

Final Glide 2021



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Cover photo by Lukasz Grzadzielewski

Oxford University Gliding Club – 2021

BY SIOBHAN TOBIN

OUGC has had a great 2021 supported by OGC. This year we had just over 40 members, who are students or staff at Oxford Uni or Oxford Brookes Uni. In addition, we welcomed 30 people to the airfield for an 'intro day' experience in October and November. Most of our members have no prior experience with gliding or aviation, and we'd like to thank everyone at OGC who facilitates our flying, especially the instructing team.

The enthusiasm of the BIs is truly epic.

We kept our gliders and their trailers in service thanks to maintenance efforts of Tim Freegarde, Jim C, Gordon, Miles, Boris, Richard C, Dave and Tulip. Shout out to the OUGC members who trailer-washed, glider-polished and generally pitched in with maintenance: Daniel, Thomas, Rowan, Siobhan, Aili, Rupert, Azmi, Tai-Ying, Philipp, and Greg.

During 2021, we were fortunate to venture to some different sites for gliding adventures! These included:

Midland GC – some OUGC members attended a week-long course in May



Cambridge GC – for the Varsity week (soaring event competing against Cambridge Uni) in June. The Oxford Varsity team: Siobhan, Francesca, Azmi, Tai-Ying, Aili. Although we lost, Francesca had the most height gain, Aili had the longest flight... and Neil did the most flights!



Cotswolds GC – for the Inter Unis task week (soaring and progress event) in July. The OUGC team: Aili, Azmi (3rd in individual progression), Tai-Ying, Marie-Therese (1st in individual progression), Bridget, Oliver, Thomas. OUGC came 2nd in the team progression competition out of 6 uni teams.



Special thanks to those from the OGC family who came along on these trips, whether it was to assist with instruction, transport, glider rigging, or general wisdom and mindfulness: Neil, Jon C, Dave, Liisi, Steve McCurdy, John S, Richard C, Jamie. We hope you enjoyed the flying, the banter and the snacks (for future reference, Neil is partial to camembert)!



We had a heap of fun in 2021: we had first solos, sunset spinning, ridge soaring, winch driver training, bronze theory exams, aerobatics, cross-country flights, and even a curry night!

We are delighted to be a part of OGC. We look forward to a cracking 2022 with all of you at Weston-on-the-Green

Picture credits: Aili Shao, Jamie Allen, Tai-Ying Lee, Neil Swinton, Azmi Rahman

Secretary's Report

BY DAVE BRAY

November / December 2020

The committee said goodbye to Vukan and Ben, welcoming new members Garry and Richard to a virtual meeting due to the second Covid-19 lockdown. Assigning areas of responsibility, reappointing Neil as the CFI and swiftly getting to club business.

With membership standing at 116, the club was in a healthy place but plenty of improvements were discussed with the 2020-21 focus being the clubhouse, outdoor areas, and other facilities. The plan to implement a working party swiftly took shape!

The project to get the instructors DBS checked was progressing with members able to use their lockdown time to submit the required electronic forms - all part of a long-term project to get the clubs paperwork up to the standard required to be recognised as a BGA Junior Gliding Centre. The first edition of the "Junior newsletter" was sent to the clubs growing number of youngsters.

Early teething problems with the electronic membership forms were sorted by Paul; these now improve data capture for visitors and reduce the administrative burden for the club.

Covid and the operational restrictions needed to comply with ever changing rules caused all sorts of extra work, our thanks to Ben who moved sideways to be our Covid Officer to ensure the club could satisfy the RAF's checks on our procedures.

The wreckage of DKR, the broken Astir was assessed and the report submitted to the insurance company.

January 2021

Like many things, plans to tidy up the members caravans were halted by the third lockdown due to covid, however more documentation for the club administration was able to progress. The club was approached to buy a share in a motor glider based at Hinton but with limited qualified instructors it was felt that the club would be unlikely to make use of it. The insurance company paid out for the astir and allowed us to purchase the wreckage from them. However, damage to the K13 in a ground handling accident had Graham Barrett and a small team working hard in the workshop.

Despite covid, plans to relaunch the Friday evening group nights were put into place with Richard Markham stepping up to coordinate the visitors and ground crews over the summer.

OUGC wise with all flying suspended and no undergraduates in the collages, efforts were turning to negotiating funding grants.

Plans for various club trips and expeditions were voiced to allow members the hope of post lockdown holidays.

The facilities subcommittee's design plans for the clubhouse were reviewed with a solid majority agreeing with the design. However, the kitchen, bar and clubhouse aspects were put on hold pending some small tweaks. The green light was given for the entrance hall, toilets and shower project and started off with a new entrance door being fitted.

February

The treasurer was working hard applying for every bit of financial support available, with fantastic success. With thoughts turning to restarting flying operations, the CFI presented plans to keep everyone safe with a separate meeting including members of the committee, safety and covid officers to discuss the fine details. The K13 repair was completed – thanks go to Graham and Gordon!

A mix up with the fuel delivery company led to the club heating stopping at the beginning of the coldest week of the year, fixes to the system and tank base were completed thanks to Haste and John H along with several others.

The club was notified that the airspace change planned by our neighbours at Brize and Oxford airport had been rejected by the CAA – thanks to Paul Morrison who led the clubs response.

The refurbishment project continued at pace. The CFI arranged several member Zoom talks and lectures which were well attended and kept everyone connected.

March

While lockdown had ended, the change of Weston-on-the-Green airfield from a “Dropzone” to a “Licenced Airfield” meant that the RAF administrators kept us on the ground assessing various safety documents we and the local RAF team had to put together. Instructors managed to keep themselves current with visits to various local clubs who supported us – thanks to Shenington and Banbury!

The committee agreed to extend every member renewal date by three months as a thank you for sticking by us during the pandemic. Plans for a July party celebrating 65 years on site were made.

April

A meeting, demanded by the highest levels of the RAF, took place mid-April between the local RAF team and us. Flying operations were authorised thereafter because of the discussions and work done by Neil, Tim M, Ben, Paul M and various committee members. Flying restarted the next day – we ended up purchasing a new mitzi to replace one which couldn't keep up with the pace! A trial rolling of the landing areas was attempted but the ground too hard and grass too clumpy to have much of an effect.

