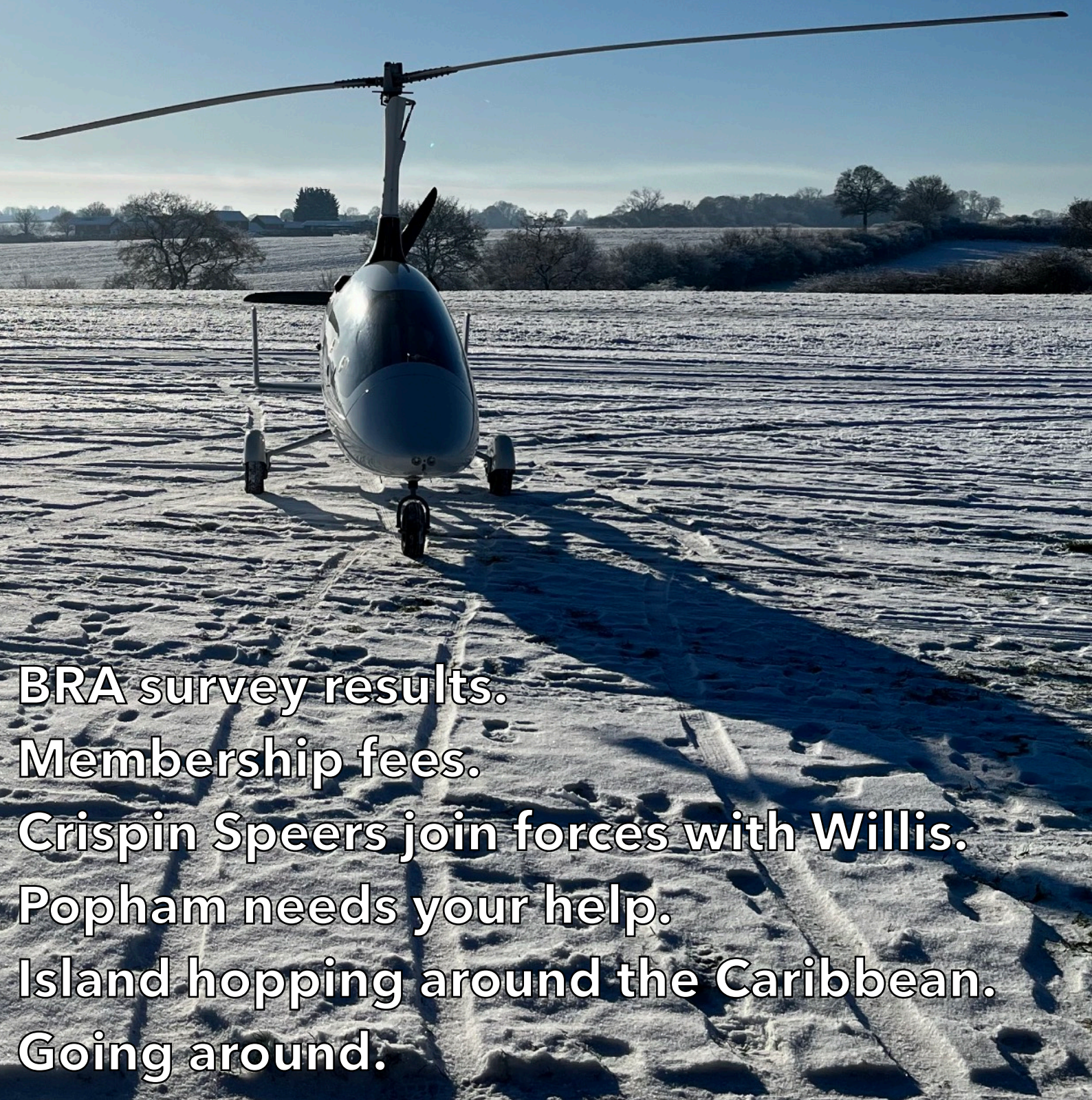




January 2026



BRA survey results.

Membership fees.

Crispin Speers join forces with Willis.

Popham needs your help.

Island hopping around the Caribbean.

