

VARSITY 2016

By Cecilia Bailey

On a cold November day, a group of rather inexperienced glider pilots sat in a car, listening to a much more experienced glider pilot discuss the technicalities of spot landings, all whilst attempting to find their way to Cambridge, in the dark and with limited phone battery. We were bound for Varsity 2016, where we would compete against the Cambridge University Gliding Club in a spot landing competition at their home field of Gransden Lodge.



Everyone failed to realise that Julie was demonstrating her 'napping and driving at the same time' skill

We arrived (several naps and a coffee break later) and met the competition. They were very friendly and welcoming, so that it felt less like a competition and more like a small expedition. Having helped get the gliders out of their slightly cramped hangar and pull them to the launch point, we had a few check flights then spent the rest of the day landing as close as possible to the marked spot. Those who weren't flying helped with the launching or watched with great excitement as gliders from both teams came in to land.



The dreaded line to mark where to touchdown

A trusty tape measure was used for scoring, with OUGC members present to make sure no cheating was done by CUGC! Alas, it was a short winter day, and before we knew it we were packing it all in again (with some relief, as some of us really had had enough of the freezing Cambridge wind!). Sadly, Cambridge won, but it was still a great day of flying for all and made us all the more motivated to thoroughly thrash them at the next Varsity competition, and to practice our spot landings! All in all, an excellent trip and competition, and I can't wait for the next one!



*OUGC and CUGC teams + instructors, from left to right:
OUGC: Elliot, Anthony, Dinant, Cecilia, Charlie & Julie
Instructors: Andrew & Graham
CUGC: Vikram, Bonan, Chris, Nat, Tomasz & Mattis*