

# Final Glide 2022



*Photo Credit: Siobhan Tobin*

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## Editor's Introduction

BY EIFION HERBERT

Welcome to the 2022 edition of Final Glide, Oxford Gliding Club's annual end of year newsletter / review of the year. I'm sure I speak for all our members in offering a big thankyou to the committee, instructors and volunteers who work tirelessly in the air, at the launch point, in the workshop or behind the scenes making our club the success it is. One thing that has really stood out for me this year while soliciting submission for Final Glide is the amount of correspondence I receive from past members who still keep in touch. Perhaps they now fly elsewhere, or have put away their soaring hats for good, but once you are a part of the Weston-on-the-Green family, that stays with you, wherever life takes you. Thankyou all for being part of my gliding family in 2022, and I look forward to further flying adventures in 2023.

## OUGC in 2022

BY SIOBHAN TOBIN

2022 has been a fantastic year for OUGC as part of OGC. Some highlights:

Mini expedition to Sutton Bank in January. It was freezing but beautiful. We learned Qwirkle and Wordle and how to aerotow and ridge soar. Rupert had his 700th glider flight!

Azmi accomplished his silver badge in April after two field landings in two weekends (!!!), and a McMuffin-fuelled 5 hour flight. This is OUGC's first silver badge for 6 years.



We had a training weekend at Bicester with Motorglide UK. A stay-cation for OUGC. Good practise flying from another local airfield. Huge thanks to Jonathon May for being our tug pilot for the week! ESB then went on to the Junior Winter Series at Edgehill.

Annuals completed on FEF and ESB in April with lots of polishing and glider TLC!

In May, we had the OUGC dinner for the first time since 2019. Neil went punting and he didn't fall in.



In June, OUGC hosted Cambridge Uni GC for the varsity soaring competition at WOTG. We had a great weekend even though we came 2nd. Thanks to Cecilia for coaching us and giving a lot of help to the other team too (site checks in all weathers). Jamie did a (very hard) super quiz and Liam cooked an awesome feast.

We had a joint training week, the "Up-Slack camp", with Uni of West England GC at Aston Down in September. Good times focussing mostly on skills development for pre-solo folk.

Tai-Ying Lee, Aili Shao, Saru Bhattacharyya and Oliver Kay all went solo! Congratulations!!!

In summary, we had 30 members flying regularly and 70 intro day participants. Jonathan Edge did more than 80 flights with intro day students, a spectacular effort. Our two gliders ESB and FEF have seen lots of action and a big thanks to Tim and Jim for leading their maintenance across the season. Thanks to the wider OGC maintenance group for keeping ESB and FEF serviceable (that pesky air scoop). Neil, Dave, Jon G, Cecilia, Gordon, Nick, Cloudy, Jon C, Miles instructed on various trips, which wouldn't have been half as much fun (or at all possible) without them!

I can't wait for 2023 with OUGC & OGC at RAF WOTG!

Siobhan Tobin

OUGC president

## Eurotour 2022

BY JON GATFIELD

This is basically an excuse to share a few nice photos for folks to look at during the cold winter months. Once again, this year my wife Paula and I packed the trusty motorhome and headed for the Alps using a 6-month French visa so we weren't restricted by the 90 day rule in place post Brexit. We left in May and I flew in Sweden, France, Italy, and Bosnia Grand Prix, plus the mandatory international competition in Rieti, Italy, only returning in mid-September. Paula nipped home every so often for respite care. My poor AS33 now has 550 hours on it and it's only 18 months old: that's the joy of retirement.



*A 13,000 ft cloudbase near Chamonix*



The highlight of the summer was a trip from Serres, in the French Alps, up to the Matterhorn and back. I flew with a couple of “youngsters” - my son Mike in his LS8 and Finn Sleigh in his ASW20 - acting as the “guardian angel”: opening the air brakes to drop down below the lowest glider every so often to help find the lift. I think this is critical doing lead and follows, even more so in mountains.