Going around.



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Membership Secretary:

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Cover photo credit: Chris Rose

Welcome

Welcome to the January BRA magazine.

First off, we want to wish you all a happy New Year and we hope 2026 is an amazing flying year for you all.

There are some subtle tweaks to our "newsletter", which we're now calling a magazine as it now seems more than just "news".

So let's get into it...

As you can see, there's now a cover picture for the magazine, and we want your gyro pictures for it.

We have the results of the BRA survey.

After many years of keeping the same price for membership fees, Lawrence, our Membership Secretary, brings us news about an increase.

Aviation insurers, Crispin Speers, have joined up with Willis. We have what you need to know.

Popham need your help to save it from being turned into housing. We pass on an LAA article that tells you how to make your voice heard.

I talk to a member about their recent trip to the Caribbean to go fly a gyro between the islands. There's not many places you can fly where your pre-flight brief includes shark repelling devices!

Clive returns full of the joys of a new year with his Rubber Side Down. This month discusses the Go Around and reminds us that this is something we should consider doing.

Chris Rose

ed@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

We want your gyro pictures

By Chris Rose

With the switch to the magazine style format, we can now have a cover picture, and we thought it would be nice for you guys to submit pictures of your own gyros, or interesting gyro related ones, to us. The ones we like we'll put on the cover of the magazine and you'll get a credit on the first page.

You can submit a photo anytime as we'll be doing this every month, and you can submit as many as you like over the months. Just don't dump a whole load on us at once! Send them in one at a time spread out over the year. I hope that makes sense?

Just because your photo isn't used in the next issue of the magazine doesn't mean we won't feature it in a subsequent issue.

A standard mobile phone picture is fine, at it's default resolution. We will crop it to fit it on the cover.

Email your photos to me:

ed@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

BRA survey results

By John Truman, BRA Secretary

In October we issued a survey asking members for their opinions on some BRA activities. We thank the 43 members who took the time to respond and we share the main results here.

Events - 95% thought that BRA events are a good thing with 42% of respondents saying they would be happy to get involved in organising a Gyro event locally in some capacity.

Monthly Newsletter - 92% say they read the Newsletter regularly, whilst 7% say they read it sometimes. The Newsletter has developed enormously over the last two years and it is clear from individual responses that members were very happy with the monthly content they receive. The areas that respondents frequently mentioned as "most liked about the Newsletter" were the "Rubber side down" section and other safety related articles, Gyro community News and Event reports, Member flying experiences and places to fly to. Some also expressed that the newsletter enhanced the sense of a Gyro community.

When asked what they would like to see the Newsletter provide, most respondents were happy with the current mix of news and articles though ideas for expansion most often mentioned were: the Gyro scene overseas (reports on aircraft available in other countries as well as overseas events etc), Member Articles about experiences and reports on airfields visited. Maintenance/technical information and Historic features were also mentioned along with some recognition of newly qualified pilots joining the Gyro community.

The BRA Website was visited by only 63% of respondents in the last year, all of whom were aware of the Forum but just 14% had ever used it. Some used the Website for a specific reason, such as finding an instructor or for event information, whilst others looked out of general interest. Ideas for improvement listed were: Engineering and Technical information which may be hard to find elsewhere, Modifications and accessories/flying aids available, a better marketplace for buying and selling. It was also suggested that moving the forum to social media may improve uptake.

The BRA says - Thank you to everybody who took the time to respond to the survey, the information and suggestions are most helpful to us. We will be actively working on events

shortly and are grateful to those who kindly expressed an interest in helping us with this. We are proud of how the monthly newsletter has blossomed over the last year and will continue to ensure it stays a "must read" for our members. Of course, we always welcome and encourage any article or contribution from members. The BRA Website has had some issues over the past couple of years and we recognise that some further development is required. It's clear from some of the responses that some good information on the Website is not being found, so we will look again to make navigation more logical. That said the website is clearly underused and we would love members to actively use the "for sale" section and the Blog.

Finally, whilst the system we used for the survey gave us all the responses and information, it failed in a few cases to tell us who the respondents were! Unfortunately, this included one of the two people who said they would be happy to join the committee. So, if you are that person, or were one of the people considering offering your services and now definitely wish to volunteer please let us know.