May

OUGC's Phillip handed the reigns to Siobhan as their committee changed. Members Simon Calvert and Paul Freer donated their Astir CS “554” to the club – a mid-term project which is hoped to be returned to the air following work by the inspectors. Our sincere thanks to both Paul and Simon for this incredible act of kindness, we hope to see them back at the club in the future. Blockages around the cooling fins of the buggy engines caused by cut grass result in Andy Butterfield rebuilding an engine. The hangar guttering fails more noticeably and requires an OGC bodge to prevent the gliders getting damaged by water. Membership numbers (up to 139 now) and everyone's enthusiasm to fly means all the gliders are out regularly with 80 plus daily launches but even with a 9am start, that's not enough to get everyone in the air as much as they'd like – an efficiency drive is started.

June

The toilets and shower refurbishment are completed, thanks to the helpers but especially Andy Bray. The big tractor gets a tyre change from John and Richard. The RAF's grass cutting contractor got stropky about a strop which he found on the airfield, shutting us down, requiring yet more paperwork and meetings with the RAF to allow us to resume flying with new procedures in place. This unexpected spotlight on us led to concern about the state of the caravans and various other H&S assurances by the RAF team.



July

Friday evening group flying restarts with thanks to Richard Markham, the crews, and the all-important BBQ chefs. Our 65 years on site Pig Roast party was timed to perfection as large social gatherings became legal again, around 100 guests attended. Julian Bane led the Giftaid claim to HMRC, compiling everyone's expenses and donations recovering nearly £1000 for the club. The new Heating oil tank was installed, hopefully saving the club money on fuel in the winter. Arrangements for the T21 to be recovered during the autumn are confirmed.



August

Plans were put in place for various social events including the recruiting organisers for the Christmas party. The guttering on the hangar is replaced by members, saving the club a lot of money. The state of caravans had improved but an unscheduled visit from the MOD's Fuel and Gas authority sent alarm bells going yet again regarding the T&Cs of our lease. The club hosted a meeting with the BGA's Junior coordinator as progress towards becoming a UK Junior Site continued. A few hardy volunteers attend a fete at Kirtlington, with a glider to engage with the local community.

September

Flying was temporarily suspended when the RAF suffered a tragic fatal accident involving one of their local skydiving team. We received the audit report into the state of our diesel and LPG tanks, an action plan was drafted and submitted, the club has a year to resolve things. A new entrance barrier is installed at the airfield – please open BOTH gates when towing a trailer though it! The T21 recover project begins with Daisy reported as being in great structural condition. An audit of the club's electrical installations shows failings which the committee begin making plans to resolve. The K21 suffers some damage as it hits some cones on landing, hidden by low sun and long grass, this is fixed by Gordon and his amazing team.

October

Upgrades to the club parachutes continues with three new ones being purchased replacing the oldest. Various members of the committee attend the BGA's management conference, a well

organised virtual event giving food for thought for the future. Plans for the AGM are underway. With membership having grown to an impressive 156 members during the year and a whole lot of launches despite the poor soaring weather of the summer, the club has had a solid year! The day of the AGM saw the club confirmed as the BGA's newest UK Junior Gliding Centre! Well done everyone!

Annual General Meeting 2021

BY DAVE BRAY

The 13th of November saw the club hold its 71st AGM. Held across multiple rooms in the club house as well as allowing members to partake via zoom meant that numbers attending were good.

After a short review of the year by Martin the Chairman, and an explanation of the club's financial position by Paul the Treasurer, a motion, proposed by the outgoing committee, was raised to amend the constitution, formalising a practice of allowing members without two years prior experience to be voted on to the committee if members of the club, present at the AGM agreed that it was necessary. After a period of debate this was put to the vote where it was accepted.

Phil Hawkins, Peter Brooks, Paul Morrison, Gordon Craig, and Paul Smith were reinstated as Directors of Oxford Gliding Company Ltd for another year. Sir Paul Nurse was re-elected as honorary President, with John Gibbons and Graham Barrett elected as Vice Presidents.

The committee felt that the club recognise the extraordinary contribution of three individuals who have each been members of the club for over 38 years

Therefore, it was proposed that in addition to Sir Paul Nurse, John Gibbons, Graham Barret, Mike Randle, Phil Hawkins and Peter Brooks, the members support honorary memberships for Gordon Craig, Martin Hastings, and John Hanlon. This was voted for by the members. Our congratulations to our new honorary members!

Regarding the committee for 2021-2022, the positions of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary only had one person nominated for each position, however, of the three "ordinary member" positions available, four members had put themselves forward. Due to only two of these members having the required 2 years or more membership of the club. members first voted on whether these circumstances were "extraordinary" or not. This vote resulted in it being declared "extraordinary" and therefore led to a separate vote for the three positions available.

The club would like to thank Selvam, Jonathan, Siobhan, and Garry for putting themselves forward, the club cannot operate without this level of commitment from its members – please all consider standing in the future.

The committee for 2021-2022 will be:

Chairman - Martin Brown

Vice Chair - Alex Rose

Treasurer - Paul Smith

Secretary - David Bray

Ordinary members - Garry Cuthill, Jonathan Edge, Siobhan Tobin.



The food at the AGM is an OGC tradition

Club Awards 2020 / 2021

Well done to the winners of the club's awards in 2021.

Trophy	Awarded For	Winner
John Gibbons Cup	Most improved pilot under instruction as chosen by the OGC Instructors	Amelia Richardson
Dennis Farmer Memorial Award	First 5-hour claim flight of the year	Jacek Dudzik
Two Up Award	For services to instructing awarded by the CFI	Martin Durham
The Malcolm Laurie Trophy for the Club Ladder	Ladder trophy for weekend flights from Weston on the Green	Richard Hall
The Simpson Trophy	Most outstanding flight from Weston on the Green	Henry Morris
The Malcolm Laurie Memorial Trophy	Best flight in a club glider (from any site)	Gordon Craig & Paul Smith

Not awarded this year were the **Deep Breath Cup** (Highest legal flight from Weston on the Green) and the **The Flying Brick** (Awarded for a spectacular faux pas or for a stupid but not dangerous activity)

Please make sure that your flights are uploaded to the BGA Ladder website (see an OO or inspector for accessing club glider traces), and nominations for trophies are passed to the committee to allow for all trophies to be awarded next year!



OGC Achievement Ladder - New Award for 2022 season to be given at the AGM!

Hot of the press, the club is launching a trial of a new trophy to be awarded at next year's AGM, the "OGC Achievement's Ladder"

This is a trophy which is open to virtually every member to win and points can be built up over the next 11 months through every achievement gliding has to offer. So, whether it's getting your progress card signed off for buggy driving, going solo or flying your first 300 km cross country, your year at the club will be building up your ladder points!

