



April 2026

**BRA award - please nominate again.
Popham and the BRA AGM.
Magni mandatory service bulletin.
Single Seater meeting.
Part 2 of Tony Unwin's gyro history.
Sideslipping and kiting.**



Your Committee:

Chairman:

Kai Barnett

Membership Secretary:

Lawrence Spiller

Treasurer:

Rupert Stanley

Safety And Training:

Clive Rose

Events Coordinator:

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](mailto:membership@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk)

Web:

britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

Cover photo credit: Mark Hull.

Correction for last week's photo credit: Although Pauli Murphy provided the photo to us, it was actually taken by Paul Howard.

Welcome

Welcome to the April BRA magazine. In this month's magazine:

Last month we announced the BRA award for outstanding achievement in, or contribution to, the UK gyro community. **Due to a technical hitch, if you sent in your nomination in March then please send it again as it will have been lost.**

The BRA will be having its AGM at the Popham microlight trade fair.

Magni issue mandatory service bulletin for Battery Voltage Information for M16C Plus/M16 Plus, M22C Plus/M22 Plus, and M24C Plus/M24 Plus.

Single Seater meeting announced.

Tony Unwin continues with part 2 of his gyro history. It includes a link to a YouTube video which is a great accompaniment to the story. Part 3 will be in next months magazine.

Clive Rose is back, and at the back as usual, with a couple of readers questions on sideslip and kiting.

Finally, please keep your cover photos coming, along with any interesting gyro related stories you'd like to share.

Chris Rose

ed@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

BRA award for outstanding achievement in, or contribution to, the UK gyro community

By Chris Rose, Editor

Due to a technical hitch, if you sent in your nomination in March then please send it in again as it will have been lost.

We've also extended the nomination period for another month, so the new deadline is 1st June.

As announced last month, the BRA thought it would be nice to issue awards to people who, as the title above implies, have done amazing gyro related things. There are some notable people out there who deserve recognition, and whilst we have our own ideas, we'd also like to hear your nominations.

We will consider diverse reasons, for example but not limited to:

- promoting the sport in the UK
- gyro flying exploits
- technical developments
- safety

When you nominate someone, please can you also give a brief explanation why.

You must be a BRA member to nominate someone.

Please can we have your submissions by the 1st June 2026, with the aim of making an announcement in the July magazine.

Your nominations can be emailed to:
nominations@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

BRA AGM at Popham 2nd May

By Chris Rose, Editor



The BRA will be holding its AGM at the Popham Microlight Trade Fair on Saturday, 2nd May, at 13:00 in the BRA tent. Please come along and show your support for the BRA. It's also your chance to voice your opinions direct to the BRA committee, and to hear what we've been up to behind the scenes. If you would like to put yourself forward for any of the committee positions then this is your opportunity to do so.

Keep an eye on your inbox as we'll be sending out the agenda for the AGM, and an invitation to it, in the next few days.

Even if you can't make the AGM, it's still worth coming to Popham as there's generally quite a few gyros there. They normally allow you to park your gyro on the flight line outside the BRA tent area. Both Rotorsport and Magni usually have their latest gyros on display, so it's a good chance to see these in the flesh and talk to their sales team. Failing that, you'll find enough other gyro pilots milling around who will undoubtedly be quite happy to talk gyro bollox to you!

Hope to see you all there!

Magni mandatory service bulletin for battery voltage display

By Chris Rose, Editor



Magni have just issued a mandatory service bulletin in regards to the display of the battery voltage. It affects all M16C Plus/M16 Plus, M22C Plus/M22 Plus, and M24C Plus/M24 Plus aircraft powered by the Rotax 915 iS engine.

The bulletin says:

This Service Bulletin is raised by Magni Gyro for updating the Engine Monitoring System (EMS). The implementation provides the pilot with a gyroplane battery voltage indication.

In the event of Rotax 915 iS Generator B failure both Warning Lamp A and B remain OFF and so in order to mitigate the risk of continuing to fly with Generator B in a failed state, without being aware of it, the indication of battery voltage is provided in the display.

If this Service Bulletin is not implemented and a Generator B failure occurs, electrical utilities (e.g. radio and transponder) can begin to exhibit power supply anomalies, up to shutdown.