*Spot the LS8*

We all get rattled when we get low but as soon as we see a glider still lower it seems to make things better. I reckon I air braked down a total of around 20,000' during the day though! Making the jumps across big valleys can sometimes be stressful too and it helps to have others around to lay down the stepping-stones. Cruising around the Matterhorn at 13,000' with your son on your wingtip is probably one of the best experiences gliding has to offer.



*Circumnavigating the Matterhorn*

That all said it was great to be back at Weston instructing – I still get a buzz out of that even after the “Eurotour”. We are all lucky to have this great hobby, wherever and however we fly.

# ‘Our fears become our limitations if we don’t overcome them.’ - Lt Col Waldman

BY AMELIA RICHARDSON

When I started gliding, I found the winch launch a little... terrifying shall we say. Being hurtled into the air in three seconds is a daunting feeling at first, it took me some getting used to! Three years on, I look back to where I first started and cannot believe how much gliding has changed me as a person.

A few instructors reading this will know how much I ‘loved’ the winch launch in the beginning! The winch launch was a very new thing for me, the acceleration, the angle of how you go up, the speed and the launch failures. It was all a lot to take in at first and a very new mixture of feelings to get used to. If I wanted to fly, I would always have setbacks along the way.

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## *“Face that Fear”*

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The little voice inside my head told me to face that fear to get over my fear of the winch launch. With a lot of support from my instructors, I did it. One moment in particular I recall is when Bob said, “Crickey, you didn’t scream - well done!”. I landed, grinning from ear to ear knowing I had jumped that first hurdle! There were a few more to come along the way, setback number 2, negative g...



*Happy smile after converting to the K23*

Now, I got used to the winch launch but what happens when it goes wrong? Well, I had seen launch failures practised from the ground but never actually done one. Halfway up my 12th winch launch, the weak link broke. This was so unexpected for me, the nose went down and my stomach went up! That was a sickening feeling. That was my first experience with negative g, and it took me a short while to get used to it. I told myself to avoid doing launch failures because I kept pushing my fear of negative g aside. That little voice kept telling me to do it and it was right - I had to do it. One of my favourite flying exercises was the ‘negative g not always a symptom of a stall’. Jon G demonstrated this to me, then I flew it myself. Watching the grass float up in the air

was amazing and a new experience. The distraction made me forget that I was afraid of negative g. When we landed, it took me a minute to realise what had happened. I had just faced a fear without realising, damn it was an amazing feeling.





*Aerobatic practice*

Of course, then comes another setback, setback 3, aerobatics. Aerobatics is one thing that I had been longing to try. I kept putting it off and putting it off, and something in my head was telling me not to do it. Finally, after going home one night I was annoyed because I put off doing a loop. I went up with Dave B the next day, nose down to 120 knots. No turning back now, then it was done. I had done it!

Let me skip forward three years. This year I was kindly awarded a scholarship from the British Women Pilots' Association to help fund my aerobatics. This has helped me unlock a new side of gliding I could have never dreamt of doing because of how expensive high altitude aero tows are. This year I managed to get my Standard badge and half my Sports badge signed off thanks to this fantastic scholarship. Aerobatics has opened up a new view of gliding to me, this view seems to usually be inverted!

Gliding has changed me as a person in many aspects. I have to look back to where I first began to see the difference. When I started in January 2020, I was small, quiet and eager to learn but I didn't have the confidence to speak out. Through facing these setbacks, I have learnt to just ask for a little help or advice. Through sessions in the workshop or running around at the launch point, you have to use your voice to get opportunities.

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*You never know where a conversation may lead.*

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*You never know where asking can get you, even 10,000ft above Wales!*

Where can conversations and the right attitude take you? I would take the chance to touch on how asking can get you opportunities. As some people know I was this year's 'Roving Reporter' for the Women's World Gliding Championships. Some people may ask how I got that opportunity, it was through showing keenness, commitment and a genuine interest in gliding. It was an absolute pleasure to be the reporter for WWGC22, it opened up a whole new world of gliding competitions to me. I even got the opportunity to fly over the opening ceremony to draw smiley faces with Aerosparx (a flight I will never forget).

