

Winter Training Camp 2016

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Once upon a December, a group of irreducible Oxonians headed off to celebrate the end of term at the Bicester airfield with four days of gliding!

The Winter Training Camp has kicked off with a very busy yet wonderfully sunny winter day, where we all managed to get between one and two sets of flights. After the sun set and left us all freezing, gliders were towed back to the hangar and everyone hurried off to the heated bar for a drink. As some campers fled the cold back to Oxford, Artur and Sam headed to a local supermarket and came back with two full chickens and enough food to feed us for the week. Artur and his helpers started cooking «plov» for the group, starving gliding pilots for several hours (not for the first time apparently!), but everyone stuck around and the resulting dish was well worth the wait, both in terms of taste and quantity.

Despite the foggy forecast, Monday greeted us with a beautiful, slightly misty, sunrise (that some people even qualified as "romantic"). After a quick breakfast, 4 gliders were taken out and intensely flown throughout the day despite a winch overrun around noon which left only one cable functioning for a few hours. Learning from our mistakes, the day ended up with a faster-to-cook meal, a plate of carbonara. The dinner was followed by last drinks in the bar with Ollie, who headed back to Cambridge, and by some episodes of IT Crowd to laugh the evening away.

On Tuesday, the weather bailed on us, leaving the airfield covered with a thick fog. Yet, the day was not lost as Bob and Dave improvised classes on approach and landing, as well as stalling and spin recovery. Dave also shared with us some of his gliding experiences and stories through videos of his cross-country flights, competitions, soaring and even a field landing! As the afternoon started, most of us chose to go back to Oxford for a little heat and rest.



The participants on the last day. From left to right: Lukas, Edward, Rupert, Sam, Wojciech, Charles and Cecile

The final day of the camp began in some fog but it was soon lifted, unraveling a beautiful day to everyone's surprise and delight! With four instructors, and only seven students left, it was a great flying day for everyone. Wojtek even tried some aerobatics with Bob during the last launch of the day! After some drinks at the bar and last chats with the club members, the camp was finally wrapped up with a copious Chinese dinner with some of the OUGC committee members back in Oxford.

To end up this tale, we'd like to send again our warmest thanks to Twiggy for running up the airfield for us, to our winch drivers, and to all our instructors who made these few amazing days possible for us! As new members of OUGC, this was a great opportunity to get a lot of flying done and hopefully progress a bit, to learn more about the land jobs, and to get to know better Windrushers members than on the busy weekends.