



November Newsletter 2025

Welcome

Welcome to the November newsletter.

We kick off with a big thank you for all our members who responded to our survey.

I show you what a bored gyro pilot does when his partner insists you carve your own pumpkin for Halloween as she's wants to do one herself and won't do it on her own!

Martyn Love, the very same person who recounted his tale of flying to the Pyrenees in last month's newsletter, is back this month, but this time he's selling flags (the kind you have on the front of your gyro to indicate you're flying in balance) which look very nice, and far more posh than a piece of string.

His majesties government has decided to change, the way GAR forms are submitted. So any of you thinking of flying into or out of the UK should take note of this article.

I chronicle the adventure of two fellow gyro pilots who flew to Spain to deliver an M16 in what seems the most effort anyone has gone to to sell a gyro!

And finally, bringing up the rear (no sniggering at the back!), is Clive with his Rubber Side Down. This month he cautions us about weather and whether (to fly or not), and worries about his pension fund.

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BRA survey

By Steve Paffett, Events Coordinator

A big thank you to all of you that responded to the survey. 44 of you took the time to respond. Very positive feed back on the Newsletter and I know our Editor and committee work very hard to make it as current and interesting as possible. Hopefully it jogged a few of you re the forum and website, we are constantly adding and updating that, albeit as with most things we do in our spare time it doesn't always seem that different.

One of the articles posted for sale was gone within a month and a few of you commented that you had almost forgotten the website existed.

Those of you who said you may like to have a more local group or even help organise an event locally, sadly the data does not show us who you were. If you can please email events@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk and let me know if you are still interested.

Thank you again

Steve

Gyro pumpkin

By Chris Rose, Editor

Rewind a couple of weeks, and the discussion came up with my partner of pumpkin carving for Halloween. Normally she takes great pride in carving one and I normally join in with my own. But last year I refused to do it saying I thought it was a waste of a pumpkin, and generally being bah humbug (wrong season for that response I know, but it's getting close!) about the whole thing. This year she said she didn't want to do it either, and on further investigation it transpired she was upset that I

refused to join in anymore. So, I thought about the possible consequences of continuing my stance, and relented, and did what only a gyro pilot would do...



Yep, it's a gyro, and yep, I missed the tail off! I only noticed a couple of days later, so I'm not sure I'm that much of a gyro pilot! Clearly I should have done a better DI!

And in the interest of fairness, and to keep the peace, here's hers...



Anyone for a flag?

By Martyn Love, Member

Want something posher than the bit of string to show your gyro is flying in balance? I'm offering a limited number of flags, made from stainless steel, with a red powder-coated flag. It has an adjustable angle with a detent to set the perfect position. Supplied with 3M VHB tape to securely attach it to your gyro without need for holes being drilled or screws. I've included a fitting mask to allow you to perfectly align it, and 3M cleaner to ensure a good bond. And of course it comes with fitting instructions. If you're interested please call me to haggle about price: 07563 207985

Cheers, Martyn.



Changes to the way you submit a GAR form

This just announced in regards to GAR form submission:

We're making changes to the way that you sign in to Submit a General Aviation Report (GAR) on 31 October 2025.

Changes to the way you sign in

Beginning on Friday 31 October, you'll only be able to sign in to Submit a GAR using GOV. UK One Login.

You should use the same email address to create your GOV. UK One Login that you use for your Submit a GAR account. This is so you keep the existing information in your account.

The switch to GOV. UK One Login allows you to sign in to some government services using the same email address and password. In the future you'll be able to use your GOV. UK One Login to access all services on GOV. UK.

Problems signing in

If you have any problems signing in, you can contact the GOV. UK One Login team for support. Support is available Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm UK time by phone and webchat at:

<https://home.account.gov.uk/contact-gov-uk-one-login>

*Kind regards,
Submit a GAR Team*

Delivering an M16 to Spain to clinch a sale

By Chris Rose, Editor

Before we start, let me explain, the story is about two fellow gyro pilots, Mark Weston and Kevin O'Neill. A few weeks ago, they very kindly sat down with me to regale me with their adventure of delivering a gyro to Spain from the UK. Mark isn't a low hour pilot, neither is he a high hour pilot, but what makes this story more remarkable is that this was his first foray outside the UK. Kevin, on the other hand is a seasoned fixed wing instructor, well versed in flying in Europe - well France at least - and a gyro pilot. So just how did Mark and Kevin end up delivering a gyro to Spain?