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*"Our fears we don't face become our limitations"*

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- I don't use many quotes, but this is one of the ones I use regularly. Watching a video by Lt Col Waldman on YouTube, changed my attitude on how I face my fears. His experiences he had throughout his career as a fighter pilot made me realise if I don't face my fears, I probably wouldn't have been able to achieve what I have in my three years of gliding.



*Meeting my future office*

But it's not just Lt Col Waldman that keeps me motivated, it's all the amazing instructors and members that have been there to support me through my gliding career. As I advance in my gliding career, I love to look back and see the progress I've made to achieving my dream - to be a Fast Jet Pilot.

I have had lots of setbacks along the way, I never saw it as a brick wall, but more of a hurdle. These may be significant hurdles I had to face, but I always knew I could do it. That little voice inside my head always made me face these, without that little voice I wouldn't be where I am today.

[https://youtube.com/watch?v=-WU\\_OnQR-M4&feature=shares](https://youtube.com/watch?v=-WU_OnQR-M4&feature=shares) Lt Col Waldman's Motivational Speech

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## Women's World Gliding Championships 2022

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*Rope running at WWGC22*

WWGC22 was held this year from 13-27 August at Husbands Bosworth Airfield. It is an international competition when the top female pilots from around the world come to compete in a gliding competition. This year there were pilots from Ukraine, Britain, Argentina, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and many more. And of course, our very own Claudia managed to bag a silver medal, supported by Supercrew Nick. In 2023 I'll be in Garray, Spain for WWGC 2023, I can't wait!

## Notes for Student Pilots

BY GEOFF JONES

- Most important of all don't give up. Determination to succeed is everything.
- Don't look round at other pilots and think you can never be as good as they are. You can. They were students like you at one time.
- We all have the odd day when things don't go well. Try again and you can overcome the problems.
- When I went solo, I didn't fly well in the morning. I flew solo in the afternoon!
- Don't be afraid of flying on windy days. It's an extra challenge that will improve your flying. The more experience you get the easier it becomes.
- If consistent landings are a problem make certain you look at the far end of the airfield early enough as you round out. The instructor can't see where you are looking so sort this out yourself.
- Everyone gets frustrated when they can't get over the finishing line and fly solo. There are lots of skills to learn to fly safely. The instructors all talk to each other as a group and they know when you have reached the required standard.
- Once you are solo all the hard work pays off. You get to fly the beautiful little K8. All the good things pilots say about the K8 are true.

# That was the week that WOG – a Weston flying week from the archives

BY MIKE O'NEILL

With a wife and 3 small kids, RAF shutdown weeks are my only chance to get cleared for solo flying and do a bit of soaring. With such restricted flying, I need to make the best of what time I do get and I also get the urge to write up what I got up to so that I have something to read and re-read as a reminder of what it is that brings me back to gliding, year after year. So here goes....

**Saturday 12th** - Drove down from Manchester to Weston and arrived to find the northeast corner of the airfield covered with a plague of gliders and deckchairs. Everyone was out enjoying a break from the heatwave with a pleasant breeze accompanying a passing weak cold front and attendant clouds. Got checked out the K13 including a 60min soaring flight with Andy Butterfield when we were joined in a 6-knot thermal by what seemed like all of the Open Class Nationals. Talk about busy. Neil Swinton in K6E 577 made it downwind to Milton Keynes before landing out. Haste and Lyn Jones in the Acro landed out near Banbury. Haste was both pi\*\*ed and off on his return from a Banbury hostelry to WOG. We'll have to start calling Lyn 'Landout Lyn' if he continues to keep company like this. I don't think anyone did any serious cross-country flying. Anthony Buck and his scout troop had a wonderful day with many of them having a good local soar in Daisy. It's good to see youngsters get such a great introduction to gliding.

**Sunday 13th** - The cold front disappointed us by failing to depart smartly and instead leaving behind too much moist cool air and consequent over-convection and spreadout. Finding a thermal off the launch proved a bit of a lottery but after helping Paul Morrison to smoke a barograph and put it in the K8 before launching, he was rewarded with a Silver Height climb, subject to ratification. Chris Lee finally got cleared to fly the Astir at day's end. I tried the patience of Chris Buck by finally finding a thermal and staying up until 18.45hrs when officially on a hangar flight. Bought copious beers in the bar as an apology. Got approval of all once they stopped to imagine what it was like to go a whole year without soaring. The Met. was summed up for me today by the sight of a red-faced and headache ridden Hawkeye walking away from his Mini-Nimbus after struggling down to Shepton Mallett and getting back (a miracle in itself) when he wanted a 13th August hat-trick 500k flight.

