

BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
59	DG-1000	none	29/06/21, 15:20	none/minor	not reported
Wheel-up landing on a grass airfield. The P1 was coaching the P2 throughout the flight until taking control at the low key area and omitted his pre-landing checks. The P2 reported mild concussion after an otherwise normal landing.					
61	EuroFOX	substantial	02/07/21, 19:10	none	800
Nose leg broke towards the end of the landing ground run. The strut fractured just at the front edge of the welded lugs to which the suspension cable is attached. The club engineer suggests that this may have been the site of a stress riser caused partly by the weld penetration during manufacturing and partly by the high number of landings. The airframe had accumulated 7,700 landings over 2,176 airframe hours. The propeller, spinner and cowling were damaged, with possible damage to the engine, when the tug tipped onto its nose.					
62	ASW 20	destroyed	22/06/21, 15:10	minor	3,400
Glider cartwheeled during an aerotow launch. A witness reports watching the glider take off and then being held close to the ground while the tug continued to accelerate. He describes a small wing wobble and then the right wingtip catching in the 12-16-inch long grass beside the runway. The glider cartwheeled at nearly 90° of bank before hitting the ground nose first and dropping back onto the undercarriage. The pilot had some cuts and bruises; the front of the fuselage and both wings were damaged. The safety officer's report notes that the weak links had broken, indicating that the pilot had not released.					
64	Duo Discus	minor	26/05/21, 14:10	minor	558
Wheel-up landing into a field. After releasing from the tug and retracting the undercarriage, the engine was started, the first time for several months. When the pilot switched off the engine the propeller continued to turn until he switched off the fuel as well, not normally the standard procedure. Later in the flight the pilot chose to start the engine again but omitted to turn on the fuel. By now down to about 800ft the pilot made a hurried circuit into a pre-selected field, but didn't have time to complete the pre-landing checks and failed to lower the wheel. Lack of currency, non-standard engine procedures and a late decision to land were all cited as factors by the club safety officer.					
65	DG-500	substantial	05/07/21, 13:25	none/minor	3,500
Undercarriage collapsed during field landing. Unable to gain height ridge soaring over hilly terrain, the pilot selected a field that he describes as "the best of a poor lot". After flying a circuit the approach was flown over wires and trees into an increasing upslope with trees at the end. The airspeed at round out was insufficient to completely round out and hold off. The glider landed heavily, damaging the undercarriage causing it to collapse. The P2 suffered a muscle strain and some whiplash.					
66	Astir	destroyed	23/06/21, 13:35	minor	240
Bail out after control disconnection. The pilot had rigged the glider and performed a positive control check with the help of another pilot. After soaring for some 50 minutes, the pilot heard a metallic sound behind him, as if something metal had fallen. He soon noticed that his aileron control was less responsive and could see that the right wing aileron did not respond to stick movement. At speeds above 55kts the outer wing started to flutter and, although the airbrakes worked, the pilot felt that he would not be able to make a controlled approach and safe landing with limited roll control and the possibility of wing flutter at approach speed. He elected to bail out and landed safely. However, as he was falling backwards while deploying the parachute the risers dragged along the back of his ears, causing cuts that required stitches. Further information from the AAIB December '21 bulletin points out that it is possible for the ball of a L'Hotellier connection to be partially engaged in the socket, enough to pass a positive control check, but still come out if subjected to a vertical load. The indicator of such a partial engagement would be the Wedekind sleeve remaining in the extended position and not covering the L'Hotellier lock plate.					
69	Libelle	substantial	18/07/21, 15:30	none	38
Field landing groundloop in crop. Unable to find a decent climb, the pilot chose to return to the airfield, figuring that he had just enough height to make a straight-in approach and landing. After encountering strong sink, the pilot realised that he would not reach the airfield and that he was now low over an area with no suitable landing fields. Down to about 500ft ato, the pilot turned towards a field about 0.25 miles away that seemed to have shorter crops and was able to fly a straight in approach to it. The crops were about 60cm tall and the landing took the glider over a tramline. The groundloop snapped the tail off the glider.					
71	Grob 109	minor	19/07/21, 15:10	none/none	1,228
TMG yawed and ran off the runway after landing, despite the pilot using full controls to try to keep it running straight. An inspection revealed that the tailwheel assembly had broken, allowing the tyre to contact the rudder after touchdown, pushing it to one side and yawing the aircraft. The rudder was also damaged.					
72	ASW 20	substantial	21/07/21, 17:00	none	73
Undershot final glide. The pre-Bronze pilot had been local soaring and was trying to land in a gap between gliders returning from cross-country flights. He started a long final at about 2,500ft using the airbrakes to descend quickly. While on short final he heard the club K-13 announce that they were also on final approach so he chose to land short to allow the K-13 to overfly and land long. In the event he misjudged his approach and got too low and slow, hitting the bank of a ditch bordering the airfield, yawing the glider as it flew over the ditch before coming to rest on the edge of the airfield. The undercarriage and surrounding fuselage were damaged, as well as a wing and the airbrake mechanism.					

