

BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
121	ASG 29	minor	16/08/23, 15:00	none	1331
Groundloop during landing. The pilot flew a racing finish before pulling up and slowing down into the circuit. Despite gaining less height than expected the pilot flew a normal size circuit but this led to a low and rushed turn on to final approach. A wingtip touched the ground before the main wheel and the glider groundlooped during the ground run. The pilot noticed some damage to the aileron on the outer wing panel and took the glider in for a full inspection. The pilot acknowledges that turning on to final earlier would have enabled the turn to be completed at a safe height.					
122	Ventus	substantial	17/08/23, 17:15	none	1100+
Field landing groundloop. The pilot set up a downwind but uphill approach into a stubble field but the glider floated further than expected. After landing the pilot put the wing down and deliberately groundlooped the glider but the tail struck a hedge, damaging the rudder and its mounting points.					
123	DG-505	minor	20/08/23, 14:55	none/none	1335
Rear canopy opened during aerotow. The P1 had completed the pre-flight checks, including locking the canopy, but had to open the canopy again to request a helper to attach the tow rope and once again to proffer advice to the inexperienced helper. The canopy latch was stiff, requiring two hands to operate (one on the latch, the other holding the frame down) and the P1 suggests that they obviously did not properly secure the canopy the last time. The canopy came open at about 300ft ato but after advising the tug the P1 was able to release at 600ft and land safely on the airfield. The canopy itself remained intact but the frame was damaged and the securing strap was pulled out of the fuselage.					
124	LS 6	substantial	15/08/23, 13:50	minor	2242
Ridge soaring crash. The pilot had flown several beats of the ridge in the previous 35 minutes, waiting for a thermal while maintaining height in the light wind. The pilot reports misjudging the ground clearance allowing the outside wingtip to hit a rock on the edge of the ridge. The impact removed the wingtip extension and spun the glider round. The glider touched down, wings level, and ended up facing uphill. The pilot was taken to hospital but fortunately suffered nothing worse than cuts and bruises. As well as the damaged wingtip, the tail boom snapped, the canopy destroyed and there was damage to the wing and the front of the fuselage.					
125	Stemme	minor	25/08/23, 10:20	none/none	5377
Prop strike. After landing on the runway at a power airfield the TMG needed to use the full width of the runway to turn round to backtrack. As the aircraft approached the southern edge a wingtip caught on a bush, yawing the TMG off the runway until a wheel sank into the soft ground. The TMG nosed over, damaging the propeller and nose fairing. The airfield was asked to cut back any bushes near the runway.					
126	K-21	substantial	27/08/23, 13:00	none/none	1421
Heavy landing. Despite full airbrake the glider was high on approach to a restricted landing area so the P1 took control to initiate a sideslip. After coming out of the sideslip, the P1 handed back control to the P2 before recognising that the glider was still too high. Retaking control, the P1 then turned towards an alternative landing area to avoid overrunning on to rough ground and thick vegetation. The glider stalled while rounding out on to the uphill landing area and impacted on the nose wheel, delaminating the structure around the nose wheel box. The CFI reports that the glider was about 5ft agl when turning. The report mentions the need to take control early and questions the wisdom of handing back control when so close to the ground.					
130	Grob Astir	minor	31/08/23, 13:30	none	76
Heavy landing. The pilot reports strong sink on the downwind leg, turning on to the diagonal leg early and then flying into strong lift. Despite opening full airbrake the pilot became concerned that he was still too high as he flew down the runway into the light wind so chose to turn 60° on to a cross runway with more room to land. During the turn the pilot allowed the speed to reduce and the glider stalled on to the ground. The impact pushed the undercarriage up into the fuselage.					
132	Grob Astir	minor	04/09/23, 17:15	none	995
Control connection inspection cover came off during flight. The cover was secured using a bungee clipped to a ring inside the cover and the perimeter gap was then taped over. It was discovered that the securing clip was not functioning properly, had likely come loose over several flights and the gap tape was unable to hold the cover in flight. The club reminded pilots that the retaining cord should be inspected and the cover taped down again as part of the DI of the normally rigged and hangared glider.					
133	Duo Discus	minor	05/09/23, –	none/none	3410
Heavy landing. The P2 allowed the speed to reduce late on final approach and the undercarriage collapsed on touchdown. A detailed examination revealed that the undercarriage structure had been failing progressively over time and the landing was the final straw.					