New rates for BRA membership

By Lawrence Spiller, Membership Secretary

Dear BRA Member,

Following many years without an increase in our membership fees, the committee has reluctantly had to recognise that our costs have been rising with inflation and increasing standards.

We have decided that from 1st April 2026:

1) The cost of the annual membership renewal will increase from £25 to £30.

2) The cost of life-time membership will increase from £200 to £250. There will no longer be an additional joining fee.

3) Junior Membership, which has recently been introduced for under 16-year-olds, will remain at just £10.

The cost of our volunteers remains free and with our real income levels restored, the committee hope to organise more frequent and better events. In particular the next World Recorder Breaker planned for 13th June 2026 at Old Warden with Aston Martin & Little Nellie will be very special.

If you currently pay by Standing Order, please can you adjust the amount now to help avoid an administrative nightmare at your next renewal.

Thank you for your continued support, without our members we would not be able to represent, promote and support the Gyro community.

Kind regards,

Lawrence Spiller
BRA Membership Secretary

Crispin Speers join up with Willis

This is the email from Willis:

Dear CSP Customer,

You will have recently been contacted by Crispin Speers & Partners (CSP) to announce that Willis have mutually agreed with CSP for their aviation team to join us effective 1st January 2026. Willis is very excited by the opportunity to work with such a skilled and

well-respected team of individuals. At Willis they join a well-established leading Global Aviation brokerage that will support the team and ultimately our clients, with our full depth of resource and expertise.

We share the same dedication to consummate client service delivery and are committed to ensuring you experience a seamless transition to Willis Global Aviation & Space, with servicing continuing to be provided by your trusted partners.

From your perspective, we would like to formally welcome you to Willis and reassure you that the team you have always worked with, will continue to be your team. There will be some changes in e-mail addresses and the documentation you receive, but otherwise you should see no difference from the excellent service you have always enjoyed.

The team will be contacting you in more detail around your individual renewals, or mid-term changes, however should you need to contact any of your team, please note the new following e-mail addresses, or the generic team email address which the entire team will be able to access:

ContactGA@wtwco.com
Adam.Gray@wtwco.com
Darren.Bourner@wtwco.com
David.Bacon@wtwco.com
Graham.Roberts@wtwco.com
Lucy.Thomas@wtwco.com
Luke.Daw@wtwco.com

Many thanks for your attention and we very much look forward to working with you going forwards.

Best Regards
John & Alex
Willis, a WTW Company

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Popham need your help

From the Popham Airfield Matters website and as mentioned in the LAA magazine

Save Popham Airfield - NOW is the time to make your voice heard

On Friday 28th November, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council released their new Draft Local Plan, and it includes building 4,250 houses all over Popham Airfield.

Under the 'Regulation 18' consultation you have until January 23rd 2026 (eight weeks!) to tell them why you do not support this plan.

([click here for a quick and easy guide how to make your submission](#)). You can also click on the links below to view or download the PDF documents we have prepared including a list of Popham Airfield's key assets, and the Popham relevant 'highlights' from the Local Plan and its supporting documents. You can also view the actual Revised Local Plan on the Council's website.

Maybe you did this in the last (2024) consultation? Please do it again, as this is a new, separate, consultation, and the total number of objections carries weight. Rather than just repeat what you said last time, please change your objection so that it counts as two separate objections, rather than one repeated.

And if you have more than one reason to want to save Popham, please submit them as two (or more) separate objections.

We have compiled a list of our reasons why we think Popham is the wrong place to build housing - ([click here for "Popham Airfield Key Assets"](#)) - to help inform your submission. Please don't copy and paste, tell them why

Popham Airfield Matters to you in your own words.

You may also find new issues and concerns in the amended Draft Local Plan. It's important that the council gets as many different points of view as possible.

Remember that a factual argument is much harder for them to dismiss than a purely emotional response.

You will also find a guide to the relevant pages of The Revised Local Plan that pertain to Popham here, ([click here for "Highlights of Draft Local Plan Nov 25"](#)) to save you from having to wade through the whole +1,800 page Public Reports pack.

