



June 2026

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Welcome

Welcome to the June BRA magazine. As the cover says - You Did It! What an amazing day for the record breaker, and a huge thanks and congratulations to you all. A huge thanks too goes out to our very own Steve Paffett for organising the event, and to all those who helped out on the day.

We have the debrief of the record breaker from Steve Paffett.

I chat to the couple who were the 72nd gyro in, pushing us over our previous record. Turns out they're an interesting couple in their own right!

We have a gallery of photos taken at the record breaker.

I recount the story of a low level military aircraft encounter.

Tony Unwin gives us part 4 , and final instalment, of his gyro flying history.

I have a few interesting observations from my last gyro service.

With a follow on from last months pre-rotator discussion, Clive Rose is back this month's to talk about the rotor rpm gauge.

As ever, please send us your interesting gyro related stories - you must be getting bored of my drivell! We also want more of your fabulous gyro photos to put on the cover of the magazine.

Our Events Secretary has asked me to remind you about the British Rotorcraft Association's Facebook and you can engage with us there too. In fact, it's our Facebook that alerted the French gyro pilots, who attended the record breaker, to the fact it was going on.

Cheers and happy flying,

Chris Rose

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Old Warden Record Breaker debrief

By Steve Paffett, Events Secretary

Saturday 13th June 2026. The British Rotorcraft Association co-hosted with Shuttleworth, the Guinness Gyro Record Breaker 2026. We had to beat 71 gyros landing at a single UK airfield in an 8 hour window, this was set in 2022 at Old Warden. Despite the gusty weather and a few that could not attend through permit, or mechanical issues, a new record of 88 was achieved. There will be many images and video's to follow but we need a little time to collate the data. What I can tell you is that a large French contingent actually helped very much in making this happen. 19 aircraft attended from France and we were delighted to welcome them to what they have now turned into and international event. Paul Kerry from Perth was the pilot who travelled the furthest in the UK to take part in this event and we will try and get a story of his trip later. Eleven types attended and the list is below.

8 MT03's
24 MTO Sports
1 MTO Sport 2017
17 Calidus
9 Cavalons
11 Magni M24's
10 Magni M16's
4 Magni M22's
1 DTA
2 ELA Eclipse
1 Merlin. The only Single Seater. Flown by the intrepid Francis Moyle. A huge thank you to all involved.

A special thank you to Wallis Heritage and Elliot Wallis for bringing along Little Nellie, Zues and Ken's record breaker and a big shout out to the Aston Martins Owners Club who brought along an unconfirmed 124 of these beautiful automobiles, and to the FISO and his team in

the tower who was very satisfied with the airmanship and radio transmissions throughout the day.

Sadly, Richard Clarkson from Nottingham had pre rotator issues on his Calidus and had to call his wife to come and get him. We hope that the issue is resolved quickly and that his marriage survives.

Meet the couple who were the 72nd gyro to land and broke the record

By Chris Rose, Editor



When John Truman, BRA Secretary, bounced into the office at the bottom of the Old Warden control tower and suggested to me I interview the pilot of the 72nd gyro to land at the record breaker, I have to admit I wasn't sure if it was a good idea, besides, I was enjoying the day and didn't feel like "working". I'm so glad John suggested doing this, as the couple I met turned out to be an amazing duo, with a history that deserves attention.

Why is 72 so important? Well, the previous record that we set was 71 gyros, and the arrival of G-CIMT took the total to 72 and pushed us

over the line to a new record. At the end of the day we smashed even that number as the final count was 88! So, without any more waffle from me, meet Carole Evans and Jim Blaylock.

Carole was the pilot on the day, with Jim playing passenger, though they are both qualified gyro pilots. Their journey had brought them from a little strip near Boston in Lincolnshire that's not on the map.

Carol and Jim are married, and how they met is interesting enough in itself. Carole owned an Pitts S2, and Jim had been bought a trial flying lesson with Carole as a present. The flight got Jim hooked and he asked Carole to teach him to fly. Given that the Pitts is a fully aerobatic biplane and not the easiest to fly, Carole said that it wasn't really the aircraft to learn in, however, Jim persisted and got his wish, finally going solo in Carole's S2, bringing it back in one piece. That was 35 years ago! They became a couple, got married, and have owned a string of aircraft along the way. According to Carole, they had a "helicopter phase" which culminated in a Gazelle, but as she pointed out, it costs a lot of money to run one of those!

