BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours

13 Pegase minor 30/11/24, 14:20 none 98

High speed groundloop during landing. After a more than two-hour flight in wave the pilot returned to the airfield, noting the strong wind and planning the circuit appropriately, intending to fly a 70kt approach (the wind was gusting to 35kts). A witness reports a fast, shallow approach. Reports vary as to whether the glider bounced or ballooned, the pilot reports increasing the airbrake setting from half airbrake to two-thirds. At some point the left wing touched the ground, the glider yawed through 90° and finished the ground run travelling sideways. The only damage to the glider appeared to be to the left wing aileron hinge cover, although the glider was sent for a comprehensive inspection. The CFI later examined the FLARM trace and believes that the approach speed was higher than the nominated 70kts and concludes that the wing strike was due to significant turbulence or rotor close to the ground.

14 K-21 substantial 10/12/24, 15:00 minor/none 1,058

Heavy landing. The P1 had been instructing sideslip approaches and the P2 carried out two successful approaches. For the third flight the P1 flew from the front seat intending to demonstrate an approach using both airbrakes and sideslip. At about 150ft ato the P1 relaxed the pressure on the rudder pedal but the glider remained in the sideslip until the P1 applied out-slip rudder while reducing the bank angle. The P1 reports increasing the back pressure on the stick in response to the nose dropping (the P1 suggests that the glider may have stalled) and despite closing the airbrakes there was insufficient energy to fully roundout. The glider landed heavily on the nose wheel. The P1 was left with a mildly sore back. The glider had damage to the structure around the nose wheel.

15 K-8 minor 21/11/24, 15:05 none 41

Landing groundloop. After a high approach and despite full airbrake, the glider landed long. After touching down with a crosswind from the left, the right wing went down and the glider started to drift to the right. Running off the hard surface on to grass, the glider groundlooped, damaging both wings.

17 SF25C minor 08/01/25, 16:00 none 4

Wingtip hit vegetation while turning after landing. The pilot landed on the hard surface next to the airfield boundary and needed to turn to backtrack. The pilot turned the TMG away from the soft grass surface of the airfield towards the boundary hedge but misjudged the amount of room available, scraping the wingtip against bushes at the edge of the airfield. The pilot later noticed a small dent and scratches on the wingtip. The pilot's report acknowledges that it would have been better to shut down the engine and turn the TMG by hand in such a narrow space.

18 Grob 109 substantial 15/01/25, 12:00 none/none 2,110

Propeller strike. During the landing ground run the P1 applied the wheel brake but one foot slipped off the brake toe pedal. The TMG turned off the narrow hard runway on to the soft grass surface at about 20kts. The aircraft slowly nosed over until the propeller struck the ground, breaking the propeller and damaging the cowling underside. The CFI reports that all pilots are warned during type conversion of the possibility of a foot slipping and are looking into arranging a modification to the toe brakes, extending their width to the full width of the rudder pedals.

24 Ventus 2 minor 14/03/25, 15:35 none 1,500

Wheel-up landing on hard surface leaving minor damage to the fuselage underside. The pilot flew the flight with the wheel down, retracting it before landing.

26 PIK 20 minor 15/03/25, – none 250

Wheel-up landing on hard surface. The pilot had been flying mostly fixed undercarriage gliders over the winter and this was the first day flying his own glider for five months. After two short winch launch flights, during which the pilot left the wheel extended, the pilot took an aerotow and flew for over an hour with the wheel up. Feeling the cold, the pilot returned to the airfield but had to wait for other gliders to clear the grass landing. Eventually joining the circuit intending to land on the runway the pilot omitted the first part of his pre-landing checks and concentrated on the flaps and the circuit before landing with the wheel raised. The fuselage underside and undercarriage doors were damaged.

27 LS4 minor 26/03/25, 14:20 none 312

Wheel-up landing. The pilot released from aerotow at 2,500ft ato and flew locally for over two hours with the wheel down. The pilot then raised the wheel during the pre-landing checks. Although touching down on grass the glider slid a few feet on to a cross runway, damaging the underside. The pilot reports doing post-launch checks without raising the wheel and subsequently not recognising that the undercarriage lever was in the wheel-up position after the pre-landing checks.

28 Zugvogel 3b minor 18/03/25, 18:00 none 280

Field landing accident. Returning to the airfield after a cross-country wave flight the pilot started to get low and assessed his options. The performance of the vintage glider narrowed the options available and the pilot picked a field that appeared to be flat with an upslope towards the end. With the sun in his eyes on final approach it wasn't until the glider was low enough for the sun to be behind the slope that the pilot realised how steep the slope was. The glider landed with "quite a noise", leaving minor damage to the underside of the fuselage and delaminating a rib in one wing. The pilot assesses that the steepness of the slope at the end of the field was masked from the air by the unnoticed slight slope to the rest of the field. His return to the airfield had been complicated by having the GPS snail trail set to 100 minutes, thus losing the marks of his climbs on the outward leg.