Island hopping in the Caribbean by gyro

By Chris Rose, Editor

Back at the beginning of December, one of our members, Mark Hull, embarked upon an extraordinary journey that would see him island hop in the Caribbean in a gyro. He graciously gave up some of his time earlier this month to tell me all about it so I could put together this article.

The trip was organised by Fly With Us, the same company in Costa Rica we've mentioned in a previous newsletter. They specialise in guided tours where you fly your own rented gyro following a tour guide in their gyro ahead. The Caribbean island tour is something they've just started offering.

Fly With Us exclusively use MTO Sports, which meant the first port of call for Mark was to get conversion training in the UK. He was already an accomplished M24 pilot, but had never flown an MTO Sport. Next was medical (a LAPL was ok, although I understand that in future it'll

need to be a Class 2). Then finally he had to get himself to the Caribbean.

His journey started on the 28th November at Heathrow with a short commercial flight to Charles de Gaulle, and then boarding a longer flight to Guadeloupe. Mark stayed there over night before getting the ferry to Marie Galante to meet the rest of the tour.



The rest of the 29th November was taken up with check flights for all the pilots. The flights were like doing a GFT with Guido, the tour guide and owner of Fly With Us.

There was also a safety briefing about life jackets, life raft, and somewhat worryingly, one on the shark repelling device fitted to the life raft! Guido would be carrying the life raft in his gyro, and in the event of a gyro ditching, the life raft would be thrown out of Guido's gyro to the unfortunate gyro in the water. As you will see, there was a lot of water crossing involved!

There were to be 3 gyros making up the tour. Normally you can elect to rent the gyro to yourself, or you can share with a fellow pilot. Mark chose to share, and found himself sharing with Guido, although Mark would be doing all the flying. I can only imagine that this must have been like spending several days with an instructor / examiner in the back seat!