Mark had been flying his own Magni M16 for a while, but wanted an enclosed gyro. When an ideal Magni M24 came up for sale last year, he jumped at the opportunity to purchase it, but this left him with the issue of trying to sell his M16. If any of you have been looking at the second hand market recently, you will see that gyros haven't really been selling, or if they are being sold, they are at bargain prices. After having his M16 up on AFORS for 5 months without success, Mark was contacted by a potential buyer in Belgium, but this sale fell through when the buyer realised they'd have to pay a hefty VAT bill on importing it. Keep the VAT issue in mind.

In May this year, nearly 3 months later, Mark got his second call, this time from a buyer in Spain. Again, the expected VAT bill was an issue for the buyer, and there was the issue of getting the gyro to Spain. It was going to cost about £4,000 to trailer the gyro, so to sweeten the deal, Mark, without thinking, agreed to fly the gyro to the buyer. Mark's thinking was: the M16 had been 100% reliable, and if Ketchell could fly around the world in one, then surely he could at least fly his to Spain to deliver it! One

final thing: if the buyer decided not to buy the gyro, Mark would have to fly it all the way home again! Mark was now about to embark on a journey across Europe, with no firm commitment from the buyer.

Mark decided he needed help with the navigation, and would appreciate some company for the long journey. Kevin was based at the same airfield as Mark, and they had flown in the gyro together many times. With Kevin's cross-channel experience this meant he was the ideal candidate for Mark. Kevin agreed to go along with the plan, not really believing it would actually happen. But there was a part of him that thought, well if it happens, what an adventure it would be!

Much to Kevin's shock, it did happen, and it was too late now to go back on his word. So the pair of them set about planning the trip. Mark needed to get a Class 2 medical, a requirement to fly in Spain. Of course there would be filing flight plans and GARs - more on the flight plans later! Kevin spoke to a friend who regularly flies to Spain to get some advice, and this helped ease some of their worries, making the trip seem less of a daunting task.

As for route planning, they bought 1,000,000 scale aviation maps for France and Spain, but intended to use Sky Demon for the actual navigation. The aim was to just fly, planning the next leg at each stop, generally heading in the right direction. The only stipulation Mark had was the airfields they stopped at needed to have MOGAS or UL91. Most of us only use AVGAS if totally necessary, understanding the reduced service intervals it implies if used regularly, but Mark takes this to the extreme - he just doesn't use it! And he wasn't about to either, not wanting to deliver his M16 to its new owner in anything but perfect condition. With such a long journey, the potential for the weather to throw a spanner in the works is high, so just taking each leg as it happened seemed a reasonable plan.

As Kevin didn't have a Class 2 medical, and to save the need for him to get one it was decided that he'd fly across the Channel and do the legs through France, leaving Mark to do all the Spanish legs.

Friday, 20th June...

The day of departure arrived, and with nothing more than a plan of get to Le Touquet and take it from there, they set off from Holmbeck Farm at 09:00. It was set to be a hot day, with temperatures into the 30's, and with full fuel and two fat blokes (as they put it), leaving early made sense, avoiding the thin air and heat of midday. They had planned a splash-and-dash at Headcorn, but this plan was abandoned in flight, opting to continue out over the Channel, and straight to Le Touquet.



The flight took 2 hours and 42 minutes, arriving at Le Touquet around lunchtime. Not wanting to carry on in the midday heat, they walked into Le Touquet town for lunch.

Hearing them tell the story, I'm kind of envious of their approach: fly as much as they wanted

to each day, to wherever seemed best next, and do it comfortably. I tend to be one of those people who plans too much, forgetting that often, with aviation, you have to be flexible, especially if you're planning long trips. As Mark put it: taxis and booking.com is all you really need. Mark did point out that they basically spent the next five days in the same clothes! All I can say it's a good job the M16 is an open cockpit!