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours

30 Mini LAK substantial 30/03/25, 17:30 none 308
Heavy landing. Witnesses describe the glider performing an approach at a high rate of descent. One witness describes seeing the glider descend below the slope at 20ft agl with no sign of rounding out; another describes seeing the glider hit the ground in a level attitude but still at a high rate of descent. The impact broke the undercarriage and caused substantial damage to the surrounding fuselage structure. The CFI's analysis of the igc file shows a 65kt ground speed into the 15kt wind until very close to the ground. The glider flight manual lists a yellow triangle speed of 51kts.

33 EuroFOX minor 29/03/25, 13:40 none not reported
Part of exhaust fell off during aerotow. Early in the climb an object was seen to fall from the tug, followed a few seconds later by another. The glider P1 radioed to the tug pilot who had already started to smell burning. The pilots agreed to end the launch early and both aircraft landed safely. It was found that part of the exhaust had detached from the Rotax 914 engine, allowing hot exhaust gas to blow on to the inside of the composite fairing which had started to burn.

34 DG-100 minor 31/03/25, 17:20 none 87
Wheel-up landing. After a more than four-hour soaring flight the pilot returned to the airfield and lowered the wheel as part of the pre-flight checks. Finding lift, the pilot retracted the wheel and climbed away, extending the flight for a few minutes. The pilot then forgot to repeat the pre-landing checks before landing wheel-up on grass, leaving minor scratches to the underside of the fuselage.

35 Perkoz substantial 02/04/25, 16:45 none/none 1,926
Heavy landing after simulated winch launch failure. The P2 was undergoing training towards a BGA Basic Instructor rating and the P1 briefed for a launch failure and land ahead on the airfield's shortest runway, albeit with a 15kt headwind. The P2 was to be the handling pilot and the winch driver had been briefed to cut the power after rotation. During the first flight a maximum of 135ft ato was achieved, the P1 reports a pause before a relatively gentle pushover to a shallow recovery attitude with the P2 opening the airbrakes before flying speed had been regained. After a couple of prompts the P1 took control, closed the airbrakes, lowered the nose and was able to re-apply some airbrake before landing ahead. The debrief pointed out the need to wait for flying speed before opening the airbrakes and to use a steeper recovery attitude. The second attempt had a maximum height of 95ft ato and the P1 agains reports a pause before lowering the nose but a steeper recovery attitude. The P1 took control but with insufficient height to regain approach speed the glider stalled during the roundout and landed heavily on the main wheel, bounced and then landed again. The undercarriage frame was buckled with some delamination of internal bulkheads as well as damage to the undercarriage fairing. The P1 reports not being certain that the minimum safe climb speed was achieved before the glider reached the full climb attitude for either flight due to not adequately monitoring the ASI.

36 Grob 103 minor 06/04/25, 11:35 none/none 1,500
Rear canopy came open during winch launch. The P1 was conducting trial flights for a university club and the P2 on this flight was not a native English speaker. During the pre-flight checks the P1 was distracted by trying to explain through the language barrier how to ensure that the front canopy was securely latched but, somewhat unfortunately, neglected to lock the rear canopy. The canopy came open just as the glider reached the full climb attitude, the P1 rejected the launch and landed ahead. The canopy and frame remained intact but the retaining gas strut was broken.

37 K-13 none 07/04/25, 14:05 none/serious not reported
Heavy landing following ballooned roundout. As part of the P2's instructor revalidation the brief was that, after flying some spin exercises, the P1 would fly the circuit simulating a visiting pilot looking for a cleared-for-solo site check. The P1 deliberately ballooned the roundout so the P2 took control. A witness reports that the airbrakes remained extended, the glider rapidly lost airspeed and descended to the ground from 5-10ft agl, landing heavily. The P2 remained in the glider, reporting back pain and after being air-lifted to hospital was diagnosed with a cracked vertebra. The club are reviewing instructor training practices to ensure that coaches are briefing low-level takeover exercises adequately.