For a full scorecard list, please take a look at the Achievements Ladder Scorecard within the file share section of the members website. All claims for points (and further suggestions for extra scoring categories) to be emailed to the secretary within 28 days of the achievement being signed off.



Confessions of a Newly Solo Glider Pilot by Geoff Jones 2021

BY GEOFF JONES



A clear winter's day at Weston

This is really a list of hints, tips and observations I have collected during my first calendar year of flying.

The real learning does start when you are solo. You are pilot in command. Always check the DI book when you start to do a daily inspection. If the aircraft has been described as unserviceable you could be wasting your time. Also always check the DI book if you are the first person to fly the aircraft that day.

It is your responsibility to check your aircraft is safe before you fly. A working elevator always comes in handy. Make sure you see the ailerons move during control checks. Rudder control is handy, but you can live without it! All pilots should check their aircraft before climbing in.

The K8 only needs the merest whiff of a thermal to stay aloft. In a K8 its very hard to make headway into wind. If you thermal too far down wind of the airfield you will come unstuck or should that be possibly stuck in a foreign field. If you return upwind to the scene of a thermal you can often find it again.

Launches in calm weather can catch you out. If the initial pick up is slow and the wing runner releases early you can easily drop a wing. The yellow knob is not an ornament so if required don't hesitate to use it. Harry Reed Waller came to my rescue on that one. Cross wind take-offs should be treated very carefully too. If you are not concentrating 100% you will drop a wing. Beware of encountering a cross wind gust when leaving the shelter beside the bus.

The hazards of abbreviating your circuit. Over enthusiastic thermalling can encourage you to start your circuit at what you think is the low key area. If you misjudge your arrival height, or the offset

position, it can make landing very tricky! Yes, I have tried this! The 30-degree angle down towards the landing run and the bus gets you in the correct position for your final turn.

You will never make nice consistently held off landings if you don't look down the field early enough.

This is a good tip for students finding landings difficult. Don't get fixated on the reference point. Head up early enough and feel your way down. Well you are allowed to look as well.

Give ground obstacles a wide berth on the approach. Pointed out after my first K8 solo. Choose the safest option. As Dave Bray says we have a huge a huge airfield - use it. Trying to keep up with instructors and make a landing in a narrow corridor is not recommended! I landed safely but lesson learnt.

Changes in conditions during the day. Wind speed and direction can change. If you are landing cross wind all day you may switch to an into wind hangar flight. Best to use more of the field rather than make your final turn too low. (Except at Talgarth, it's a small field where your height needs to be nicely judged)

Being aware and "switched on". Martin Durham and John Hanlon are masters at spotting things quickly. They have eagle eyesight; I was hooking on a glider when the cable started to move. Martin spotted it before I knew anything, instructing me to release the strop. Always have courage to shout STOP when required.

I do actually fly solo! Some of these ideas have come from check flights and re-solo training after the 2021 Covid layoff.



Old faithful CGO. You always have an affection for your first solo glider

Report from the Junior Nationals

BY HENRY MORRIS

This year I had the pleasure of attending the Junior Nationals, which were held in August at Aston Down. A competition like that, especially one with the word “Nationals” in the title, seemed very daunting at first – I was up against some of the top pilots in the country; the average speeds achieved by some of the competitors there (mostly Finn Sleigh and Toby Freeland of the British Team) seem astronomical and frankly unobtainable. My performance this year put me firmly in the middle of the pack, which was by no means a ground-breaking effort, but it gives me the confidence to go back next year.



An evening sunset at the competition; the fruits of my time spent polishing the tail of KHV finally made noticeable

Competition flying is a whole different game to club flying it turns out – the first thing that struck me was the sheer volume of aircraft and people there. This year (combined with the Cotswold Regionals, which was held concurrently) there were 70 gliders and 8 tug aircraft, some of which were part of the BGA two-seat flying. Being at the back of the launch grid on the first day was a distinctly daunting experience. There is a veritable sea of empennage and span, such that you couldn't even see more than 3 or 4 rows ahead of you. Even more daunting was being at the front of the grid a few days later, with the whole Regionals, Juniors, and Two Seat grid behind me – you really can't afford to drop a wing with that many people watching.



Something that became quickly evident was the standard of flying required to safely and successfully participate in the contest. For example, when club flying, if you come off the winch and don't find a thermal, you just land and take another launch. In a competition, unless you can get a relight at a suitable time (which is tricky), that would be you done for the day. The onus is on you to stay up off the aerotow, which is normally easy enough with the whole pack up there, but quickly becomes harder if you're the first person to launch of the day.

The other thing that was a big surprise to me was gaggle flying. In a club environment, you are at most sharing a thermal with 5 or 6 other people, and you'll be quite spread out vertically in the thermal most of the time. You can normally centre the thermal how you want and get a nice climb rate out of it. Gaggle flying is an entirely different beast. I remember one day of the competition in which pretty much the entire Juniors, Regionals, and Two Seat grid were split over two thermals – about 30 gliders in each thermal.



The climb rate becomes very much secondary to your lookout scan

When you've got 3 other gliders at the same level as you, and another 3 directly above and directly below, you cannot afford to lose concentration for even a second. The climb rate becomes very much secondary to your lookout scan – in fact, much of the time the gaggle doesn't climb very well.

However, once you are past the start line and the gaggles have begun to break up, it feels much more like a competition – the feeling of overtaking a glider you know started before you and has ended up below you is deeply satisfying. Even better is seeing a glider leave your thermal early and push on, only to for you to fly 30 km further down track and find them in a field at the furthest turning point as you climb merrily above them (which was in this case the wrong side of Bicester – a long retrieve).

The racing aspect changes the dynamic of cross country flying; it forces you to fly much more efficiently and be confident in your decision making. Any hesitancy, such as taking an extra turn in a dying thermal, can tank your cross-country speed. I played it very safe on the whole this competition, and as such I was one of the only people to not land out, even on the mass landout day of the last contest day, which saw more than 10 people end up in the same field.

Cross country flying of this kind can have its ups and downs – on the longest competition day, I was about halfway round the 200 km task at 2000 ft, struggling to find a climb. I had my field picked and was going to give one last thermal a go, before landing in what looked like quite a nice stubble field. As only seems to happen when you're very low and struggling, I suddenly hit what turned into a 5.5

kt average climb all the way to cloud base at 4500 ft. That one was a bit of a mental rollercoaster. I made it all the way round the task in the end at a by-no-means-record-breaking, but pleasant and comfortable speed.