After lunch, they set off for their next destination, Abbeville, an airfield Kevin was very familiar with. They would leave their life jackets there, not wanting to carry them further than they needed. Before departing Mark had to reluctantly put in 20L of AVGAS to ensure they could get to Abbeville. The flight time there was 54 minutes.

From Abbeville they headed on to Chartres Metropole, which was to be their last stop for the day. A welcome stop after a 2 hour 36 minute flight. The local taxi company took them to a hotel, which turned out to be very expensive! I guess make sure your taxi driver knows you're doing things on the cheap!

Saturday, 21st June...

The next day saw them do three hops: First to Bailleau Armenonville - flight time 38 minutes. Then Le Blanc - flight time 2 hours and 15 minutes. And finally, Saint Junien - flight time 52 minutes.

At Saint Junien they decided it was too hot to continue any further for the day, so they went into the town, got a hotel for the night, and soaked up the local atmosphere.

For Mark, soaking up the local atmosphere was finding a street music festival. From bands playing Oasis covers outside pubs, to huge speakers pumping out techno so loud that nobody could stand near them. There were also brass bands who'd occasional chuck in

covers of Lady Gaga songs - the mind boggles as to how that sounded! All this taken in whilst eating pulled pork and chips! He says for him it was the highlight of the trip.



Sunday, 22nd June...

They arrived back at the airfield to find fog had settled in. There was only one thing to do: walk to the local McDonalds and get breakfast whilst they waited for the sun to burn the fog off. Returning to the airfield they saw a police helicopter had landed next to their gyro and they began to wonder if it was for them. Perhaps they had come to do a paperwork check, something Kevin has heard can happen, but as it turns out, they were there on other business.



4 legs today would see them heading for Cacassonne Salvaza. Stopping off on the way for fuel at: Cahors Lalbenque - flight time 1 hour 54 minutes. Montauban, and another reluctant 20L of AVGAS - flight time 31 minutes. Castelnau-dary Villeneuve - flight time 1 hour 1 minute.

They arrived at Castelnau-dary Villeneuve, needing fuel, to find the airfield deserted, the tower unlocked, but no one to be found. Scouting around, and after a long walk, they found the perimeter gate, which turned out to be locked. They were contemplating climbing the gate when a car appeared. This was the airfield manager who had apparently gone out for lunch and was now returning, leaving everything unlocked except for the gate!

The final leg for the day to Cacassonne Salvaza was a flight time of 32 minutes. The guys described Cacassonne as a bit like landing at Luton, with proper full sized commercial jets coming and going. Surprisingly, they were not asked to pay a landing fee, something I can't see Luton letting you get away with. To get out of air-side, they were given a code for the gate so they could head off to get a bed for the night. Dinner was had at a restaurant in the shadow of the walls of the massive castle there.

Monday, 23rd June...

Arriving at Cacassonne the next morning they found the army had turned up on the apron

and were busy doing press-ups. I'm not sure what they would have thought of the two British guys in their weird flying machine, most probably looking a bit disheveled after being on the road after a few days! Mark found it amusing that they had to line up behind a Ryan Air flight when they went to depart, not something I expect any of us have had to do in the UK in a gyro!



This was the start of Mark flying the legs, as the next stop would be somewhere in Spain. A flight plan had to be filed as they were about to cross a border, something to remember if you're flying across Europe. It's not enough to just file a flight plan to get into France, every time you cross from one European country into another, you have to file one.

The first airfield in Spain was Ampuriabrava, a flight time of 1 hour 51 minutes. Needing fuel, and more importantly, needing pee, they had to hold outside the airfield due to parachute dropping. Finally on the ground again, and bladders mercifully emptied, it was time for a lunch break and another reluctant 40L of AVGAS.

The guys said they struggled to find airfields in Spain that would take gyros, Their first choice wasn't any good as it was closed for a fireworks festival. Well, they could have got there, but they'd have been stranded there until the festival was over.

Another heads-up for anyone else thinking of flying to Spain, every flight needs a flight plan, and you need to remain under 1,000ft AGL. Basically, you're hugging the terrain contours at no more than a 1,000ft above them. A perfect situation for owning gyro!