**Monday 14th** - High pressure was becoming established. I went down and did some winching after some patient instruction from Dave Weekes. Howard Stone & Nick Hill in the Acro were joined by Hawkeye Phil Hawkins in his Mini-Nimbus for a 300k Hungerford-Graffham Water-Husbands Bosworth-WOG and they all finished despite imperfect weather. Dave Weekes in the Skylark did a creditable 220k flying WOG-Hungerford-HusBos-WOG. At the third attempt (kindly allowed me by Nicola Field, Sheila Evans and Caroline - thank you ladies) I got away in the K8 and waffled my way finally upwind to Enstone after about 55 mins. The sky was weird (all agreed later) and lift was rarely under the most obvious bit of cloud. Departing Enstone for WOG from a great height at max rough air (70 knots), I sideslipped off remaining height and just as I straightened up on base leg, bumped into such good lift that it quite upset my circuit. Looking out and then banking steeply into it, I was rewarded with a steady 8 knot climb from 500' to 3600' in no time at all at which point I packed up and brought the plane back for others to fly. Now I feel like I'm soaring again. Ended the day with a check flight in the Acro before renewing my acquaintance with the Astir in a 20 min. evening thermal.



**Tuesday 15th** - The sky was now all blue and I was flying the Astir. Despite early promise, the day was slow to get going with cross-country pilots reporting modest thermals to only 2500' even at 1230hrs. A few OGC pilots (Emson, Underhill, Payne, Stone) attempted to go cross country but returned unhappy with conditions. I had declared a 100k WOG-Didcot-Silverstone-WOG for my cross-country diploma and launched in improving conditions at 1415hrs, climbing quickly above the airfield to 3600' and then to 4200' over Kidlington. It seemed OK up there and I radioed down I was starting out cautiously. John Giddins in 515 beckoned me to join him over Abingdon but sink taking me to 3600' over Oxford made me uneasy and I headed back to Weston in search of lift but found only 6 knots down. Despite flying faster and moving across wind in case I was between blue streets, I was down to 1800' south of Weston before contacting lift again. I abandoned the task but, after checking no-one wanted the plane, decided to fly locally for a while to try and learn more about how to fly a blue day. I had never flown in conditions like this before and found them hard to understand. Looking for ground sources seemed to work sometimes but not always (of course not - their performance is as cyclic as it would be on a cumulus day said Hawkeye later). Upper Heyford, a reliable source in the past from my limited experience, repeatedly refused to yield a thermal. A cluster of golden crop fields northwest of the airfield seemed good and over the motorway junction was always reliable. The problem then was where to go next, and the simple answer was back to where it worked last. Hardly a recipe for making progress cross country. By 16.00hrs the areas of strong sink seemed to largely disappear and flying got easier. The thermals, which earlier had been small and bumpy, became a little broader and smoother but still seemed harder to centre and somewhat rougher to greater heights than their cumulus day cousins. I landed eventually after 3.5hrs with the feeling that there had perhaps been slight streeting.