They then had the bright idea of buying a gyro, it being cheaper to run than their Gazelle. Even before they had started to learn to fly a gyro they went out and bought a Cavalon! Apparently, this was typical for them; they bought a helicopter before they could fly one! I asked what they thought of the gyro having flown so many aircraft types, Carole's response was amusing; "It's a bit slow, I'd rather have a Gazelle", but they seem to be enjoying it. They've now been flying the Cavalon for about 4 years, they'd like to try out other gyros though, and I guess that's something that's going to happen given their love of aviation.

I asked if there was any issues with both being pilots and married, they said there was the

inevitable arguments about who gets to fly, and they both claim the other tells them what to do!

Another anecdote that amused me was that at one point Jim had gone deaf, and at the time they had a Skybolt biplane. Carole had to pass Jim hand written notes on pieces of paper if she she wanted to tell him something as they flew.

I think you'll agree, they are an amazing couple, and it's a pleasure that they were gyro number 72 in to Old Warden at the record breaker.

Record breaker photo gallery

Photo credits: Wes Edwards, John Truman, Chris Rose.



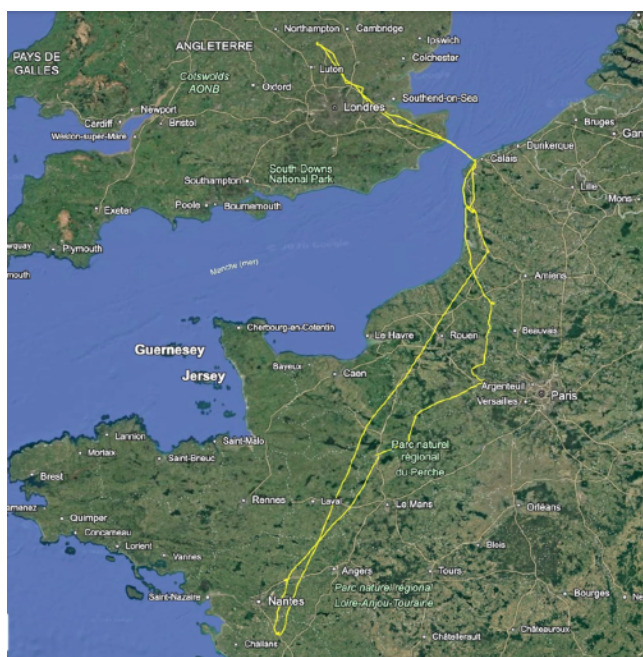






The epic journey of the French gyros to the record breaker

By



Throwback to a memorable weekend!

This past weekend will long be etched in our memories.

We set off with 6 autogires, 9 pilots from Montaugu Airport, to join Old Warden in England where the Gyro Record Breaker 2026,

organized by British Rotorcraft Association was taking place.

After several weeks of preparation, the big day finally arrived.

Friday at noon, take-off for Abbeville, where we're making a stop for the night. On arrival, nothing was won: very low cloudy ceiling, sustained wind, drizzle... In short, unbinding conditions. But we all wanted to believe it. We didn't come all this way to give up so close to the goal!

On Saturday morning, the day rises under a mixed sky which still leaves us the opportunity to join Le Touquet for the formalities of customs clearance. The closer we get to the coast, the clearer the sky. The information that the forecaster of Meteo-France had communicated to us the day before, was confirmed.

9:25am - start engines

Check-list, life jackets, distress beacons....

9:30am: Opening flight plan and heading to England!

Crossing the Channel is a moment apart. Faced with this vastness, we feel so small. The tankers and containers almost look miniatures. This is both impressive and magical.





Thirty five minutes later the English coast appears. Under our feet is a huge carpet of greenery dotted with villages and houses with typical British architecture.

