expensive and it's tricky to weigh up if the performance increase is worth it.

#### Pricing...

Note: The prices quoted below are subject to the pound / euro exchange rate and tariffs etc. They're also a rough guide from Gerry. I've included the VAT, as let's face it, most of us are going to have to pay that.

A fully loaded 916 Calidus with all the bells and whistles will set you back a whopping £213,000.

The more basic model 916 Calidus will still set you back about £168,000.

If you go for the 915 engine with a fixed pitch prop instead, you can expect to knock about £15,000 off those prices.

I've heard Gerry say the Rotax 916 and Woodcomp prop alone make up a huge

June 2025

#### **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 the <u>Events</u> 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!

## 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



## 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: <a href="mailto:events@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk">events@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk</a> 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. |
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**British Rotorcraft Association** 

June 2025