**Wednesday 18th** - I gave up my turn in the Astir for 100k to Barry Taylor to fly his 5hrs (which he did - well done Barry!) and instead, after doing my bit on the airfield including some dismal winching and stamping out a grass fire, took Graham Barratts advice and hopped into K8 Foxtrot Whisky which no-one else seemed to want. The heat under the canopy was extreme and despite a superb windless launch to 1700' from Graham I sweated buckets trying to get away in yet more blue thermals. Today was better than Tuesday though and my climb took me up to nearly 5000' straight away. Easy I thought until the familiar blue sink turned up again as I tried to get to Enstone. In a K8 I couldn't get out of it so fast and I was soon at 1800' over the golden crops northwest of Weston and wondering what had hit me. I generally did best over Bicester, Croughton and Weston and the wind had veered and was now a light north-easterly so perhaps the alignment of thermals had changed. I waffled around and enjoyed some well (and some not so well) centred climbs and the sink persisted until perhaps even 1700hrs. But climbs were to nearly 6000' (QFE). Almost ready to come down, I found myself leaving a thermal at 5000' over Bicester at 1730hrs. The occasional cloud cap had popped up throughout the afternoon marking, I presumed a particularly powerful thermal, but none had so far been in safe reach. Now I found myself looking at one over the motorway northeast of Upper Heyford and flew straight over to investigate. Almost immediately, I found myself flying in 2-4 knots up and so I held the K8 at 33 knots to soak up what I thought would be short lived lift, but which actually persisted for a good 5 minutes en-route to the cloud. I could feel the K8 and me being wafted up as though some spirit of the celestial realm was welcoming us to a new world. I arrived at the cloud at about 5800' where I found Hawkeye and Nick Hill in the Acro about 300' above me and was greeted by 4-6 knots of lift requiring now a proper thermal turn. The Acro left shortly after I arrived, and I climbed to 6300' whilst studying further cloud caps towards Banbury and thinking Edgehill and home was on without any likelihood of a land-out. It was 1745hrs when I straightened up and dolphined under each of the clouds, never in more than 2-3 knots sink between clouds and soon back in good lift as I approached each cap. 15 minutes later, I was atop Edgehill without ever

having been lower than 5000'. To guarantee a fast return I climbed in 4-5 knots to 6000' before turning for Weston and trimming to 65 knots. 12 minutes later I was turning finals at Weston having had to dump 1000 feet in a sideslip on arrival. What a flight.

**Thursday 17th** - A persistent cold and the exertions of the previous 3 days caught up with me and I rested. I gather though that was a local soaring only day with climbs limited to around 4000', few clouds and a moderate breeze.

**Friday 18th** - I rejoined the fray hoping to try for my 100k diploma in the Astir but was beaten to it by Howard Stone who wanted to fly a 300k on what the MetFax promised would be a good day with cloudbase rising to around 6000', good clouds and strong thermals. Howard loaded Mike Hotel to the gunwales with water and Simon Hogg (Astir CS), Graham Barrett (Std Libelle) and Martin Hastings (Std Cirrus) all rigged in readiness for a 300k flying Aston Down-Ross-on-Wye-HusBos-WOG. I had just set myself to thinking what else to have a go at when Phil Hawkins appeared on the airfield asking for co-pilots to take EZE around an instructional cross country. Thanks to the generosity of Nicola Field and Mark Rowlands (ex OGC instructor back on the scene after a 3 year layoff) I got the job and we set off to fly HusBos-Cardington-WOG. Two and a half hours of mixed soaring conditions later we returned with me much the wiser on cross country techniques. If you haven't flown with Phil or one of his ilk, you should make the time to do so. It is an investment you will not regret. I'll never forget coring the Acro two-handed into a thermal at 45 knots with 10 knots+ on the vario and Phil exclaiming from the back that we'd risen 1000' in 4 turns. The 300k flights all got home (Hoggy taking a short cut) and Nicola completed an upwind dash in a K8 to land at Bicester, from where we retrieved her.

Friday evening involved a barbeque, a little light liquid refreshment and an extended session of bits of songs played badly by me on the guitar to an audience whose altered state helped them make more of the music than was actually there.

**Saturday 19th** - The MetFax promised great things, but the early launchers had a real struggle to stay up, let alone go cross country and in one memorable broadcast, Dave Weekes announced he was at 5000' over Enstone in the Skylark 4 and a few minutes later advised us that he was at 1000' feet over Enstone and expecting to be a guest shortly (a forecast which proved correct within a few more minutes). Eventually, at around 15.00hrs decent thermals became abundant and I jumped into Mike Hotel to test the air with a view to trying the elusive 100k, flying Didcot-Silverstone-WOG. The visibility was very poor, and I soared locally for about an hour before deciding that I was up to the job. With the huge benefit of flying with Hawkeye fresh in my mind, I dolphined around the task, stopping only for the best stuff and got back 2 hours after Steve Evans flying his LS6 over WOG had acknowledged my start over the radio. Andy Butterfield, Steve Evans, Graham Barratt et al all got back from various cross countries of between 150k 200k in length and it was generally agreed that GPS was a real boon on poor viz days such as this. Hawkeye shot around another 130k task with Chris Buck, who pronounced himself a fan of Hawkwind upon their return.