We are passing near London, with one imperative: don't miss our "spot"! On that day, His Majesty the King offered himself an air parade for his birthday, which resulted in the activation of a large forbidden area, directly on our road, for nearly 1 hour 30 minutes.

We finally arrive at Old Warden, warmly welcomed under the lens of dozens of photographers.

Then we enjoy the visit of the famous museum of ancient aircraft: a real wonder for all aviation enthusiasts.

Spending the night in a very 'British' hotel, before departing home on Sunday morning. The crossing is always so impressive. Checking out Touquet Customs before we get back on our road.

From there we shall diverge. Some set sail directly to Montagu, while others choose to extend the adventure.

For our part, we decide to continue the 07/25 Challenge and add four new platforms to our flightbook: LF6025, LFAX, LFOF and LFFI.

We come home tired, but with a head full of beautiful pictures, shared moments, crazy laughs and memories that will last a long time.

Weekends like this that remind us why we love flying so much.



Low level military aircraft encounter

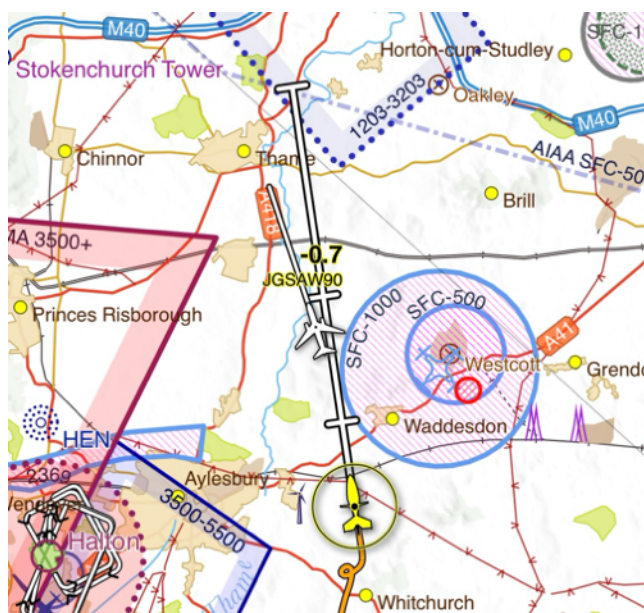
By Chris Rose, Editor

A few weeks ago I went for a short local flight. I was pottering along at 1,000ft when I glanced down at my SkyDemon / SkyEcho to see another "large" aircraft about 4 miles ahead of

me and 700ft below. This would have put them at 300ft above the ground! I've often seen GA aircraft with their aircraft type set wrong in their ADSB settings, so I assumed the "large" aircraft depiction was a mistake. Maybe it was a GA aircraft landing at one of the many small unmarked airfields in my surrounding area?

The aircraft was holding altitude and course so I assumed it wasn't in distress. I scanned the sky ahead and below me and then I saw it; it was an RAF Atlas A400 military transport aircraft! It was an incredible sight, and I watched it turn to go towards the south side of Halton, before doing a 180 degree turn and head back in my direction to fly past and under my nose, still a few miles away.

I'm used to seeing lots of GA aircraft in my area, it being not so far from a High Wycombe which has lots of training aircraft based there, but this was a first for me! It goes to show that just because you're low level, there may still be traffic lower than you! Another good reason to have something like SkyEcho ADBS!



An RAF Atlas A400 (not the one I saw) and a screen shot of my SkyDemon/SkyEcho

Notable characters from the gyro community: Tony Unwin (Part 4)

By Tony Unwin, Member

This is part 4 and that final part of Tony Unwin's fascinating gyro history. Ed.

My New Zealand Gyro School was operating normally when, out of nowhere, I received an email asking if I was interested in instructing in Kenya. Three people with no gyro experience had bought a Magni M24 for conservation work in the Masai Mara and needed help to fly it. As I had some knowledge of Kenyan aviation and the African bush from my days of DC8 cargo flying, I was keen to re-visit and offered three weeks free instruction in return for accommodation for 2 in their luxury Safari Camp that even had its own airstrip. The deal was accepted with an undertaking to achieve 3 capable pilots flying solo within 3 weeks.