They picked their next airfield, Avinyonet del Penedes, and set off. A flight time of 2 hours and 4 minutes saw them landing just as the airfield was closing. They arrived in time to see the dust plumes of the last car departing. Locked in, there was no other way out except climbing over a high perimeter fence, a very precarious climb!

Tuesday, 24th June...

Arriving back at Avinyonet del Penedes, they decided to have breakfast at the airfield as it had an excellent cafe. Turns out the airfield is home to Airbet, a Spanish company making gyroplanes. Two good reasons to go there: food and gyros!

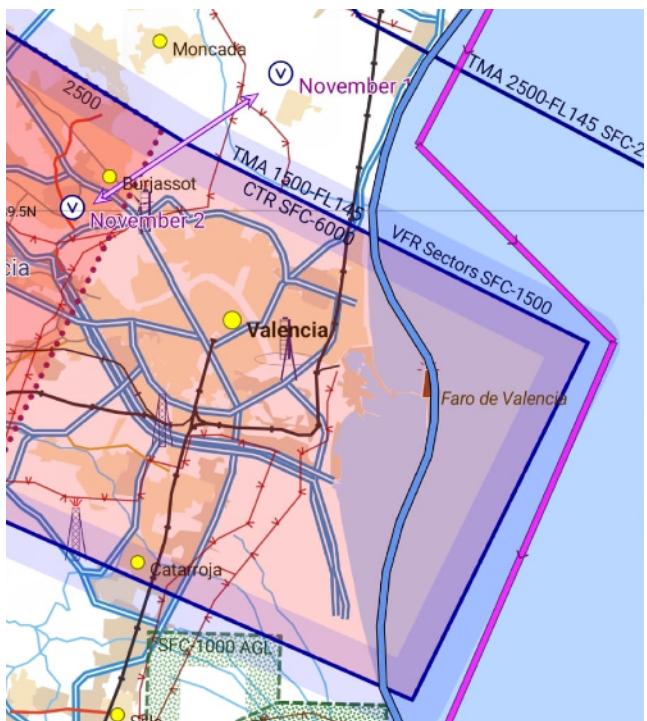


The guys hoped to make it to their final destination today, Muchamiel. They planned a stop at Castellon, a flight time of 2 hours and 14 minutes. They arrived in time to go to the seafront and have lunch. The guys commented that in Spain there were a lot of high resort buildings close to many airfields on the coast, which can make for interesting arrivals and departures.

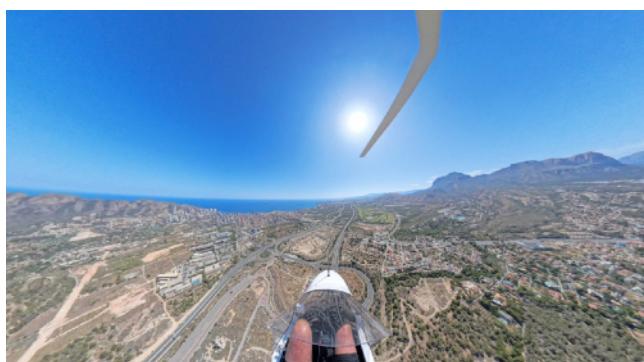


The locals at the airfield had told them that if they were flying at less than 1,000ft AGL, then not to bother filing a flight plan. With this piece of local knowledge, the guys set off towards Muchamiel, and the end of their epic journey. This final leg wasn't to be without its drama.

To skirt around Valencia airspace, their route took them out to sea across a wide bay. Things on a 1,000,000 scale map can fool you in their size, what looked like a short stretch of water to cross, turned out to be far wider when viewed in reality! Somewhat regretting leaving their life jackets back in France, the guys stuck as close to the shore and airspace as they could. This prompted a call for Valencia on the radio, having spotted them approaching the airspace boundary. They were asked if they had a flight plan? Thanks to the guys at Castellon they didn't! Expecting a reprimand, the controller simply asked if they'd like to open one over the radio, and then let them transit through their airspace. Relieved that they didn't have to go any further out to sea, and that they'd dodged the potential flight plan bullet, they continued across the wide bay.