This competition was one of my best gliding experiences so far – it was a week spent doing nothing but flying (and waiting for the grid to launch) and flying at that sort of level has definitely turned me into a better pilot. Spending that long flying the same aircraft every day means you really get to know it, and I now feel more confident in my DG than I ever have. I hope that next year some of the other XC-endorsed juniors will come and join me in a single seater.



OGC Christmas Party at The Manor

BY THE OGC CHRISTMAS ELVES, AKA GEOFF JONES AND GEOFF STEPHENS

Our Christmas Party at The Manor Country House Hotel (at the other end of the village to the club) was a great success! Thanks go to all those that turned up to create the festive atmosphere. Thanks also go to those that did the honourable thing and didn't turn up as they either had Covid-like symptoms or had tested positive. We all missed Paul Morrison, who sadly stayed away due to his recent bereavement.

After dinner there was a keenly contested musical quiz linked by a flying theme. Despite the questions being extremely diverse in order to appeal to all the age groups present, the Brown / Cuthill / Cooper / Porat / Li table came up trumps with a surprisingly high score of 15 out of 20.

Back at the clubhouse (where the refreshments were more attractively priced) there was a modest after-party which was only marred by one of the Elves getting his car stuck in a trench which he himself had dug only a week earlier!

Views will be sought as to whether we should try to book the same marvellous venue next year.

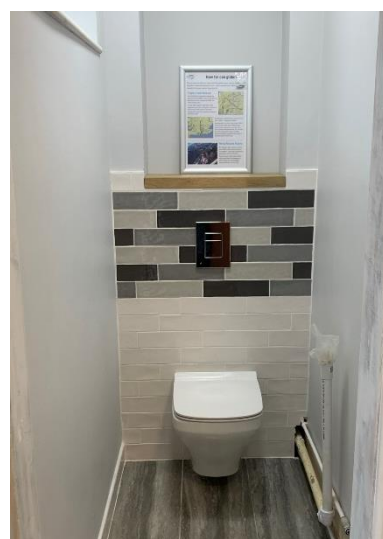


Club House Refurbishment Project

BY DAVE BRAY

Back in late 2019 you may recall a notice going out for help forming a sub-committee to give direction to refurbish the dated club house facilities. Thanks to around 10-12 members who got stuck in and following various meetings, discussions, and assessments, plans for both the toilets & shower as well as the club house redesign were made. Following delays from Covid-19 and the various lockdowns, these were submitted to the committee for review and approval. Given the green light for the proposed changes to the entrance hall, toilets and shower, I was faced with the realisation that my initial plans for involving many people would fall foul of the covid-19 bubble rules and despite having done a number of house refurbs and grown up on various building sites since the age of 14 months old, I called in the cavalry and persuaded former member Andy Bray (my dad, general tradesman and excellent competition crew) to stand in as the master builder, while I “assisted”, managed material orders, took photos and led the all-important tea making!

Day one saw the demolition of the former Gents and Shower completed in less than 8 hours and was incredibly satisfying, the rebuild and modernisation took considerably longer and had several major hurdles to overcome (usually involving wastewater...) however, the philosophy the subcommittee had taken of modern looking, hard wearing, and low maintenance proved popular with all who saw the build progressing.



Inside, with John Hanlon and I cutting block work and installing windows to the toilets, we moved on to updating the last toilet room. What had been planned to be a 4-month project ended up over running by 6 weeks for various reasons, but by June, result has been exactly what were asked for.

Please look after these new rooms, although there were designed be OGC proof, we've already found that toilet roll holders and paper towel dispensers don't yet magically refill themselves!

Since June, numerus others have also been hard at work, installing a heating oil tank, replacing the hangar guttering and more recently John Hanlon has been hard at work leading a project to rewire and future proof the electrics of the buildings including new distribution boards and clubroom LED lights to add to the new hangar ones.

While this was happening, various other improvements were being made, namely to the outdoor BBQ area with Jamie Allen, Mark Darwent, Geoff Stephens, Jeremy Mahrer, and Nick Browne as well

as many others those who came to spend time repainting benches, clearing the BBQ shelter roof, power jetting concrete and creating a wildflower garden to give members a post lockdown area to be proud of.



Keep an eye out for the reforming of the sub-committee. With all the change to the club in the last 2 years, it's going to be worth reviewing the plans for the club room to ensure that the best ideas - maximising space, creating a modern look and feel as well as practicality for the caterers who do our fantastic social events - make it into the final design. We could even take on the upstairs briefing room to make more use of it!

All in all, it's been a busy year and the clubhouse now has a new lease of life which we can all enjoy. Thanks to all those who got involved - your time and energy was invaluable.

Team JSX - Gransden Regionals

BY OLIVER RAMSAY AND AMELIA RICHARDSON

During the Summer months, Dave Bray organised a small trip in conjunction with the junior lead at Cambridge GC, to allow the club juniors to experience what it's like to help run a competition, as well as fly the tasks involved. Amelia and I jumped at the opportunity to go, setting off to Gransden on the 8th of August.

Day Zero

Arriving on a scrub day (non-flying day due to poor weather), we set up camp with some of the fellow Cambridge juniors, and saw some familiar faces, such as Gordon and Cecilia. Shortly after, Dave arrived (having actually worked his real job for once), and we made sure we had everything required to gear JSX up for some cross-country flying.

Day One

We woke up early the next day, for the first competition day we would be partaking in. Firstly, we helped grid the 'officially' competing gliders. This was a task of making sure everyone knew on which row they were lining up, and got there correctly without any accidents. We then went to the morning briefing, where Finn, the newly declared Junior European Club Class Champion, told us about what was going to happen today. The task set was a 110 km dash in a small weather window. We would be launching from the back, once the rest of the grid had launched and got away.

After the briefing, Dave, Amelia and I were handed our orange HI-VIS jackets and shown what our rope running duties consisted of. We were the launching crew, with our objective being to launch the full grid as quickly and efficiently as possible. There were a total of about 8 tugs, so launching was a non-stop process!