There is no direct flight from New Zealand to Kenya so my wife Sue and I flew to Nairobi via Dubai. We were met and accommodated by Greg, a mature Canadian who had a cottage

overlooking a large animal sanctuary on the edge of Nairobi City. With no time to waste, after a night stop, I was taken to a private flying strip to meet the Magni agent who flew an M16 and had commissioned the M24 that had been bought in for Cotter's Camp. En route, we picked up some fuel from the local garage and I expressed my concern about fuel standards and contamination which is rife in Africa.

I have no engineering competence so it was largely taken on trust that the M24 was safe to fly and so it proved when I took Greg for a quick proving circuit and then retired back to Town for a cool beer in the Nairobi Zoo/Safari Park.



Africa's Rift Valley was formed some 75 million years ago and today forms a deep trench running North to South. The Nairobi/Magni Airstrip was poised on the Eastern edge with a vertical drop of several hundred feet into wild bush. So, there was some trepidation when the next day, I was invited to fly the Magni westward with no map and no idea of the location of the Cotter's Camp Airstrip. Greg, who was the Manager at Cotter's, was to fly with me and assured me that he would have no difficulty in navigating to the Masai Mara. It turned out that this part of Kenya has significant features and following the terrain is fairly straightforward, however I was somewhat relieved to spot a windsock amongst the very hostile landscape! The runway was a hard

packed piece of earth in better condition than many of the roads in the Masai and perfectly suitable for gyro training. In anticipation of this day, a metal hangar had been created with concrete floor and was the only modern construction in the area, the rest was bush! We were met by Greg's son Keith and the Camp owner Calvin Cotter, together with an intrigued group of Masai in local dress, including spears!



It was now approaching midday and the temperature was rising so with the aircraft housed it was time to take a bumpy ride a few miles to the tented camp for lunch. I was not familiar with glamping at this time but found that without the full trappings of the city one could still have a luxurious lifestyle in a remote setting. The camp dates back over a 100 years and some of the 1920 vehicles or replicas are still used to transport visitors.

I was now able to discuss flying with my three students and plan progress for each of them. Keith was in his twenties, young keen but with no aviation beyond the back seat of his father's aircraft while growing up in Canada. Greg, the father, was camp manager responsible for the organisation, this was to include fuel for the gyro. Greg had qualified on tail wheel aircraft in Vancouver, British Columbia but this was some years earlier. Calvin had started training with the Nairobi Flying Club on Cessna aircraft but never qualified.



My task of creating 3 competent pilots within three weeks was not helped by the local conditions, an elevation of around 5000 feet plus a midday temperature approaching 30c. To mitigate these problems flying would start at first light and break at midday until the cooler evening air arrived. I found the situation stimulating, driving out at dawn through a landscape largely untouched by man from the time of creation, the local wildlife ignored the vehicles, buffalo and giraffe quietly grazed alongside the track, strolling without concern, asserting their right to the land. We started the Rotax and instantly made our presence felt, however this was not too disturbing, possibly the weekly schedule of Cessna Caravan had proved that aviation was no threat. The local Masai elders were however concerned that this conservation organisation might be introducing too much observation of their activity.



From my point of view I had a straightforward task which I enjoyed, having established the basics of gyro handling circuits became the challenge to overcome. No change there until dirty fuel, the curse of Africa stepped in! This required some intervention when the reliable Rotax spluttered on take off and required an immediate landing ahead. Calvin Cotter showed the resourcefulness of a man living hundreds of miles from civilisation and had the cowlings off and carburettor cleaned in no time, meanwhile Greg had organised a team of staff to filter all 'in-house' fuel stock before it got to the aircraft, future stock would arrive in sealed drums with no chance for contamination. Despite limited operating hours, the influx of visiting business leaders and politicians on vacation and also intruding wildlife, the three stars of the show succeeded and achieved their goals. I took a last dip in the infinity pool, a complementary safari tour and a return to the world that we call civilised.

Addendum, Keith can now be found, with several hundred / thousand hours in a gyro log book, flying anti-poacher rangers above the Tsavo National Park in Eastern Kenya. Good work my friend!



