

BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
Ref	Type				
40	LS8	minor	01/05/21, 15:30	none	39
Pilot landed safely in a field, but was surprised by the noise and deceleration. While rigging the glider back at the airfield, some abrasion to the underside of the nose was noticed, as well as some minor damage to a winglet leading edge.					
41	LS4	substantial	01/05/21, 15:00	none	1640
42	Discus	substantial	01/05/21, 15:00	none	841
Both gliders lost undercarriage doors after passing through an unseen fence during a field landing. The two were flying a club task in challenging conditions when a field landing at the turnpoint became necessary. The Discus was the first to land in an otherwise suitable field and the pilot reports contacting the wires while rounding out; the LS4 followed about 30 seconds later and the pilot felt the glider contact the wires during the ground run. Both pilots report that their gear doors were damaged as the wire separated them from the glider. The fence consisted of three 2mm solid steel strands between 1-2 feet above the ground and was effectively invisible from more than 50 metres. Photographs show a typical electrified fence set-up, they also show no discernable difference in the surface of the ground either side of the fence, rendering the fence even less visible.					
43	Grob 103	substantial	28/05/21, 13:00	none/none	785
Landing groundloop. After seeing another glider fly underneath while on final approach, the P1 chose to land long. As the glider approached a pole at the edge of the field the pilot raised the wing to avoid it, but this started the groundloop. The underside of one wing was creased, the rudder split and the tailplane mounting bent.					
45	EuroFOX	substantial	29/05/21, 11:40	minor	499
Nosewheel detached during landing. After a gentle touchdown on the grass runway, the aircraft started to slow but during the ground run the nosewheel detached from the nosewheel strut, the nosewheel fork dug into the ground and the tug tipped over the nose on to its back. The top of the fin dug into the ground so deeply that it later took three people to pull it out. The pilot was able to undo the straps and exit the tug unaided, but suffered some bruising. The propeller, spinner and nose gear were all destroyed, the wing struts were bent and the club suspects a full structural survey may write the aircraft off. An examination of the wheel and fork showed that the axle bolt was still securely in place in the wheel and that the nosewheel fork had no signs of damage to the axle mounting holes, suggesting that the nosewheel had not been properly attached before the flight. The wheel had been removed to replace the tyre during its annual maintenance only a few days previously. Paint smear on the axle bush suggested that when reattaching the nosewheel the axle bolt had not been fastened through the holes in the nosewheel fork. Instead, it appeared that the axle bolt had been tightened enough to compress the nosewheel fork and pinch each side of the fork between either side of the axle bush and the inside of the nosewheel spat.					
46	Grob 109	substantial	28/05/21, 16:30	none/none	60
TMG crashed soon after take-off. The P1 and passenger were aware that on their two most recent flights they had used the full length of the airfield to take off. Although they put that down to lack of headwind, and this time there was a 10 knot headwind, it was decided that the passenger would drive to a nearby gliding club with a longer runway and the P1 would pick him up from there. After doing the pre-flight power checks the TMG would not move, even when using full power. The P1 considered this was because the TMG was on a grass upslope so shut down the engine and pushed the TMG to a flat, paved part of the threshold and was able to take off, although using more runway than anticipated. During the short flight, the P1 put the propeller into the coarse setting and later back to fine pitch for the approach and landing at the gliding club. While pushing to the fuel pumps some water was seen dripping from the drain holes of both wings, but after an investigation no more water was seen or heard so it was assumed that this was just some residual rain coming out. The passenger was a TMG instructor, but on this flight the same P1 was to be the handling pilot. Both pilot and passenger reported that the take-off run was sluggish with poor acceleration; the P1 even checked that the airbrakes were locked shut. The P1 expressed his intention to abort, but the passenger assessed that there was insufficient room ahead to stop and that the TMG had now reached take-off speed. The passenger took control and was able to take off. The TMG climbed a little, but then started to descend. While turning to land in a field, a wing hit a tree, yawing the aircraft which then dropped nose down to the ground about 1km from the gliding club. The canopy opened during the impact, enabling the P1 and passenger to exit uninjured. Both wings were broken, the fuselage snapped and there was damage to the engine and spinner. The BGA accident investigator assessed the wreckage at a nearby maintenance facility a few days later. He found the carburettor heat control to be in the hot position and stuck there, suggesting that it had been applied before the impact. Damage to the spinner held one propeller blade stuck in the coarse position, the other moved freely. After comparing the actual take-off performance for the first flight with the data from the pilot's operating handbook, the investigator noted that the TMG was underperforming the published data by a substantial margin. He mentions the importance of monitoring acceleration during take-off in aircraft with low power to weight ratios and picking a point on the airfield to make a go/no go decision that leaves room for the aircraft to stop safely.					