Amelia and Ollie running the rope



Dave and Ollie on glide

Once about two thirds of the grid had been launched, Dave and I headed off to JSX, parked at the back of the grid, and proceeded to get kitted up to launch. We checked our maps were correctly marked, suncream was suitably applied and our hats and sunglasses were on our heads. We then hopped in for our first task off the week. Dave was in control for the launch, and once dumped at 2000 ft, he worked to get us established in a climb. This was where I learned my new number one comp rule. "Once you've found your first climb, however weak it may be, don't leave it until you're at the top". Once we had begun to climb after much searching for a second climb, many gliders came and joined us. We weren't in the ideal starting position, however the day had a short window,

so we decided to make a start behind a couple of gliders. Our plan was to start behind and catch up to them at some point in the flight, meaning we would have a faster speed if we were to finish.

We set off towards our first turnpoint, heading north-east, with the wind coming from the west. We found our first climb halfway down the first leg, about 2.5 knots, which we topped up to cloudbase, as the sky ahead didn't look inviting. We then pushed onto the turnpoint, and then turned back to fly under the 'street' we had just flown down trying to find a climb.

The weatherman had been unfortunately right

The sky, as forecast, was beginning to die. We kept on finding little patches of lift which we would ride up 500 ft or so, before they'd die, and we would then push on. We were struggling. However, in the distance, there was hope, a glider at a similar height to us, going up. It happened to be an ASW20. We swooped in just below it and managed to climb 1200 ft in an average of 1.8 knots. We considered this a 'mega' climb compared to all of our previous bubbles. Now with height to play with, we pushed on slowly, to see if the sky ahead was working, however being well within glide range of Gransden Lodge if it didn't seem to work.

It didn't work. The weatherman had been unfortunately right, and the day had died. We decided to turn back short, and quietly landed back, amongst the finishers of the day who had managed to start earlier, and whizz around in the good bit of sky. We finished the day with a debrief of our flight, washing the bugs off the glider and securing it, before I embarked on a short retrieve with another pilot, to help derig our 'saviour' in the ASW20, who had kept on pushing and inevitably landed out. Our work was paid for by a trip to McDonald's, and after arriving home, a short social in the clubhouse before heading off to the tents for some well-deserved rest.

Day Two - Amelia

Now it was my turn to have a little bit of fun. We woke up in the morning not being the most optimistic about the day. It was very overcast and damp - not good weather for flying cross country at all. But anyway, the weatherman thought it would be a good day. Shortly after breakfast, we got ready and gridded at the back. After the morning briefing, we saw the first cumulus clouds developing on the horizon. This brought a smile to my face!

Finally, after two hours of waiting, Ollie and I went to rope run and launch the first few gliders. (I have never seen so many tugs launching so many gliders!). About halfway through the pack, I ran for a quick toilet stop and got my parachute on and hopped into the back of JSX. Dave joined me shortly after. The cumulus clouds finally got to us. We were about to get airborne before a reight came to land. I felt my heart sink - turned out it was just the sniffer coming to say how good it was! I put on my hat and sunglasses and a smile lit up on my face. Canopy shut- time for take-off! First ever tow behind a chipmunk!

After we got dropped off at 2000 ft, we pootled over to our first climb. 2 knots, could be better? We were joined by both Libelles and a Pik 20. We left the thermal at 3000 ft and began our task. We began our first leg heading away from Gransden, Dave did the majority of the flying, but I was on extreme lookout making sure no one was trying to cut us up! We glided over to St Neots and started dropping past 2000ft, eventually we found a good climb, averaging 3 to 4 knots. That was my first ever experience of gaggle flying. It was a blooming epic experience! After reaching our second turn point, someone had landed out below. We caught around seven climbs throughout the 90km to get

to the last turn point. We turned off on the last turn point and began our final glide. I did find it funny how we didn't do a normal circuit. Once we landed, I just could not stop smiling, I wanted to do it all again. Turns out the weather man was right.

Ollie, Dave and I cleaned JSX and put her to bed for the night before enjoying a well-earned dinner of pasta. I went back to my tent and sent my family and friends pictures of one of my most epic flights so far. This flight was one of the best experiences I have ever had- sure there'll be many more to come.

Day Three - Ollie

Day three began, which meant it was my turn to fly again. We met up at JSX, and having looked at the forecast ourselves, we knew it was going to be a decent day. We sorted out JSX, and for the third day running, we were first ones on the grid.

At 10 am, briefing started, and we were tasked with a 200 km task, with some awesome predicted weather throughout the flight. After hastily launching the grid when the sniffer was successfully staying up, Dave and I hopped in and began our whiz around Gransden's local countryside.

The flight included loads more gaggle flying, and for much of the task, we were keeping up with Gordon!

After landing back and sending off our trace, we parked JSX up for the night, before heading to the clubhouse for a social and food. After checking the scores a while later, we realised we had managed to beat Gordon by 0.5 km/h after scores had been handicapped.

Day Four - Amelia

We got up bright and early that morning to a blue sky and a wonderful sunrise. We had breakfast and got JSX ready. After successfully tripping over a water barrel, we pulled JSX to the back of the grid. The weather man said there was some window of opportunity for those at the front of the grid. Ollie and I started to get the first few gliders away. Halfway through the grid, I watch the first two relights land. Knowing that it would be a struggle we carried on anyway. I jumped in the back of JSX and looked at the FLARM to see how everyone was getting on. I noticed a Libelle climbing at a rate of around 1ft per 10 seconds. Today was going to be a challenge.

Glider after glider in fields

Finally it was our turn, we launched to 2000 ft and went to find the first climb. Half a knot and five gliders hanging on. We got to cloudbase, 2500 ft. Not great for flying. Anyway, we gave it a try. We started the first leg but didn't get far; showers and a low cloudbase ahead of us. We caught a climb of 2 knots and that was just enough to get us back to Gransden. In that climb we were joined by about 6 gliders including Gordon in 224. Finally, we gave up and called off the task. On our final glide back in I kept looking around all I could see was glider after glider in fields or heading back home.

We had made the right decision! All I saw on glide and seek was loads of gliders in fields, some even at the odd airstrip if they had an engine. Dave and I went to rescue Cambridge's Perkoz and pilots - getting drenched in the process! It was great to see how a landout worked.

That evening, I returned home after a very poor series of sleeping on my bed that kept falling apart! Apart from that, it was the best 5 five days I have ever had!

Day Five - Ollie

Day five began, and the weather looked poor. We gridded up JSX, and waited around for the briefing to begin. They predicted a short flying window, in which they hoped we would manage a 90km task. However it was still raining outside, and no one had much hope.

After waiting on the grid for an hour, with a low cloudbase, the director decided to abandon the day, and everyone began tidying or derigging their gliders. This took little over an hour. Now, we had to come up with something to do for the day. As it turned out, there was a minigolf just down the road.