I'd just like to say a huge thank you to Tony for putting in so much effort to bring you his story. As I'm sure you'll agree, it's been a very compelling read, and an encouragement to all of us just how far you can take the fun of gyro flying. Ed.

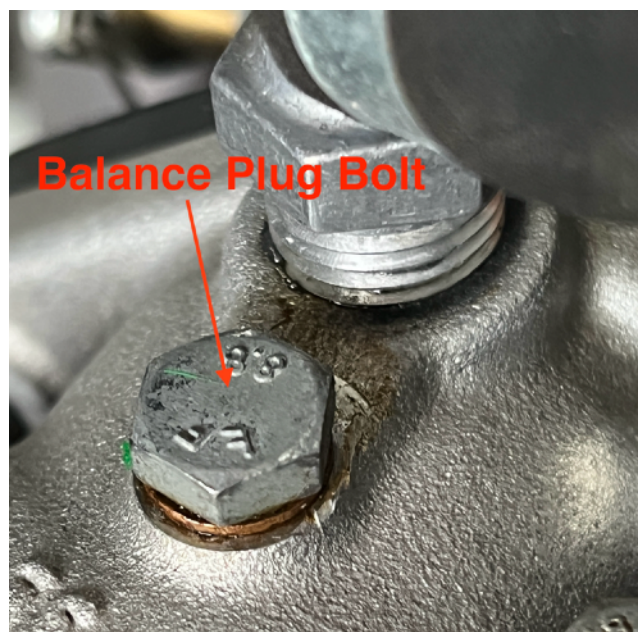
Some observations from my last gyro service

By Chris Rose, Editor

Back at the end of May I had my MTO Sport serviced. It's a relatively new aircraft at only 4 years old with some 300 hours, and I've owned it from new so I know its history. I wasn't expecting any issues as the aircraft had been performing fine, so I anticipated it was going to be a relatively quick and simple exercise. How I was mistaken! If you've ever wondered why a service can take so long, my experience will offer you an insight into why the unexpected simple things can become a nightmare.

I hasten to add, that none of the issues I mention below can be attributed to my engineer, they are just things that have happened as part of daily life with a gyro. The only exception is the one issue that was there from the factory.

With the service complete, all apart from an engine test and air dryer change, I was feeling pretty confident the engineer wouldn't find any problems. The first thing to do was run the engine and check the carburettors were balanced. On the Rotax, there's a screw on the manifold that plugs the hole that the balance kit screws into. On removing this screw it was discovered that the threads in this hole had gone, they were in fact stuck in the threads of the screw! The only way to fix this issue was to remove the manifold from the engine, which was no easy task given that the electronics for the ignition, and various other things like the carburettor and ancillary pipes, are connected to it. The ignition electronics are held in place by a bolt that is almost impossible to get to! It took a couple of hours just to remove the manifold alone! The engineer then had to take the manifold away to get the thread repaired.

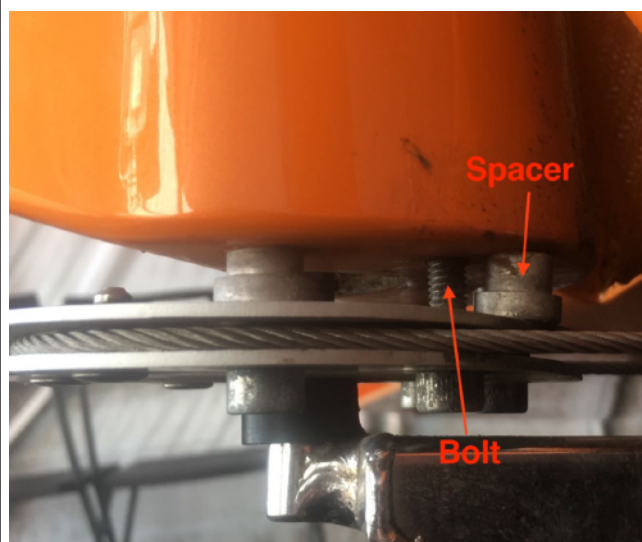


To add insult to injury, the air dryer decided to do exactly the same thing! It should have been a simple 5 minute job to swap the air dryer, but when the elbow connector from the pipe that comes from the compressor pump was undone, its threads were left stuck inside the air dryer! This necessitated, removing the compressor pump so that a new elbow

connector could be crimped on. Yet another couple of hours that weren't expected!