**Sunday 20th** - After an excellent roast beef dinner on Saturday night courtesy of Lyn Barratt, Fiona Buck and Mrs Lyn Jones, Sunday morning marked the end of my leave permit and I left Weston for the M40, points north and an awaiting family. Total airborne hours 17+

What a week! What a Club! My grateful thanks to OGC and the talent and enthusiasm that makes flying with them my favourite gliding experience.

# A look back at first flights

By JESSICA DUDZIK



*From first flight....*

While being solo, it's worth to sometimes look back to when you had your first flight. For me my first flight was January 2016! The difference from knowing barely anything on your first flight to knowing lots of things when you're solo is astonishing! For me - my first flight was when I was 7 and my first solo when I am 14! Solo is something that everyone looks forward to and loves it!

Another thing that people look forward to is the K8 - once you start flying the K8, you can never say anything about that lovely glider - it is amazing!

One last thing I would like to say is a big thank you to everyone for their hard work this year!



*...to first Ka8 flight*



*Soaring on a sunny October day*

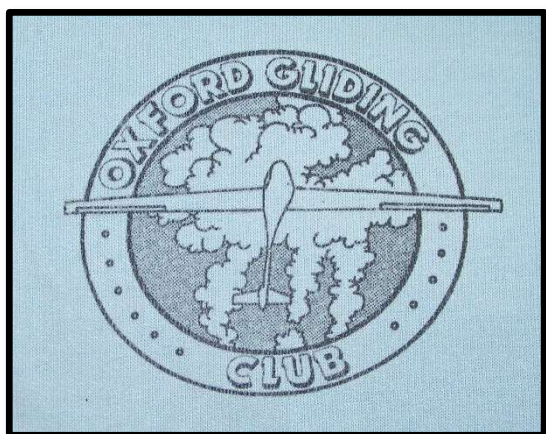


## OGC Shirt Logos - going back in time

BY PHIL HAWKINS, DIRECTOR OF THE OGC COMPANY LTD

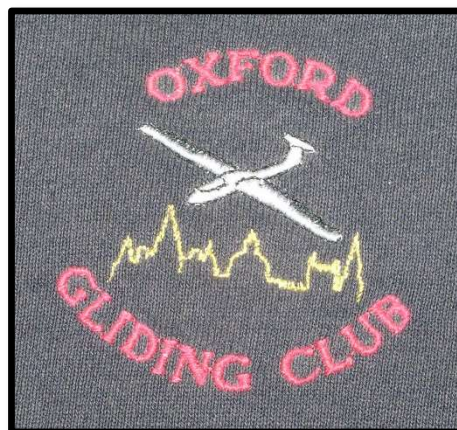
Most of us probably have clothes we rarely (if ever) wear but don't want to throw away for one reason or another. I'm no exception, and my collection includes OGC sweatshirts dating back more years than quite seem possible. Logo designs used on OGC shirts have been changed several times over the decades, and I'm wondering if anyone can equal this collection, or beat it?

The first one is probably the oldest, as I seem to remember it dates from the 1980s. The design wasn't popular, although I still like it, and it didn't endure. The shirt is a sort of sandy or buff colour, which is a fashion choice I've luckily never repeated. It shows the dirt, and parts of the printed design have faded badly such as the cloud outlines and the edge of the bubble canopy. The fabric is worn thin and has holes under the sleeves, but still I won't get rid of it.