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT

Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
73	Discus	minor	17/07/21, 13:50	none	51
Field landing in tall grass. The pilot set up a circuit into one of the few grass fields in an area mostly covered with crops. It was only on final approach that he realised that the grass was quite long and, in trying to round out over the grass, the subsequent touchdown was hard. The glider came to a rapid stop and the wheel retracted, removing an undercarriage door and leaving a split and some scratches in the fuselage skin.					
75	K-13	minor	-/, pm	none/none	1,600
Glider hit livestock. A ewe and a lamb ran in front of the glider just as it was about to land. The ewe cleared the glider, but the lamb was struck by the fuselage. The lamb was apparently unharmed, but there was a two-inch puncture in the glider fabric about 12" behind the nose that was subsequently patched with tape. The report points out that grazing sheep are a feature of this airfield.					
77	Pegase	substantial	29/07/21, 12:20	none	not reported
Field landing accident. The pilot flew a low and cramped circuit into a suitable field with a crosswind approach in the lee of some tall trees. He recalls the ASI reading about 50kts on approach and lowering the nose to try to gain speed, but the landing was heavy, breaking the rear fuselage. This was the pilot's first actual field landing. He had gained his Cross Country Endorsement over a year earlier, but had yet to have any refresher training.					
80	Slingsby T-65	minor	04/08/21, 12:35	none	13,355
Hit obstacle during out landing. The pilot rejected his original field on the downwind leg in favour of an adjacent section of runway on a disused airfield. The primary use of the airfield was for motorsports, but the pilot was aware that powered aircraft and gliders occasionally used it. He could see that the motorbikes were not currently active so set up an approach avoiding some fencing and obstacles on the threshold. At a late stage in the ground run he was unable to avoid a portable plastic barrier, which bounced off the glider nose before hitting the wing. The impact chipped some gel off the nose and damaged the leading edge of the wing.					
82	ASW 29	substantial	07/08/21, 14:05	none	1,074
Competition field landing crash. After rounding the final turn point some 20km from the airfield, the pilot climbed to what his flight computer told him was 400ft above the height required for a final glide to the 300ft finish ring, allowing him to cross the 3km radius finish ring at 700ft above the airfield elevation. Losing some height during the glide he reduced his MacCready setting from 4 to 0.5, restoring his notional 700ft safety margin. As he got close to the finish he could see that he was low and, with tall trees obstructing his view of the airfield, he chose to divert over lower ground to his right. Passing over several unsuitable fields he aimed for a grass field with a slight upslope. As he rounded out the pilot tried to turn to align the landing with the length of the field, but the wingtip touched the ground. The glider landed heavily while skidding sideways, breaking the rear fuselage. The undercarriage and tailplane were also damaged. The pilot later realised that he had not set the finish ring height in his flight computer.					
Incidents					
58	K-21	none	26/06/21, 10:15	none	-
Tug pilot cut the tow rope after the glider got too high. He reports feeling the glider move around behind him soon after take-off. Above 300ft ato he glanced back to see the glider laterally displaced and climbing; once the control column reached the back stop and the tug's nose started to go down, the tug pilot guillotined the rope. The glider P1 reports that the P2 had been flying gliders off winch launches for decades, but had "done half a dozen solo aerotows" during that time. After a comprehensive briefing the P1 allowed the P2 to fly the glider from the take-off and tried to verbally coach him into maintaining position. He reports that the glider started to climb when the P2 tried to close the DV panel and was about to take control when the tug cut the rope at about 300-400ft ato. The glider landed back on the airfield with the rope still attached. The CFI reiterates the advice in the BGA instructor's manual that even experienced pilots converting to aerotow should not be allowed to fly the take-off and early climb until they have demonstrated an ability to control the glider's position during the tow at a safe height.					
59	DG-1000	none	01/07/21, 14:35	none/none	1,019
Wheel-up landing on grass airfield. The P1 was coaching the P2 through a soaring flight, airbrake descent to circuit height and then through the circuit until taking control on the base leg and omitted his pre-landing checks.					
63	Libelle	none	22/06/21, 14:20	none	54
Groundloop after the wingtip caught on the ground during an aerotow take-off ground run. On the previous take-off attempt the pilot had released as soon as the wing touched the ground; on this attempt the pilot held on for longer and the glider groundlooped into long grass at the edge of the runway.					
67	LS4	none	26/06/21, 11:00	none	-
Flight with disconnected aileron. The pilot had rigged the glider and performed a positive control check as part of the DI. While on aerotow the pilot needed full right stick to level the wings after a left turn and, hearing something rattling behind him, realised that the aileron was disconnected. He released from the tug at 1,000ft ato and was able to make a safe landing on the airfield. After discussing the incident with BGA inspectors, the pilot noted that it was possible for the ball to be partially engaged in the socket and for the locking sleeve to be partially screwed over the ball and socket, giving the appearance of a fully-secured control connection. As there were no markings to indicate the fully locked position for the locking sleeve, a visual inspection may not notice the discrepancy. The pilot suggests, after engaging the ball in its socket, attempting to displace it again without releasing the lock plate before screwing the locking sleeve over the ball and socket.					