Some of my new mates and I decided we would go and have a round. The sky had improved even after the day had been abandoned, the sun was shining, and it was hot. Comps can be great fun, even when there is no flying going on.

Day Six - Ollie

At the start of day six, the new co-pilot turned up - Miles Bailey. He had, luckily for him, turned up on the trickiest flying day there was going to be. A 2000 ft cloudbase and climbs of a maximum of two knots.

After gridding the glider and listening to the task briefing of a 96km task, we set to launching the grid when it became 'good'. Once the grid was gone, and many relights, we set off ourselves, launching into a weak climb, and practically drifting through the start to begin our task. About 10 km down track, we found our first on-task bubble, and sat in it for the best part of 15 km, slowly drifting towards our first tp. We managed to hit the turnpoint just below the cloudbase and began the hopeless push into the wind to get back.

We failed, and as we were getting low, headed off to our chosen field, where we landed with two other gliders from the comp. Dave hastily came and collected us, and JSX was safely derigged and put in its trailer for the final day of flying tomorrow.

Day 7 - the Final Day - Ollie

We woke early, and after some breakfast, rigged JSX. I was back flying with Dave. We had a short weather window, however it was forecast to be good.



Dave and Ollie in JSX. Photo by Emily Tillet

Once again, we began launching the grid when the sniffer was staying up. It was all going well until I somehow managed to pull a muscle in my quad while running the wing of a glider. I slowly hobbled back to JSX, and began to gear up, seeing as I was 'useless' at the front of the grid.

Dave, once he had finished launching the grid, hopped into the backseat of JSX. He checked my quad was alright, then we set off. We managed to hook a nice climb to set off in the ideal position, and even saw some 6 knotters on the first leg! After a bit of a slow second leg, due to getting low, we turned the last turnpoint, before hitting the control point and landing back home.

Final Thoughts from Amelia and Ollie

What an awesome week we all had. I learnt a lot about flying in competitions, cross-country, and tactical flying, as well as making loads of new friends, some of which I am still often in contact with today.

I think for me, it was amazing to see how a gliding competition worked - even getting the chance to be a part of it was a blooming epic experience. These memories are never going to leave my head. I met such amazing people and pilots - it gave me a taste of what gliding was really about! Thank you so much to Dave for organising that fantastic week.

A big thank you to Dave for organising all of this, and Miles for coming all the way to Gransden for a crappy day of flying.



Amelia and Ollie with the big DG. Photo by Geoff Jones

My Silver C Flight

BY JOHN NESTOR

I have spent most of my gliding life in Australia at Caboolture Gliding Club. A great club, friendly and supportive but constrained by airspace, humidity, sea breezes and lack of outlanding paddocks. Any land not part of the town of Caboolture and its suburbs is bush, scrub, forest or water. Flights exceeding an hour are rare and two-hour flights are as rare as hen's teeth. Many club members have not flown a two-hour flight at Caboolture. For these reasons the club has an annual week's pilgrimage to Darling Downs Soaring Club, a three-and-a-half-hour drive for me so not a place to go for a day's flying. The Darling Downs are 1,200 ft ASL; the thermals are as big as paddocks; the paddocks are as big as farms and there are few airspace restrictions. Returnees from Caboolture week at DDSC always rave about flying there and how many badge claims they have made. The week is scheduled for late Australian spring (November) when (hopefully) the heat has built up, but the summer rains have not yet started.

You don't have to declare five hours, you just have to fly it

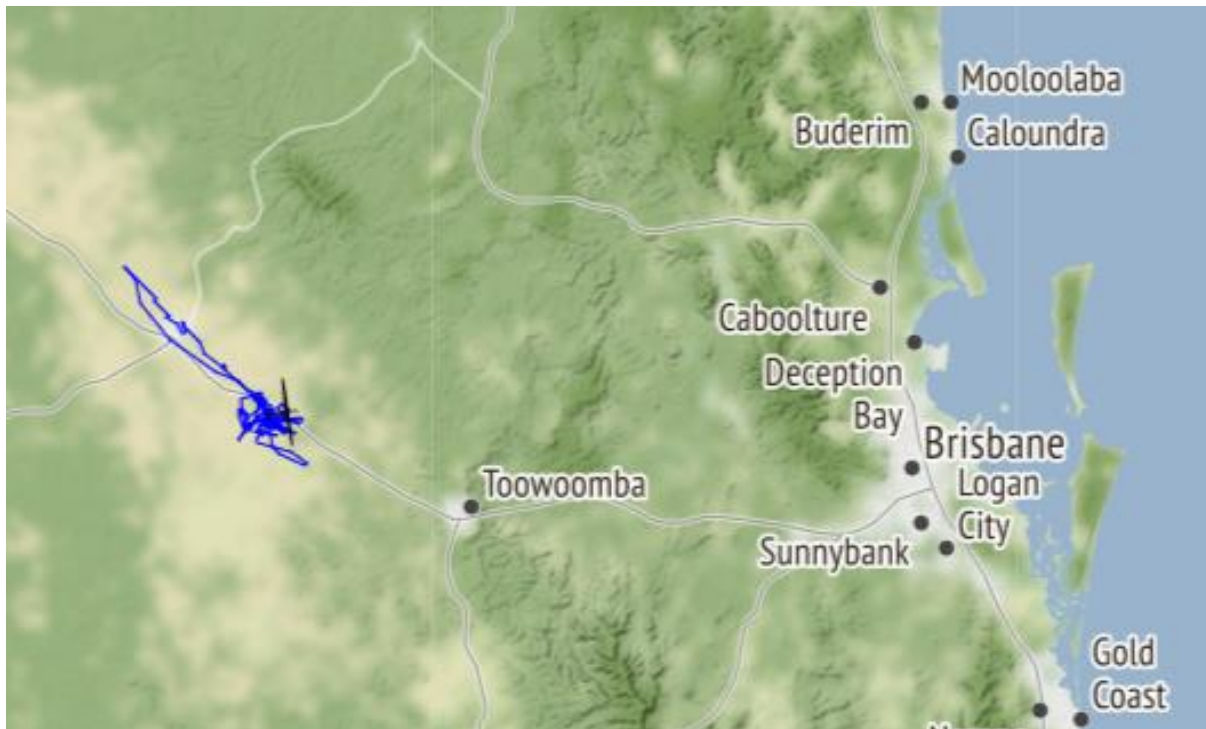
In November 2016 I booked myself into the week and on the Tuesday evening the talk was all about the conditions predicted for Wednesday. Talk was of 300 km and 1,000 km flights. On Wednesday morning "mr-look-out-of-the-window.com" confirmed the predictions and aircraft were prepared. A perfect day for a Silver C flight - but I was not cross country endorsed. At morning briefing the tasks were mostly 300 km in private gliders and when I said that I would fly the Astir Jeans and declare five hours there was a chorus of "You don't have to declare five hours, you just have to fly it". That made no difference, I was committed.