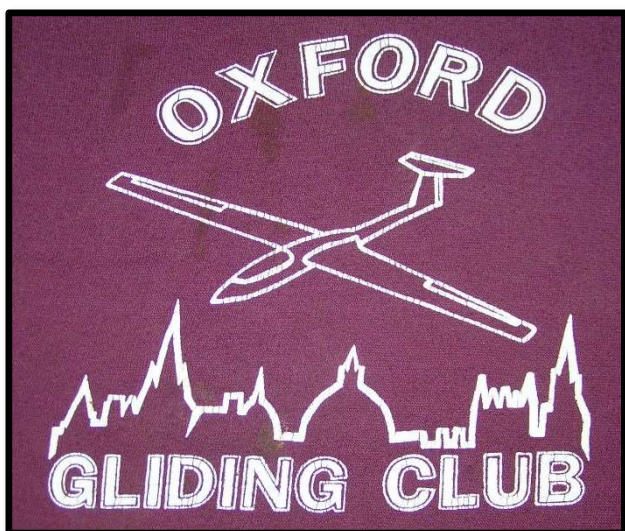


This one I believe to be the next oldest, and I have both pale blue and deep red examples. The logo printing on the red shirt is in white, and hasn't worn as well as the black-on-blue. Another quirky design with absolutely no pretense of accurate centering or symmetry, but I always liked the apparent visual representation of thermal clouds in vertical columns.

The next two have basically the same logo design although in different interpretations. This is the earliest appearance of the stylized Oxford skyline theme, probably around the early 1990s although I'm not really sure. I suspect this was originally a much blacker shirt, but the fabric has faded to grey over time. Two examples in my collection, both black, but the embroidery on the other one is not as good.







Now this logo is much bigger, the design appearing boldly across the entire chest of the shirt, not merely in a top corner position. It's obviously the same logo as before, merely rendered in print instead of embroidery. I've still got three shirts like this, all with white printing, the others being dark green and navy blue. I do still wear these from time to time, but mostly for gardening.

Also, did the embroidery version come first, or was it the big bold printed version? I can't remember.

The last one is probably more familiar to some of the present-day members. It dates from the Club's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2013. Another stylish logo done with an embroidery machine, although I was never quite sure about the white and grey text overlaying the silvery '75' in the background. The shirt material is heavy and very good quality, and it gets worn on special occasions, such as my recent 75<sup>th</sup> birthday!



The big anniversary bash was held on the airfield on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2013, and the weather was pretty foul. An extract from my diary follows. Fiona and I were living in Scotland by then, but we were staying at Swerford with Richard Hall and Annabel.

The day of the OGC 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary party began overcast with low cloud, the afternoon being mostly wet or very wet from about 2pm onwards. We drove to the airfield about lunchtime to attend the afternoon's festivities. A six-section marquee had been set up alongside the main hangar with a covered walkway from a side entrance to the hangar side door.

We sat at one of the circular tables in the marquee near the open end facing the airfield, but we closed it when the rain started. Tea, coffee and a bewildering array of members' home-made cakes were being served in the workshop during the afternoon. Fiona's family were all there including her Dad, who gave his great-grandchildren money gifts in Chinese red envelopes, and we took photos of the family group.

There was a brief break in the weather during which a short aerobatic display by a single jet had been booked for a wedding at Weston Manor hotel. Paul Morrison had somehow contacted the pilot of the Folland Gnat from North Weald to give us a couple of low passes after the main display over the hotel was finished. That was unique in my experience at WoG, and a large crowd of members and visitors had gathered on the golf course to watch it.

Later the wind and rain came back with renewed force and the marquee sides were flapping madly. The evening dinner was available for self-service, again from the workshop, from about 7.30pm

onwards. Chicken or salmon with various vegetables. It was very good and reasonably hot. More cakes with cream afterwards. I won a Lasham video called "Sailing the Skies" in the raffle.

A live band had been booked to play from about 9.30 onwards and I guess they were OK but too loud for us. We chatted for a while longer to several old lags who had turned up including Mike & Jane Randle, Paul Bayley, Martin Harris, Tony & Tessa Taylor, Tony Lee, John Giddins, John Smoker and John Pratelli. Drove back to our digs about midnight, and it was still raining.

PS: if there have been other shirt designs since 2013 that may still be available, I'd be pleased to add to my collection!