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BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
Ref	Type				
68	LS4	none	22/06/21, 13:00	-	383
While performing the club mandated pre-flight positive control check it was discovered that an airbrake control was not connected. The locking sleeve had been screwed over the ball, but the ball was not attached to the socket. The pilot had been flying for 20 years, but very rarely rigged gliders; having only recently bought the LS4, he had rigged it only about 10 times. He cannot recall having ever received any formal training in how to rig a glider.					
70	DG-300	none	15/07/21, 13:20	none	93
Glider hit boundary fence on approach. The pilot states that he suddenly lost a lot of height and put the airbrakes away, but still clipped the fence. A witness describes the last part of the approach as being low, slow, nose high and with the airbrakes shut. After hitting the fence the nose dropped, the glider touched down and a wing hit the ground, yawing the glider. The glider appeared to be undamaged, but was awaiting an inspection at the time of the report.					
74	K-21	none	14/07/21. -	none/none	516
Airbrakes came open during an aerotow, just as the tug lifted off. The pilot maintained concentration on the tug for a few seconds before firmly closing the brakes. About 20 seconds later the airbrakes came open again and this time the pilot held the brakes closed for the remainder of the aerotow. After being inspected in the workshop, it was discovered that the starboard airbrake locking force was below the limit set out in the maintenance manual. A senior inspector noted that the bearings in the over centre lock pivot bellcrank were starting to break up, allowing play in the right airbrake mechanism.					
76	Europa	none	16/07/21, 12:45	none	380
Light aircraft ran over tug rope during its take-off run. The pilot had been careful to start his take-off well clear of the gliders and tug and to aim his run down the middle of the strip. It was only when reviewing film shot from an underwing camera that the pilot noticed the tow rope laid out in the grass perpendicular to his take-off direction. The club intend to amend their operations manual to require tug pilots to tidy the rope during any pause in aerotowing.					
78	Discus	substantial	26/07/21, 11:00	-	-
Rear canopy hinge broken after an unintentional canopy jettison while rigging.					
79	LAK 19	minor	18/07/21, 11:00	-	1,540
While manoeuvring his car at the side of the launch grid, the pilot had to turn to avoid another car and ran over the wingtip of his glider, leaving splits and cracks in the surface.					
81	Puchacz	substantial	08/08/21, 10:30	-	-
A club two-seater was parked with the port wing protruding from the hangar, waiting to be taken to the launchpoint. The outer port wing section was run over by a member's car reversing from a parking space, damaging the wingtip.					

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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