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
Ref	Type				
134	Discus	substantial	09/09/23, 16:00	fatal	–
Spanish Civil Aviation Accident and Incident Investigation Commission investigation.					
135	Cirrus	substantial	07/09/23, 11:30	none	91
Ridge soaring crash. The surface wind at the airfield was 10kt but the geostrophic wind was reported to be 15-20kt with weak wave forecast. The pilot took a high aerotow, releasing at 3,400ft at nearly 10km into wind. Not finding any wave lift he pushed further into wind to reach an into wind slope some 12km from the airfield. The ridge merely slowed the glider's descent and the pilot eventually decided that he was now too low to escape down the valley back to the airfield so committed to continue soaring in the hope that the ridge lift would improve. After about 10 minutes of ridge soaring a wingtip caught in vegetation, yawing the glider on to the ridge. The pilot was uninjured and was able to walk off the hill. The glider fuselage snapped, the tailplane and cockpit were damaged and the canopy smashed. While debriefing the pilot, the duty instructor pointed out that the IGC trace showed that the glider had been towed through two areas of strong lift, releasing only after passing through the second into an area of sink; the pilot replied that he hadn't been watching the vario while on tow. The instructor also pointed out that by continuing on the ridge the pilot had no plan B. Had the pilot left the ridge when it became obvious that it wasn't working the pilot would have been able to return to the airfield, given the tailwind; even shortly before the crash the pilot should have been able to reach the few landable fields closer to the airfield. Other pilots later reported that the wave was stronger than expected and therefore the associated areas of sink may have overcome the expected ridge lift.					
136	Grob 102	minor	30/08/23, 14:40	none	23
Heavy landing. The pilot realised on short final that he had not lowered the undercarriage. He was able to lock the wheel down but then had very little time to stabilise the approach. The resulting heavy landing ended in a groundloop, damaging the wheel box and undercarriage. The pilot cites tiredness and dehydration after a longer than expected soaring flight. The club intend to emphasise to their members the importance of pre-landing checks.					
137	Grob 102	destroyed	16/09/23, 15:20	none	360
Field landing accident. The pilot's report notes the presence of powerlines at the upwind end of the field but he failed to see the powerlines running diagonally across the threshold of the field, with one pole hidden in the centre of the threshold treeline. A wing caught on the powerline causing the glider to crash just short of the trees. The starboard wing was broken, the tailplane detached and the fuselage boom cracked. The pilot explained to the CFI that he had picked the field at 900ft agl and estimated that he would be at 700ft when he reached the field. When the two examined the IGC file replay the pilot volunteered that perhaps he could have opened the airbrakes and flown straight in. He explained several turns as trying to line up with the furrows in the field; the CFI points out that at one stage the pilot had turned away from the field, flying downwind at a height when he should have been on final approach. The pilot's only previous experience of field landings had been three landings over 20 years ago before taking an extended break from gliding. His only refresher field landing training was more than a year before the accident.					
138	Libelle	minor	17/09/23, 12:10	none	–
Tow rope hit parked glider. The rope would normally be retracted after the glider released but the visiting tug pilot had left the rope extended. After being warned over the radio the tug went around but the rope struck the glider, damaging the leading and trailing edge of the port wing as well as damaging the port elevator. Club policy is for all tug approaches to be flown as if the rope was still extended, flying around potential obstacles, but this had not been mentioned to the pilot during his site briefing.					
140	Grob Acro	minor	23/09/23, 10:05	none/none	1893
Front canopy opened during flight. The canopy opened about four minutes into the flight, the P1 took control and was able to land safely on the airfield. The retaining strap broke and the hinges bent but the canopy remained attached to the glider. The P1 had seen the P2 move the locking lever forward before the flight but was then distracted by a question from a launchpoint helper and did not see if the P2 exerted any upward pressure against the frame after locking the canopy. The P1 also pointed out that even when fully closed there was always a gap between the fuselage and the frame on the port side.					
141	Grob Astir	minor	28/08/23, 15:30	none	1.75
Heavy landing. The pilot had flown the glider several times on previous days so the duty instructor allowed him to fly it on the day. The first three flights ended in good landings and the fourth flight was to be a hangar landing. The pilot initially opened the airbrakes on approach but then shut them to extend the glide. The pilot reports that adjusting the airbrakes at the later stages of the approach was distracting, leading to a delayed roundout and heavy landing. An inspection found that the only damage was a broken brake cable.					