Incidents

16 SF 25C minor 15/12/24, 12:30 none/– 450
Carbon monoxide detected in flight. The TMG had already flown for 30 minutes that day so although the P1 did an external walk round the P1 did not feel it necessary to do the full DI, including removing the cowling for a detailed check of the Limbach engine. The P1 noticed a slightly larger rpm drop than usual while selecting carburettor heat during the pre-flight engine checks but put that down to to the absence of carburettor icing. About 30 minutes into the flight the P1 selected cabin heat. While climbing after a practice approach an alarm sounded. The P1 initially assumed a FLARM alert and spent about 20 seconds looking for a threat before noting no alert on the FLARM display. The pilot then realised that the alarm was from the newly installed active CO detector. Cabin heat was deselected and an expedited circuit was flown with the alarm again sounding on final approach. The passive CO detector showed no indication of CO. An inspection revealed that the right hand exhaust pipe gasket had failed. The club also intends to inspect the heat exchanger and firewall for cracks or leaks.

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BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours

19 K-21 none 19/01/25, 14:30 none –
Rear canopy not fully latched before take-off. While the P1 was preparing for a solo flight a helper offered to secure the rear seat, doing up the rear harness before closing and locking the canopy. The pilot checked canopy security before flight. After landing it was noticed that the starboard side of the rear canopy was proud of the fuselage. The locking rod had engaged the outer side of the canopy frame instead of the usual position. The plastic interlock mechanism that should have prevented the front canopy starboard rod from latching had been worn down over time, leaving a slightly sloped groove in the front face that allowed the front canopy locking rod to force the interlock down, engaging the front starboard lock although the rear lock was not engaged. The club intends to replace the plastic interlocks with an aluminium equivalent allowed under Schleicher TN36.

20 PA 18 none 01/02/25, 13:35 none 400
Engine stopped during take-off ground run. The pilot had refuelled the tug before parking at the launchpoint to await the next aerotow. After the glider was ready, the pilot started the engine and the launch was started but the engine stopped before the tug left the ground. The tug rolled to a stop and the glider was able to avoid it. It was found that the engine had stopped due to fuel starvation. The fuel selector was checked and it was noticed that the lever was loose and did not correspond to the indicator position. The pilot thinks that the tank was selected on the basis of the lever position rather than the indicator. The fuel valve would then only be partially open, allowing enough fuel to taxi but not for take-off.

21 ASG 29 none 18/02/25, 14:00 none 400
Wheel-up landing on soft grass with no damage to the glider. The pilot had put the wheel away to work a weak thermal and forgot to re-do the pre-landing checks. The CFI points out that the pilot was lacking in recency with only 22 flights for less than 30 hours over the previous three years. The pilot had flown two flights in a K-21 the previous month before this flight, his first flight on type.

22 Discus none 27/1024, 14:00 none 15
Tug engine failure. At about 300ft ato the TMG engine started to run rough and puffs of black smoke were seen coming from the exhaust. The TMG pilot waved the glider off, backing it up with a radio call and the glider made a safe landing in an adjacent field. The TMG was able to land on the airfield. The cause of the rough running engine is believed to be a carburettor issue, which has subsequently been resolved.

23 K-21 none 15/02/25, 13:05 none 33
Field landing by unlicensed pilot. The duty instructor's daily briefing specifically pointed out the crosswind and the implications for local flying and circuits. The pilot released from the winch launch and started to look for lift. At about 800ft ato the pilot started to circle in weak lift, drifting downwind but not gaining height. After a few turns the pilot realised that he was lost and radioed the club to ask for help. A few members offered advice until the duty instructor requested that they let the pilot concentrate on flying the glider. The pilot was able to select a large field, spotting and avoiding pylons before making a safe landing some five miles downwind of the airfield. The retrieve from the waterlogged field involved a winch-equipped tractor and a 4WD vehicle. Since the club's K-21 trailer was with their other K-21, a Puchacz trailer was used, taking each wing individually due to incompatible fittings thus necessitating three trips during which sleet turned to snow and eventually finishing about six hours after landing.

25 Mini LAK none 16/03/25, 14:30 none 1,678
Wheel-up landing on soft grass leaving the glider undamaged.

29 Puchacz none 29/03/25, – none 286
Airbrakes started to open during winch launch ground run. The P1 had demonstrated the pre-flight checks to the P2 during the previous two flights and the P2 was invited to do the checks on this flight. The P1 heard the noise of the airbrakes locking closed and the handle seemed to resist forward pressure when pushed. While holding the release the P1's palm covered the airbrake handle so when the brakes started to open the P1 was able to close them just as the glider rotated.

31 Grob 103 none 29/03/25, 15:00 none 216
Wingtip brushed ground during winch launch ground run. The launchpoint controller reported that the grounding happened so briefly that there was no time to stop the launch before the wings levelled and the glider took off. The CFI suggests that the P2 might have applied the wrong control inputs to correct for the crosswind.

32 K-8 minor 29/03/25, – none –
During the pilot's pre-flight checks the airbrake actuating lever sheared off low down between the spring and hinge bolt.

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.