The Service Bulletin also applies to gyroplanes equipped with Rotax 912 iS.

The bulletin is SB 050 which you'll find in the owners area of the Magni UK website.

Single Seater meeting announced

By Chris Rose, Editor



By Originally uploaded by Gyromike (Transferred by The Bushranger) - Originally uploaded on en.wikipedia, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17749755>

Single Seater member, Pat Gardener, contacted us to say he's organising a meeting on the 3rd October at the Aviator Hotel, Sywell. The meeting will be held early afternoon, and as we get more details we'll let you know.

Pat explains it like this: *"The format will be to meet at the Aviator hotel early afternoon, chat for hours about anything and everything single seat and extend into the evening with a meal and beer for those who want to stay."*

If you have any questions regarding this, then please contact myself, and I'll pass these on to Pat.

ed@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

Notable characters from the gyro community: Tony Unwin (Part 2)

By Tony Unwin, Member

This is part 2 of Tony Unwin's story and there's an interesting YouTube video that makes a good accompaniment to this. You can find this here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hh3ty8lvilQ>. Ed.

My new fixed wing commercial led me to Peterborough where John Meacock was starting a fledgling parachute school and my original flying instructor Barry Tempest was CFI. I became chief pilot/only pilot of a new air taxi company, my experience was minimal so the learning curve was steep! My last hurrah in parachuting was with British ten-man relative work team World Championships in the USA, allowing time to Air Taxi to unheard of locations throughout Europe - experience in bucket loads! Meanwhile another fledgling organisation, the BRA was finding its feet. My membership number 011 puts me among elite company - Tony Melody, Dave Organ, Mike Golding, Mac Smith, David Beavers, to name a few. Wing Commander Ken Wallis was appointed an honourable life member for his design work as well as flying Little Nellie with great aplomb as James Bond.

The UK CAA were concerned by the number of single seat accidents that involved pilot induced oscillation and borrowed my VPM to investigate the situation. Mathematicians from Glasgow University created computer models and flew scenarios to understand the C of G / thrustline relationship to gyro stability. Not too surprisingly it turned out to be the size and momentum of the tailplane that was the crucial factor as with most flying machines.

As the commercial aviation world also became more stable I moved to a co-pilot position with a Gatwick based airline flying 50 seat passenger aircraft around the UK and Europe. Gyros filled my spare time and I displayed at Duxford with the first UK gyroplane display license as well as instructing on the VPM. The day job grew and I flew freight around the World from Gatwick in a 4 engine DC8 jet for 3 years. That company joined greats like Laker Airways and PanAm into oblivion. I scrambled to get an American Air Transport License to fill a co-pilot slot with Saudi Arabian Airways and flew Tristar 1011, B747 and B737. Returning to the UK, I moved to Bristol to fly MD83, B737 and Airbus A320.



Now the best bit - on retirement I wanted to fly gyros somewhere it was warm, they spoke English and was civilised. New Zealand fitted that profile and so I was delighted to meet and be sponsored for an entrepreneurial business visa by an Auckland Professor who was building his own 2 seat gyro, Kahu, based on an American helicopter but powered by a heavy Mazda rotary engine. This operation was in a blister hangar at Tauranga Airport on the East Coast 3 hours drive from Auckland. While awaiting visa approval I visited a new factory in Germany starting to produce a Magni-like two-seat trainer called an MTO 16. I was very impressed and Otmar Burkner and I agreed a dealership arrangement for New Zealand and

Australia. An order was placed for three aircraft to be shipped to Tauranga minus engines and these would be finished locally and become the basis for a training school and dealership.



Back in Tauranga I had been able to acquire a small hangar opposite the Kahu operation, currently being used by an ex-pat Brit to house two PA 28 Cherokee training aircraft. At one stage this went on to house 14 serviceable gyros! Having approval to start a business I advertised with instant results, my first student had already done a few hours training with an instructor on his home built, 2 seat Dominator. Fortunately, I had previously flown a Dominator with its designer Ernie Boyett in Florida the year before. A curious looking aircraft but very stable as the c of g is located way above the thrust line, it remains today a popular home build machine offering reliable performance at an affordable price. I completed training my first Kiwi student, I was appointed an NZ advanced instructor and the school was accepted by the CAA.