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AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
48	Discus	substantial	13/06/21, 12:55	none	9,000
Winch launch cartwheel. The wind was light and there was no significant crosswind component. The duty instructor reports that the wing went down early in the launch, there were calls to stop the launch, but the glider cartwheeled before the winch driver could stop the winch. The pilot was uninjured, but the glider fuselage snapped, the forward fuselage and cockpit were damaged and the canopy broken. The pilot had noted that the grass seemed longer than normal and had asked the wingtip holder to make sure that the wings were held absolutely level for the launch. The report points out that it is the pilot's responsibility to release before the wingtip touches the ground, but also acknowledges that the grass was longer than recommended. It notes that a three-week cutting cycle is normally sufficient, but that recent wet and warm weather had aided growth. Nevertheless, the club had been winch launching safely the previous day and earlier on the accident day.					
49	LS8	minor	09/04/21, 14:30	none	1,500
Wheel-up landing. The pilot had been regaining currency in the club K-21 and this was the first flight in the LS8 for some time. The pilot forgot to retract the wheel after launching and subsequently raised the undercarriage as part of the pre-landing checks after returning from a cross-country flight. There were some minor scratches and grass stains left on the underside of the glider.					
50	Grob 103	destroyed	13/06/21, 12:40	serious/serious	not reported
Winch launch failure training accident. AAIB investigation.					
54	ASW 20	minor	12/06/21, 15:35	none	52
Aerotow launch failure. After encountering turbulence soon after take-off, the pilot got out of position relative to the tug and pulled the release at about 10-15ft ato. The pilot recovered from the launch failure, but it wasn't until after the glider floated at low speed and low height over the perimeter track and over a crop field that he cracked open the airbrakes. The glider settled onto the crop, yawing slightly and may have damaged the undercarriage by landing with some sideways drift.					
56	K-21	substantial	26/06/21, 18:00	none/none	2500
Wingtip caught in heather while holding off. This was to be the last flight of the day for this glider and the pilots had intended to land on a crosswind runway so that the ground run ended near the hangar. After turning final, the pilots noticed another glider had stopped in their intended landing area so they elected to land short. The P2 was the handling pilot and had allowed the airspeed to fall slightly below the nominated approach speed. The glider continued on a steep approach, undershooting the threshold markers before the downwind wingtip caught in the heather bordering the undershoot area. The glider yawed through 180° as it crashed, breaking the fuselage in half and damaging the tailplane. The P2 was an experienced visiting pilot and had shown good piloting skills before the accident. The P1 had been supervising airfield operations for most of the day before this flight and the report suggests that fatigue may have contributed to the P1 not taking control after the approach deviated from the desired profile.					
Incidents					
38	SF 25c	minor	18/04/21, 09:00	minor	-
The TMG was being pulled out of the hangar by two members using webbing straps connected to the undercarriage legs. One of the members caught his shoe under the wheel spat, the momentum of the TMG pushed him over and the wheel ran over his calf, breaking the wheel spat and bruising the member's leg.					
39	DG-300	none	11/05/21, 13:00	none	179
Control column grip came off during an aerotow. The glider flew through some turbulence at about 40ft ato and the g-forces lifted the pilot's hand, together with the grip, completely off the control stick. The pilot was able to grab the stick and regain control, releasing at a safe altitude before replacing the grip. The pilot reports that the grip is a simple interference fit on the tube and that prior to the flight the radio would receive, but not transmit, suggesting that the wiring to the PTT button had been compromised.					
44	EuroFOX	none	29/05/21, 12:20	none	-
Engine failure during aerotow. During the fourth tow of the day, at about 100ft ato the engine started to lose power, the engine rpm dropping by 200 before recovering. The pilot checked that the fuel boost pump was on and that the fuel was on and feeding from both tanks before turning towards a downwind leg. After straightening out, the tachometer was varying between 4,800-5,400rpm, but the combination was still climbing. The tug pilot waved off the glider at 500ft ato before landing back on to the airfield. An investigation revealed two loose spark plugs; however even after tightening these the problem persisted, but only while towing. The aircraft was taken offline for some more thorough maintenance, including replacing all the spark plugs and disassembling and cleaning the carburettors. Again, the problem persisted while towing. The fuel filter was then replaced and a new mechanical fuel pump fitted, after which the club have had no further problems.					
47	DG-303	none	07/06/21, 13:30	none	2100
Tow rope detached from the tug soon after take-off. The glider landed ahead, but had to groundloop to avoid running off the airfield. The operation of the recently-fitted reconditioned release was tested before the flight and the rope reattached. The club speculates that the ring at the end of the rope may not have been properly attached in the release or, more likely, that the spring in the release may not have held the release closed.					

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BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
51	Junior	minor	13/06/21, 09:45	-	-
A K-21 glider had been left at the launchpoint still attached to a tow vehicle. Another member stepped into the vehicle to move it, not realising that a glider was still attached, and the K-21 struck and damaged the fuselage of the Junior.					
52	K-6	minor	05/06/21, 10:00	-	-
Glider wingtip hit the parked winch while being towed. The wingtip was damaged and the lower rear fuselage around the tailskid was also damaged as the glider was yawed off the towing arm.					
53	K-21	none	14/06/21, 14:00	none/none	1494
Overspeed during aerobatics. After rolling to inverted, the pilot chose to pull through to erect flight. His passenger noted that the pull seemed to take a while and that the ASI registered more than V _{NE} during the pull through. The report points out that the pilot was not current at advanced aerobatics and the pilot intends to fly with an advanced aerobatic instructor before practising any rolling or inverted figures again.					
55	K-13	none	02/06/21, -	none/none	-
Airbrakes opened at about 200ft at during an aerotow. The brakes were quickly closed and the launch continued. Both pilots had carried out pre-flight checks, including the airbrakes, and asserted that the brakes were closed and locked before the launchpoint helper attached the rope. The P1 thinks that the over centre lock may have been stiffer than expected.					
57	-	-	16/04/21, 11:00	none	-
Staff winch driver trapped hand in spinning winch rollers while rethreading the cable. The club have several cable rethreading tools, but none were available at the winch at the time.					

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.

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We look forward to hearing from you.