There was now a strong head wind, and with fuel running low they opted for a short cut, through a ravine, following a motorway.



With some relief, the guys arrived at Muchamiel with enough fuel, and without further drama. To top it off, Mark did a peach of a landing in front of the prospective buyer.

Total time flight time for the journey was 22 hours 21 minutes spread over 5 days.

The route on their paper maps is shown below:



A short time later, and with the sale agreed, the guys flew back to the UK on a commercial flight home from Spain, much faster than their journey there, but not as exciting.

The rest of the sale process took a while to complete, with the buyer having to fly to the UK in the end to sign the sale document in front of a UK notary. Without this, the buyer would have had to paid Spanish stamp duty on top of the VAT.

Marks final comment was on how helpful everyone they met was. Everywhere gave them free hangarage, except the airfield they turned up to after it had closed.

At the end of the day, it seems like a lot of effort on Mark's part to make the sale happen, but when you look at the adventure he and Kevin had, you can't deny that it's better than handing over a gyro in windswept rainy weather in a remote field in the UK!

Rubber side down

By Clive Rose, BRA Safety And Training

In January 2013, a pilot died when his helicopter struck a crane in London in bad weather. The incident prompted a couple of frantic calls as he had the same name as one of my relatives, also a heli pilot. There was a suggestion that he may have felt a commercial imperative to make the flight in order to collect a customer for a flight to Yorkshire.

Fast forward a few months and Thorney Island had an event where pilots were invited to fly-in and take one or two local residents for short flights. If the prospect of visiting an airfield rarely open to the public wasn't enough, there was also food involved...

Anyway, an expense (collective noun for a group) of gyros flew down to Sandown for a bacon bap before the short hop back over the Solent to Thorney Island for The Event. On the first leg, we'd had to descend to maintain VFR in the gap between the descending cloud and the rising South Downs.

Years later, when I was training RAF Puma pilot Rich, he introduced me to the maxim "If there's ANY doubt, there's NO doubt!" I'm sure it applies to many situations, but none more so than flying weather. If there's ANY doubt the weather might interfere with the safe completion of your journey, there's NO doubt you should abort.

Anyway, we flew the letter box between cloud and land and, after the scoff and dash at Sandown, ended up at Thorney Island, bathed in sunshine. Lots of fun was had flying locals around the bay and a great time was had by all.

Our return was delayed when Julian's pre-rotator spontaneously disassembled, as we queued for departure. He left his aircraft, hitched a ride and we all departed Northwards.

Alas, the clouds we'd encountered in the morning had now formed a deadly embrace with the South Downs, blocking our journey home.

Thorney Island were very understanding and kindly hangared our aircraft overnight while we negotiated trains and taxis to complete our journeys home. My darling wife (she of the 7 S's you read about last month) and I were babysitting our new Grandson that night so she had to do the heavy-lifting while I juggled a train timetable and an expiring phone battery to join her.

We returned the next day under clear blue skies to collect our aircraft. Julian had to wait for parts and engineer so he returned to base somewhat later and is now arguing with SpaceX over their use of his phrase "spontaneous disassembly".

Importantly, the maxim "if there's ANY doubt..." gets trotted out ad nauseam, alternative landing spots are considered on all cross-country flights, and weather is scrutinised at all points along our routes throughout the duration of the planned trip. As it should have been back in 2013. Ahem!

Always fly towards questionable weather so you can make an early decision to turn tale before you get caught in it. No imperative (personal or culinary) trumps safety.

My grandson now has 6 gyro hours under his belt and has started ground school training towards his PPL(A). His parents are planning to use my pension to fund his ATPL. If you see me rattling a cup at the next BRA Event, you'll understand why!

Fly safe, check the weather, and at all times
Keep it rubber side down!

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 it 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 2026!

Record-Breaker 2026

13th June, 2026, Old Warden

Get this date in your diary now for the 2026 gyro record-breaker where we attempt to beat our previous record.

We hope the Aston Martin owners club will be in attendance, the connection being James Bond and Little Nellie. Last time I think we had 300 Astons show up. We are also working on having some of Ken Wallis's other gyros on show.

More details to come.



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 or gyro related stuff for sale here for free!