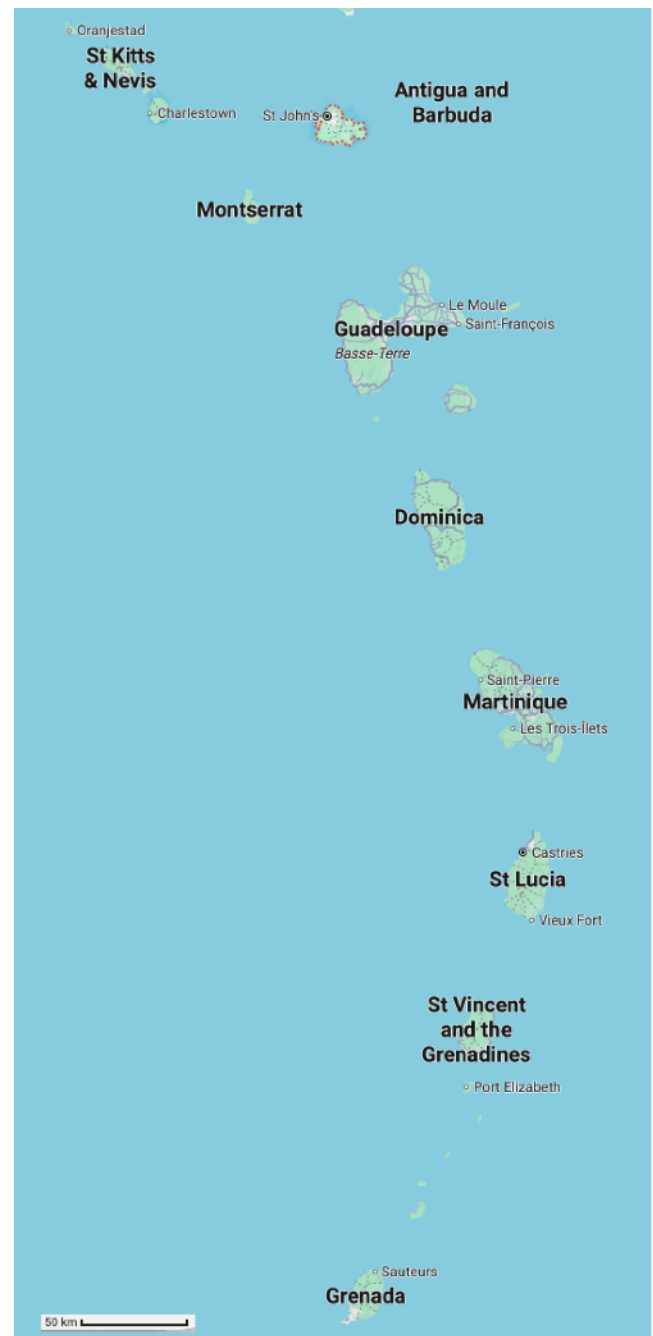


After a night in Marie Galante, the tour kicked off the next day 30th November. The first stop was a short flight to Guadeloupe where custom clearance had be done. This took a few hours, but eventually they took off again to fly to Dominica. They had enough time to do a bit of sightseeing at a waterfall before getting some sleep.



The next day, 1st December, they flew around the island and down to Martinique and St Lucia. They had forgotten the life jackets, so Guido arranged for these to be delivered by speedboat!

I've included a map below with a 50km scale so you can see the sort of distances they were covering and how much of what they did was over open water!





There was a bit more sightseeing: a lake at 3,000ft, a waterfall, and the location where some of the Pirates Of The Caribbean had been filmed.

On the 2nd December they flew from Dominica to Bequia which was to be their home for the next three nights.

The following day, 3rd December, they flew all around St Vincent and the Grenadines, which included Canouan, Mayreau, Union Island and Carriacou. They even saw Mustique, where the rich and famous live.

The 4th December was a day off from flying, and Mark took the opportunity to go diving to see a ship wreck.

They were back in the air again on the 5th December, with an early departure from Bequia to fly back to Dominica. Their route took them back past St Vincent, St Lucia and Martinique.



At Dominica they refuelled before setting off again for Antigua, which was to be their final destination for the day. They passed Marie Galante and Guadeloupe, finally touching down at VC Bird International in Antigua.

The group stayed around Dickenson Bay for 3 nights, and had time off from flying until the 8th December.

On the 8th December they left Antigua and flew around Barbuda and then on to Montserrat, where they landed at John A Osbourne airport. They stayed overnight at St Peters.

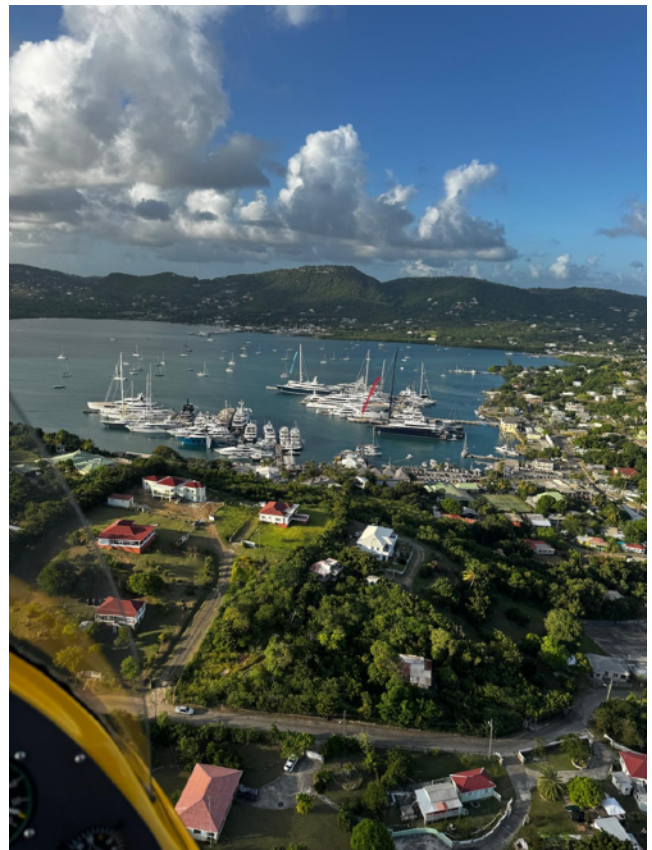


The 9th December was to be their last day flying. The plan was to fly back to Dominica where Mark would get a charter flight back to Guadeloupe in time for his flight back to the UK on the 10th December.