# The Gliding Ashes

BY SIOBHAN TOBIN

2022 was my first full year as a solo pilot — there seemed to be a lot to aim towards, but my progress wasn't linear (spoiler alert: it never has been, and it never will) and sometimes I wondered what it was I was trying to achieve across the summer apart from (less nervously) cruising around WOTG.

Enter Geoff J. One day in early June we were both waiting for cables at the same time. Geoff was in the K8 and I was in the K21 solo. The weather was ok, not outstanding. We are of a similar skill level and have always noted each other's small wins in gliding! I can't actually remember who challenged who, but we decided to have a small competition to see who could soar the longest that day, and so the Gliding Ashes began.

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*Round One (12th June)*  
*Siobhan 56 mins*  
*Geoff 15 mins*

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I might have had the advantage in the K21 as it was a windier day. But a win's a win!

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*Round 2 (6th and 7th August):*  
*Siobhan 2 hours 13 mins*  
*Geoff 2 hours 13 mins*

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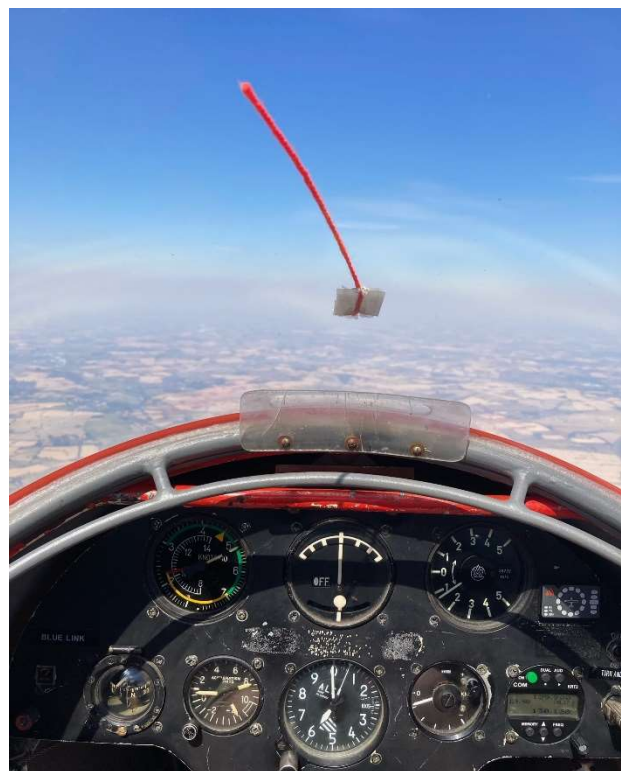
A more even aircraft split with Geoff in his K6 and me in the K8. For each of us, it was the longest solo flight to date, and we were stoked. Also by complete coincidence the times were equal down to the minute! Round 2 was a draw.

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*Round 3 (13th and 14th August):*  
*Siobhan [total across both days] 3 hr 52 min*  
*Geoff [total across both days] 5 hr 45 min*

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Round 3 was a clear win to Geoff in the K6! We had great flights on a really hot weekend. Both of us tried for a 5 hours but didn't accomplish any part of the silver badge that weekend to



View from the K6 at 6K!



Friendly competitors Geoff and Siobhan

our disappointment, oops. Having a good crack at this did show we had come along way from solo soaring PBs of ~30 mins at the start of 2022!

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*Gliding Ashes result:  
Siobhan 1, Geoff 1. A draw!*

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Having a slight competitive aspect to regular weekend flying was good fun. We both saw improvements in our flying and got to convert to new types (K6 for Geoff and the Astir for me). Discussing our flights afterwards was entertaining and encouraging. It was useful to have the (sometimes achievable) goal of “beating Geoff” in sight and we had a laugh recounting our competition. Bring on 2023!!!





## Happy New Year 2022, see you all in 2023

FROM THE EDITOR

To finish off this year we have an incredible display of confidence from our CFI Neil Swinton and Jamie Allen in OUGC President Sibohan's ability to handle a punt. Not only sans buoyancy aid, but Neil in his best suit!