It was also discovered that a spacer on the rudder pulley wheel, that is bolted to the bottom of the rudder, hadn't been installed properly at the factory when the gyro had been built! The bolt that should go through the spacer hadn't! There are several bolts like this and all the others were correct. My sharp-eyed engineer spotted this whilst checking these bolts, something that had easily been missed on all the previous services over the 4 years I've had the gyro. So yet another delay whilst this was corrected.



So, the next time you get a large bill from an engineer for the number of hours spent servicing your gyro, cut them some slack as simple five minute job can turn into hours! As for the incorrectly installed spacer, there's a lesson there in looking at the most mundane things carefully, even if your gyro is new!

Rubber side down

By Clive Rose, Safety And Training

What was I thinking?! A few paragraphs last month about pre-rotator failure and not a word about Rotor RPM Gauge infractions. To paraphrase one of our esteemed Examiners, there are two types of gyro: those that have had a Rotor RPM Gauge failure, and those that haven't. Yet...

Six years ago, one of my rental customers, flying at 2,000' in the local area, radioed to say the Rotor RPM gauge had stopped working. He confirmed the rotors were still turning so I suggested he continue his flight and we'd sort it out on the ground.

Generally, the gauge is linked to a proximity sensor under the pre-rotator gear. That sends pulses to the RRPM gauge which decodes the pulses to determine the rotor speed. But occasionally, the gauge or the sensor will fail and you're left with an unserviceable Rotor RPM display. You shouldn't really be flying with any u/s instruments but if you know your aircraft well, there's no reason you shouldn't be able to safely take off and get back to base where the issue can be properly resolved.

What engine speed do you use to begin pre-rotation? How can you tell when engine power and Rotor Speed have reached equilibrium? And how much power do you use to accelerate the rotors to full speed before starting your take-off run?

Regardless of aircraft, you should be aware of engine rpm, what the spinning rotors look like and how the aircraft feels and sounds at each stage of pre-rotation. These cues will inform how you pre-rotate in the event of a failure. Do you have a long enough/smooth enough runway to attempt take-off without a functioning gauge? Importantly, do you have enough space to abort the take-off if there's any doubt the rotors are increasing to take-off speed as you accelerate? If you always use full power to take off, how will you know?

With stick fully back, when you start your take-off run, your initial power setting should provide sufficient ground speed and inflow to accelerate the rotor towards take-off speed. Under normal circs, you'll glance at the instruments to check airspeed and rotor speed are both increasing.

As aircraft and rotors accelerate, increasing rotor drag will eventually overcome your initial power setting and your aircraft will come to a stop on the runway. You'll remember this from Rotor Management. Without a Rotor RPM gauge as you feel this marked increase in rotor drag you know your rotors have converted inflow to lift/drag. At this stage it's safe to add take-off engine power and to start easing the stick forward as you transition through wheel balance to take-off.

If you don't feel increasing rotor drag with your initial power setting, you've probably forgotten to bring the stick back. Reduce power to idle and bring the aircraft to a stop before excessive dissymmetry of lift takes you straight to the scene of the accident.

Rotor RPM Gauge failures are rare. Occasionally, grease from the rotor head will attach to the proximity sensor and render the gauge useless. Spend some of your next Training Hour revisiting Rotor Management and you'll have the experience and the aircraft

knowledge to get home Rubber Side Down if this rare treat visits you.

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.

BRA Sandown, Isle Of Wight fly-in

5th & 6th September

As per tradition, the BRA will be holding their annual fly-in at Sandown on the Isle Of Wight, on the weekend of September 5th and 6th.

Sandown is a fabulous location as I'm sure anyone who'd been will agree, with onsite camping, toilets, showers, cafe, and bar. Dan, the airfield manager, normally plays the perfect host and looks after us really well. So, come along and enjoy the fun!



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!