However, when they went back to the gyro that morning, they found the battery was flat - Mark had left the ignition on over night! There was a bit of panic realising they all had international flights to catch, but they managed to get it running in time.

On the 10th December, Mark flew back to the UK, having racked up 17 hours of gyro flying in the Caribbean.

I asked Mark to pick out a highlight from the trip? And he said all of it! I asked what he didn't like about it? And he said there were too many days off. He'd have preferred to fly more.



Mark commented that it was a strange juxtaposition of the rich and the poor: the islands on which the poor lived were still

decimated after the last hurricane, whereas the islands where the rich lived you'd never have guessed there had been one.

Some of the long distances they flew over open water are not for the faint hearted, nor are the thoughts of becoming a meal for a shark, but I think we will all agree that it must have been one amazing adventure that very few of us will get to do.

Rubber side down

By Clive Rose, BRA Safety And Training

Two of my scariest flying events were actually from outside the cockpit. Both occurred at the same airfield, but on different occasions and on different days.

Event 1: arrive at EGxx with a student. We were followed by another pilot in my rental aircraft. As student and I back-tracked on the taxiway, rental customer was making the most unstable approach I've ever seen, which I thought could only end in tears. By some miracle he managed to smooth it all out JUST above the runway and land safely.

Event 2: I arranged to meet a customer at EGxx where we would do a local sortie to Permit flight test his aircraft. He was approaching behind 2 aeroplanes - let's call them FW1 and FW2. FW1 landed long, pirouetted and began a backtrack on the hard runway, despite a request from the A/G radio to vacate and backtrack on the grass. FW2 could see the runway was occupied so he threw in an orbit on short final. He completed his orbit, runway was clear, so he landed long on the hard. We all know gyros stop on a sixpence, but my customer was very short on final now and landed before FW2 had vacated. He was so distracted by the antics of the aeroplanes ahead that, after vacating, he sat for many seconds on the grass with his stick still fully

back. I opened my mouth to speak to A/G radio, at which time, the stick moved forwards and safety was restored.

FW2 and both gyros, above, should have initiated a Go-Around - two because of an occupied runway; and the first, because of the unstable approach. All of them were accidents waiting to happen. Only good luck avoided carnage on the runway or, worse, a mid-air with FW1's orbit.

Event 1 occurred in crosswind conditions the pilot had not considered before his arrival. We all know gyros take crosswinds in their stride. If the wind is within limits, It's Just A Landing. Stick, to maintain lateral position in the centre of the runway; pedals to keep the aircraft aligned with the direction of travel.

Event 2 occurred in stable conditions, albeit with a couple of lunatics ahead. If the approach is unstable or the runway is occupied, add power and fly another circuit. From a nose-down approach, coordinate adding power with raising the nose. There's no need to rush these actions. Add cruise power as you raise the nose to the horizon and stabilise the aircraft. At your relative leisure you can then add climb power to regain circuit height and make another approach.

If you have the bandwidth, make a call to inform the airfield "XX going round". And ideally, fly to the dead-side as you parallel the runway so you can maintain visibility and awareness of other aircraft.

All these actions are preferable to a standing-up meeting with the CAA to answer for the MOR the airfield is duty-bound to make for landing on an occupied runway; or picking up the pieces of a broken aircraft you've spanked.

Going Round is really easy to do, will earn you enormous respect of any onlookers and gives you loads of time in the circuit to analyse WTF

just happened and how to fix it for the next approach. And don't overthink it - in the upper air, Going Round is just a combination of levelling from a descent and initiating a climb. You've flown those ad nauseam in training and IRL, haven't you!

Otherwise every approach is a Go Around unless the stars align, making it safe to land Rubber Side Down!

There's no imperative to land On This Approach. Unless you're on fire or you're out of fuel.

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 magazine for one issue.

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