At the flight line at about 10:45 I was asked what my plans were. When I said "five hours" the answer was "You should have started that an hour ago", rather discouraging. After take-off the tug pilot found a thermal and I let go at about 1,900 ft AGL, looked at my watch, five to eleven, and realised that I had to be still in the cockpit and in the air at five to four. I put the nose down to tell the logger that I was off tow, turned back into the thermal and soon was at 5,900 ft AGL. That climb and the next one to 6,700 ft showed me that I could be generous with my interpretation of "Gliding Range of the Airfield" so I set off for Dalby, 30 km northwest, where I had been before in a two seater and where I knew there was an airfield I could use to save myself and the aircraft but not to save myself from rather difficult explanations. Navigation was easy, just follow the road and the adjacent railway. I arrived over Dalby Airfield, having, like the novice I was, taken every thermal that I found. Safe over an airfield I decided to continue northwest along the railway. When the next thermal took me to 7,700 ft AGL I decided that was enough, I had final glide to McCaffrey Field, and turned on a reciprocal course, arriving over the start point after two hours in the air, with still three hours left to stay airborne. Those three hours were spent playing in streets, mostly between 7,000' AGL and 8,000' AGL. It was very cold, I was shivering uncontrollably and could not feel my feet which made rudder control erratic. Thermalling would have been difficult with little rudder control but streeting was easy.

Having heard stories of pilots being denied five hours because they came down minutes too soon, I was determined to avoid any pitfalls and stayed high until the full five hours were up. At five to four I started down, not easy, the air was stacked with thermals. And then I felt something behind my right shoulder and reaching round I found the logger. As I watched, the power lead (it was an RJ12

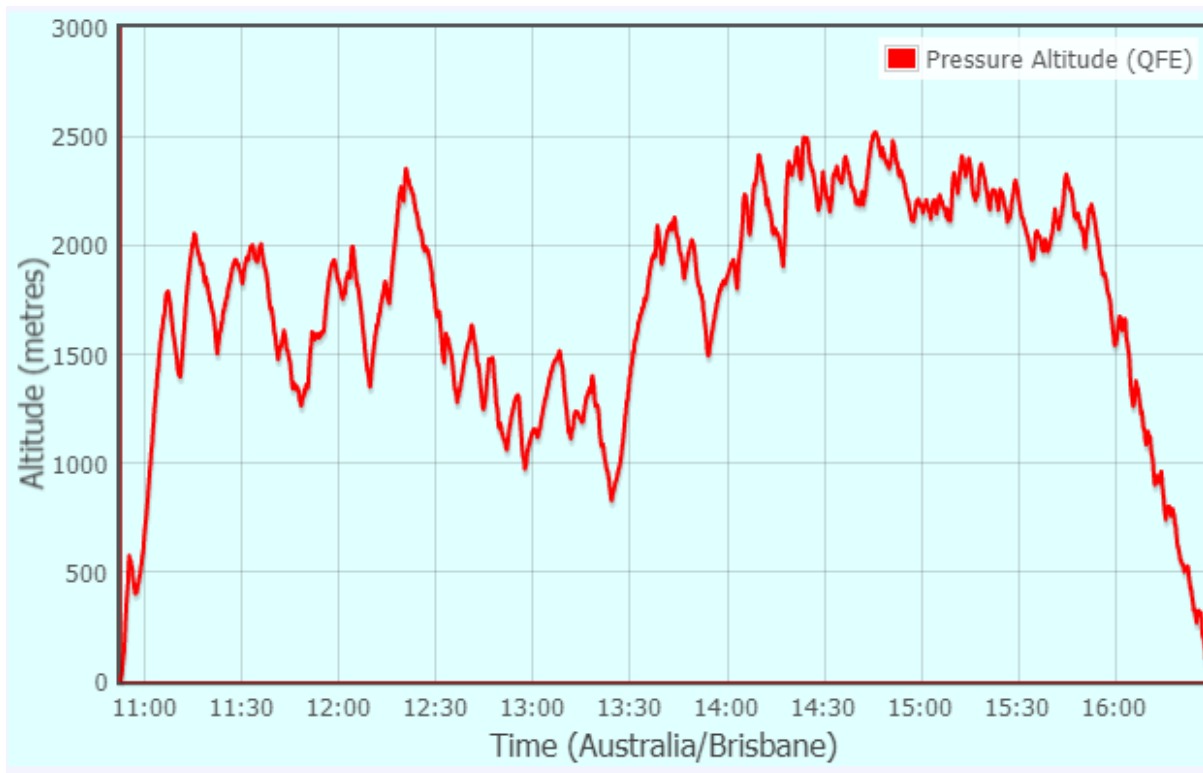
connector with a broken clip) slipped out. I radioed the field asking for an OO to note my landing time and landed at 16:28, well over the five hours.

In the bar after a hot shower there was a jubilant atmosphere, everyone had completed their allotted tasks, but no one was more joyful than me knowing that I had five hours and a height gain double the required 1,000 metres.



The mentor for our week, Bob, asked me where I had been. When I told him, he said that he had put Jimbour House, (50 Km away but 60 Km because of the dogleg around Oakey Army Air Force airspace) the accepted Silver C distance, into the logger “just in case I went that way”. When I mentioned XC endorsement, he said the DDSC interpretation of “Gliding Distance” was not the same as CGC’s. Gliding Distance was to any recognised airfield. So, having flown half way to Dalby with final glide to McCaffrey Field or Dalby, I could have gone to Dalby then, with enough height, set off for Jimbour House where there is an airstrip, making sure that I had final glide to Dalby or Jimbour House strip all the time. I thanked him politely through gritted teeth.

The logger problem would be solved by reading the FLARM but the FLARM was an old one with a serial connection and the computer with the serial connection was away for repair. I produced my phone running XCSOAR which I knew would not be accepted for the badge claim but would at least show what I had done. Imagine my surprise when the reader pinged “Silver height”, “Silver duration”, “Silver distance”. My continuation north west past Dalby had taken me 51.1 Km from the take off point, BUT, I had not declared 50 Km and I had not reached an accredited turning point!



