

Sir Nicky celebrates 98th year with record flight

The 'British Schindler' makes micro-lite trip for his birthday

By Claire Moulson

clairem@maidenads.co.uk

A MAN who saved more than 600 Czech Jewish children from Nazi death camps in the Second World War has taken to the skies to celebrate his 98th birthday.

The occasion was to mark the hero's 98th birthday and to ensure he upheld his place in the record books as the oldest person to fly in a micro-lite, which he cracked when he was 94.

Sir Nicholas, of Pinkneys Green, is thought to now be responsible for more than 5,000

country's UK ambassador Jan Winkler.

Judy Leden's father was saved by Sir Nicholas along with the hundreds who were brought over to the UK before the outbreak of World War II, and now her own son is nine, the same age as her father when he was brought here. She also has a daughter aged 11.

Mrs Leden, 47, flew from her home in Derbyshire to pick up Sir Nicholas in her micro-lite. She said: "We had

a great time and I think Sir Nicky enjoyed it. He asked me if he could go up because he loves to fly, so what could I do?"

"White Waltham Airfield is busy so we only got the chance to go up for five or ten minutes. It was very clear and there were beautiful views, but it was a bit bumpy."

Sir Nicholas, who has lived in Maidenhead for 50 years, had a flying licence when he was young and taught instrument flying in the RAF. He said: "Judy is a lovely lady and I think I convinced her to do this more than she persuaded me. Really all I have to do is just put my bottom on the seat.

"It's lovely being up there, it is beautiful. It is nice being up in the air and not being enclosed in a box, and being open to the elements."



LAUNCH OF THE LEGENDS: Sir Nicholas Winton and 'Czech granddaughter' Judy Leden MBE take to the skies for his 98th birthday. Ref:96120-2



BIRTHDAY GUESTS: (from left) Czech ambassador Jan Winkler, Sir Nicholas Winton and Martin Povejsil, the political director of the Czech Foreign Ministry. Ref:96094-3

Sir Nicholas Winton, also known as 'the British Schindler', flew from White Waltham Airfield on Sunday in a micro-lite aircraft with one of his many 'Czech grandchildren', the world hand-gliding champion, Judy Leden MBE.

people being born since rescuing the youngsters in 1939, many of which are now grandparents themselves.

In recognition of his services to the Czech people, Sir Nicholas also received a birthday visit from the

Sir Nicholas has a daughter and a son, and two grandchildren as well as his extended Czech family. He was only discovered as being the man responsible for the lives of so many in 1988, after his modesty had kept him from being identified.

He added: "All my contemporaries such as relatives and friends are now dead, but my Czech family has brought a new generation of friends who all help to keep me alive."

Mrs Leden said: "We are very lucky such an extraordinary man has lived for so long and we have had the chance to meet him."