Meanwhile three new MTO 16s had arrived and Otmar and his chief engineer Karston flew in to fit the first Rotax 912 which I had sourced locally. (On route I lost my agreed Australian dealership to Otmar's long time buddy living North of Sydney).

The factory visit trained local engineers to maintain the MTO's and displaying them soon

bought students and new owners from the local area. A few years later with the birth of Calidus,



Otmar returned to demonstrate this new wonder alongside five MTO's on a National Safari of 70 light aircraft. The journey covered every corner of both Islands over a ten day period and although designed for light aircraft the gyros performed alongside without missing a beat and established a reputation as serious aviators. With National exposure, including a breakfast TV slot, the Company was exceeding the UK in sales per head of population.

Look out for part 3 in next month's magazine.
Ed.

Rubber side down

By Clive Rose, BRA Safety And Training

I'm always delighted to receive correspondence from RSD readers and thought I'd use the below questions, received a couple of weeks ago, to feed this month's article.

1. When is it safe, and possibly unsafe, to sideslip a gyro?
2. What measures can be taken to prevent a gyro from kiting during the take-off stage in high wind?

Sideslip first...

Anecdotally, I heard of a gyro instructor somewhere in the Med' who side-slipped straight to the scene of his fatal accident during an Experience Flight.

Aeroplanes sometimes use sideslip to lose height or speed when too high or too fast on approach. If you're too high or too fast and you've forgotten how to go-around, remember you're flying a gyrocopter and there are myriad other ways to lose height and speed. None of these should be deployed if you're approaching a busy airfield but if you're on fire or making a forced landing, by all means slow the aircraft (above 500' agl) or use an S-turn to bleed height, while always keeping sight of your landing zone.

In a sideslip you're dipping a wing towards your direction of travel. In a gyro, remember your rotors are teetering to maintain equality of lift from each blade so the retreating blade is much lower than the advancing blade. Gyro 101 demands we maintain positive-G and airflow up through the rotor disk at all times. Sideslip and get relative airflow over the top of the disc, there's no coming back from it.

Kiting in high wind...

You're using a brolly with the rain coming at you sideways and all-of-a-sudden the wind gets under the brolly and it turns inside out. That's kiting! And that's how quickly it can happen.

You're pre-rotating in a strong wind and bring the stick back, exposing the underside of the disc to the inflow. What's going to happen? Although it's immense fun to fly in strong winds, the risk of rotor management infractions increases exponentially with higher speeds. Take your eye off the ball for a moment and Mother Nature will remind you who's in charge.

DO NOT TRY ANY OF THIS ON YOUR OWN! IF HIGH WIND IS FORECAST, BOOK A TRAINING HOUR...

Kiting is when the nose wheel lifts high in the air as you bring the stick back. The best way to mitigate it is to practice over and over with the self-loading ballast of an Instructor. Pre-rotate to an agreed rotor speed – say 100 rrpm – before releasing the pre-rotator and slowly bringing the stick back. Stick back at lower rrpm allows you to harness the wind to complete pre-rotation. Bringing it back slowly allows you to manage the rotor's acceleration without kiting like your brolly.

Keep the stick back until you get to the appropriate rrpm, release the hand brake, increase power and you're into a normal take-off. The Rotor Speed Build phase will be compressed because of the greater inflow, otherwise it's situation normal, albeit with a more responsive aircraft.

High winds are an excellent training tool, but are not to be toyed with. If you've trained with an Instructor in high wind conditions, they won't pose a problem if you return to your airfield and find the wind stronger than when you departed.

After landing, stick forward and into wind, park with the wind coming from the right side and get the rotor braked to a stop. Turn everything off and remember to breathe!

Keep note of your Weather Limits and stick to them. If the wind is stronger than your limit, drink tea. If it's within limits, enjoy. And bring yourself and the aircraft safely back, 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.

Popham BRA AGM

2nd / 3rd May, 2026, Popham

The BRA will be holding its AGM at the Popham Microlight Trade Fair on Saturday, 2nd May at 13:00 in the BRA tent. Please come along and show your support for the BRA. It's also your chance to voice your opinions direct to the BRA committee, and hear what we've been up to behind the scenes.



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 magazine for one issue.

Advertise your gyro or gyro related stuff for sale here for free!