At this point Jenny Thomson (Club President, Instructor, Tug Pilot, OO and member of the GFA board) said that she did not think a declaration was required. Although the Gliding Federation of Australia Handbook specified a turning point pre-declared, the FAI did not and GFA rules were supposed to be in line with international regulations. She rang the badge lady who was adamant and Jenny said "We will make a test case of this". She kindly put together an email quoting chapter and verse of the FAI regulations which I submitted to the GFA with the IGC file and payment which resulted in me receiving, within a week, the prized Silver Badge.

Postscript:- The next day dawned with few thermals in sight but as I was unsure of the distance being allowed I launched with a logger set for Jimbour House. No problem getting to Dalby downwind, more difficult to Jimbour where I sat over the airstrip for a long time until I found a thermal to 7,000 ft which took me back to Dalby. 6,000 ft over Dalby should have been final glide to McCaffrey field but with a lot of sink and a strong headwind I was scratching around in two or three knot thermals which gave me a bit of height but little better angle to the field. My track along the road had many landable paddocks and I inspected every one. Then the radio chirped up "Can you see that glider in front below us, he's having trouble". Twisting my neck right round I saw the Pawnee tug towing the ASK21 a 1,000' above me. It was a colleague who was on the same task but did not find a thermal over Dalby on the return trip; when the houses got too close he put it down at Dalby Airfield and requested an aerotow retrieve. He still got the Silver distance.

Post Postscript:- I have learned that his year's Caboolture Gliding Club visit to DDSC has been washed out by a thunderstorm on Sunday which made the strip unflyable for the week. Other weeks have had unflyable days due to haze, rain, winds and bush fires. Australia is not always what you think.

The musings of a beginner cross country competition coach wannabe – with thanks to the Ted Lys fund

BY DAVE BRAY

Back in 2019, I applied for a bursary through the Ted Lys fund to take the club's DG505 to a regionals competition and show a few P2s the fun that can be had flying competitions while improving their flying and my coaching skills. Unfortunately, the pandemic caused this grand plan of 2020 all get cancelled. So come the start of 2021, I negotiated transferring it to a different competition aimed at giving our young members a chance to experience it. With all comps being cancelled the year before, getting an entry proved difficult until I spoke with the CFI and Junior coordinators at Cambridge GC who offered a place flying off the back of the grid in exchange for helping with the grid set up and launching during the week. Result!

The competition itself was directed by the newly crowned Junior European Champion, Finn Sleigh, well supported by several experienced Cambridge members. It turned out to be the best organised competition I've flown at as well as a lot of fun, with the organisers getting the best out of all the days considering the forecast they were presented with each morning.



Ollie and Dave ready for the off with Amelia running the wing – photo by Geoff Jones

We ended up with 5 scoring days in the “tonic” class (gliders of less than 101 handicap), the “gin” class managed 6 due to the limited weather window on one of the days.

Flying with our two juniors over the week was a great experience for many reasons, with 50 or so gliders in the air showing why we emphasise the importance of a good look out, the East Anglia task area is also really good to fly over in August with big, recently cut fields giving lots of options in the unfortunately relatively weak conditions. The airspace is also straight forward meaning focus can be on climb and route selection, ideal starting points for progressing in cross country flying.

First cross-country flight

Highlights of the Gransden regionals for me were being able to fly with Amelia on her first cross country flight, a 87km triangle with what ended up being a much better than anticipated day, and seeing Ollie double his previous best by getting us around the single 200 km task of the week (ending up in 7th place for the day). On top of this we were able to join in the friendly pre and post flight discussions which I know make a great difference to debunking the myths of gliding competitions and give a chance for knowledge of “how-I-dun-it” to change hands.

Some of the various lessons I’ve taken away from the flights include keeping my own game plan going despite various “helpful suggestions” from the other seat, making the most of a less than ideal start position and having a bit more faith in the reading ahead of the task area. All these are aspects which I suspect I’ll be continuing to work on for the next 30 plus years. My thanks to Miles Bailey who covered for me as P1 on a day while I had to sit through a work standby, the support of Ollie’s and Amelia’s parents, all those at Cambridge GC who helped make this happen and finally the Ted Lys fund who provided the financial support.

Junior Gliding Events 2021

BY DAVE BRAY

JSX and I attended the Junior Nationals at Aston Down in late August with the BGA two-seater training scheme. It's a popular and long running "add on" event to the competition, aimed at giving young people a chance to see what a competition involves, while giving the flying a try with a selection of experienced cross-country pilots to coach them.



JSX at the Mynd - photo by David Edwards

Although there was an OGC Junior among the 10 or so selected for the course, the idea is for them to fly different gliders with different coaches to see the various approaches to a successful flight, therefore I ended up flying with a selection of pilots I wouldn't normally get to, including a guy from Seahawk GC (Cornwall) who had never shared a thermal with more than two other gliders, a Lashamite who wasn't happy to not have got around the previous day and a cheerful but nervous chap from Saltby. The weather wasn't much different from the week at Gransden (generally 3 – 4 hour windows) but as none of the task area was the same it was an interesting change flying over small undulating fields with lots of dry-stone walling! All in all, a great experience flying for the week.

In October, JSX also made a trip to the Long Mynd in support of the UK Junior's Winter Series event. Their first since 2019. These events are for young people to experience gliding away from their home club and to encourage winter flying when soaring hats are replaced with thick coats, gloves and woolly hats. The wind was a close to ideal strong south-westerly for two of the three days with the ridge allowing everyone (covid limited to 90ish people) to get 30 to 60 minute flights in all sorts of gliders - K13's, DG500s, an Arcus, Janus C, Duo and Grob to name a few.

Thanks to the BGA for supporting young people. The skills and enthusiasm were great to see and if you're a Junior and interested in attending these events in 2022, or someone over 26 looking to support the future of the sport then please get in touch or keep your eye out in the club newsletters for more details.



JSX at the Mynd - photo by David Edwards

Happy New Year 2021 – See you all in 2022

FROM THE EDITOR

A big thanks for all your contributions to Final Glide 2021, a great pleasure for me while putting this together is seeing what we've all been up to, at and away from Weston. One thing that has really stood out for me this year is how much gliding really is a sport for everyone. To finish off this year I leave you not with the usual photography, but with this wonderful wintery mountain gliding artwork. Thankyou so much Tai-Ying Lee for this.