Continued on p58

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
Incidents					
120	Twin Astir	unknown	19/08/23, pm	none/none	—
Heavy landing. The wind was a gusting 15-20kt crosswind. A witness reports that the glider sink rate increased at about 5-10ft agl with the glider bouncing back into the air after touching down; another witness suggests that the glider did not round out enough. The impact left a deep groove in the ground. The glider was de-rigged for inspection.					
127	K-21	none	29/08/23, 18:00	none/none	419
Heavy landing after low-level winch launch failure. A witness describes seeing the elevator being held in a noticeable nose-up position at the start of the ground run. After taking off, the glider rotated to a too steep attitude at an unsafe airspeed. The P1 took control and lowered the nose to a shallow climb attitude, expecting the glider to accelerate to a safe climb speed. The report suggests that lowering the nose unloaded the cable, allowing it to back release. The P1 noticed the speed reducing so lowered the nose to a suitable attitude but simultaneously opened the airbrakes. There was insufficient height for the glider to regain approach speed with the brakes out and the glider landed heavily on the main wheel. The P1 normally flew at a nearby club with longer runways. The P2 he had been asked to fly with had been returned to dual flight only status due to previous issues, but the P1 had not been informed of this. The report notes that neither of the two experienced instructors debriefing the P1 would have allowed the P2 to conduct the launch without a detailed pre-flight briefing and that difficult trainees should only be flown with experienced and well-briefed instructors. The report also points out that had the P1 noticed the incorrect stick position before the take-off the P1 could have intervened earlier.					
128	SZD Junior	none	20/08/23, 16:00	—	—
Tow rope dropped on to parked glider. The tug pilot dropped the rope upwind of the runway but the crosswind drifted the rope across the runway and on to the glider parked downwind of the runway waiting for an aerotow. There was limited scope for the tug pilot to have dropped the rope further upwind due to the adjacent paved runway used by powered aircraft at this mixed use airfield. Despite being hit by the weak link and rings the glider was undamaged, although the rope brushed the head of a visiting friend of the strapped-in pilot. The report recommends staging the launch queue further away from the runway.					
129	K-13	none	14/05/23, 15:10	none/none	403
Canopy opened during winch launch. The canopy opened at about 800ft agl, soon afterwards the airbrakes came open and then the glider turned through 180° with the cable still attached. At some point the cable back released before the glider landed downwind. The report suggests that the clip holding the canopy restraining cord might have been trapped between the fuselage frame behind the front seat and the canopy frame, thus making it harder to properly secure the canopy. The P1 suggests that while helping to close the canopy after it came open the P2 may have inadvertently knocked the airbrake lever.					
131	K-21	none	03/09/23, 17:40	none/none	362
Control restriction. After flying some aerobatics the P1 was unable to apply left aileron. After verifying that the P2 was not blocking the controls the P1 tested the range of movement and eventually the controls freed with an audible 'ping'. After the flight one of the rear seat pan securing screws was discovered under the front seat pan near the control column. Five further screws from both cockpits were found to be loose. The loose screws were covered up by the seat cushions and only visible during a DI if the cushions were removed. The club intends to add the requirement for a independent inspection of the seat screws to the SDMP.					
139	SZD Junior	—	23/09/23, 12:15	—	2000+
Near miss with aerotow combination. The glider was in weak lift about 1,000ft ato flying in a straight line under a cloud street when a FLARM warning sounded. The pilot assumed that this related to a K-21 flying 2-300ft above and slightly ahead so was slow to pick up the tug approaching on a perpendicular course. The pilot spotted the tug just in time to dive under it, missing by “a few tens of feet”. The tug pilot reports no FLARM warning and concentrating on keeping clear of the K-21. He only saw the Junior as it passed underneath the tug. The club intends to test all the FLARMs in the club fleet, looking at their performance and settings, as well as integrating FLARM training into their syllabus. The club also intends to feed FLARM audio warnings into the headsets of all their powered aircraft and pair each FLARM with a traffic display screen.					

During BGA Club Safety Officer seminars it was proposed that, to further encourage reporting, it would be a good idea to remove site names from summaries. This has been reflected in the summaries on these pages. Edward Lockhart continues to provide a little extra detail, where available, in these listings. We would also like to publish (anonymously) your stories of particular flights that have taught you a valuable flying lesson. Please send details to editor@sailplaneandgliding.co.uk or by post to the address on p3.