

BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
97	HpH Shark	minor	21/06/23, 14:00	none	1260
Landed short and groundlooped. Returning from an abandoned cross-country attempt, the pilot intended to fly a straight in approach using the landing area threshold as the approach reference point. It was only while flying over the reference point that the pilot realised that it was actually the old 1940s airfield perimeter track, some 250m short of the mown landing area. Despite closing the airbrakes the glider touched down in long grass 15m short of the landing area, groundlooping the glider as it passed on to the landing area and removing a wingtip wheel in the process. The pilot candidly reports that his workload management under stress is not as good as when he was younger and has decided to only fly as P2 in the future.					
100	Discus	none	09/07/23, 15:20	minor	3100
Field landing. Making a marginal long glide back to the club in deteriorating conditions the pilot chose to divert to a nearby into wind ridge to top up height. The glider arrived too low to benefit from any ridge lift so after a couple of passes the pilot got the turbo out but was now too low to start the engine. With few fields to chose from the pilot elected to land wheel up in a nearby crop field. Although the glider was undamaged the pilot suffered some bruising. No energy absorbing cushion was fitted.					
103	EuroFOX	destroyed	26/07/23, 12:20	fatal	—
AAIB investigation.					
104	ASW 15	minor	26/07/23, 12:25	none	56
Wing drop on landing. The pilot reports experiencing severe windshear, possibly curlover from a bund surrounding a kart track next to the airfield. The pilot was unable to prevent a wing from going down, damaging the wingtip.					
105	ASG 29	minor	25/07/23, 15:40	none	3021
Wheel-up landing on grass. The pilot was advised to expedite the circuit and landing due to incoming traffic so put the wheel down, accelerated to 90 knots and opened the airbrakes. Unable to subsequently reduce the airbrakes due to the forces at high airspeed the pilot flew a low final turn. While flaring, the pilot realised that the pre-landing checks had not been carried out so instinctively moved the undercarriage lever, landing with the wheel up. There was some slight deformation of the skin and internal structure due to friction heating.					
107	K-21	substantial	25/07/23, 11:40	none/none	411
Wingtip hit signpost during landing. While rounding out the trial flight P1 realised that he had allowed the glider to drift in the crosswind during the approach and would be landing on the edge of the landing area. The P1 chose not to try to correct for fear of catching a wingtip and during the landing the port wing hit the signpost, yawing the glider through 180° before it came to rest in the adjacent crop field. There was substantial damage to the leading edge of the wing.					
108	ASW 20	substantial	08/07/23, —	none	2,374
Competition wheel-up field landing. While over an area with several landable fields the pilot chose not to put the wheel down while attempting to climb away in weak lift. There was damage to the underside of the fuselage and wing, the undercarriage doors were damaged and the winch hook detached when the glider subsequently landed wheel up.					
109	DG-505	minor	29/07/23, 12:50	none/none	760
The wind was across the airfield orientation so the pilot made an approach to land diagonally across the airfield, a standard approach in the prevailing conditions. On this occasion, the glider overran slightly, running across a track down the centre of the airfield, scraping the underside and puncturing the skin of the starboard wing.					
111	ASG 27	substantial	26/07/23, 14:20	none	1248
Field landing accident. Returning to the club in deteriorating conditions, the pilot chose a field at about 1,800ft agl before attempting to start the sustainer. After several failed attempts, and by now down to 800ft agl, the pilot was no longer sure of being in range of the selected field so quickly picked an alternative. The grass in this field was longer than the pilot had realised; a wingtip caught in the grass, yawing the glider round and damaging the outer ailerons on both wings.					
112	Cirrus	minor	09/08/23, 15:10	none	500
Wheel-up landing. Returning to the airfield at the end of a competition flight the pilot reports distracting and unclear radio calls from a glider ahead, as well as an aircraft requesting to enter the runway to depart. While assessing the landing options the pilot omitted to lower the wheel and the landing on the hard runway damaged the belly hook, underside of the fuselage and undercarriage doors.					
113	Cirrus	substantial	06/08/23, 13:45	none	135
Hard landing. The pilot was approaching with full airbrake aiming to land short but experienced turbulence for the last 200ft and the pilot had difficulty keeping the wings level. A high rate of descent developed and the glider landed heavily on the main wheel, damaging one of the wing mounting swivel bearings and tearing off an undercarriage door. The CFI reports that some turbulence from the boundary trees would be expected but also speculates that the pilot had allowed the airspeed to decay, leaving insufficient speed to fully roundout.					

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT

Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
114	Puchacz	substantial	09/08/23, 13:30	none/none	690
Canopy came open during flight, destroying the transparency and slightly damaging the frame. There was also paint damage to the right wing and fuselage. An engineering inspection could find no technical reason for the canopy to open. The CFI suspects that the canopy latch was moved during flight and intends to ask pilots to check that the canopy is secure during HASSL checks.					
118	ASW 24	destroyed	16/08/23, 12:30	fatal	140
AAIB investigation.					
119	Ventus	destroyed	17/08/23, 15:05	fatal	—
AAIB investigation.					

Incidents

95	Perkoz	none	12/06/23, —	none/none	600
Tug upset. The P1 briefed the trial flight passenger on the position and operation of the tow release during the pre-flight briefing. After taking off and climbing to 3,000ft the P1 asked the passenger to pull the release. Seeing the P2 pull the handle the P1 climbed and turned away from the tow rope without checking that the rope had actually been released. Looking down the P1 saw the tug in a nose down attitude and seemingly hanging from the glider. The P1 pulled the release again and the tug recovered and landed safely. The report points out that asking the passenger to operate the release is not standard practice in a trial flight and that the handle needed to be pulled 12cm to operate the release. It suggests that a passenger unfamiliar with the release may not pull hard enough to release the rope.					
96	ASW 15	none	24/06/23, 11:55	none	285
Winch cable hang-up. The cable was attached and take up slack was signalled. As the cable came taut the glider was pulled forward and started to roll down a slight slope just as all out was signalled. Although the stop signal was attempted the signaller thinks, with hindsight, that he may have been pushing on the button rim, not the button itself. The pilot heard the cable back release and pulled the release just to be sure so was surprised when the glider continued to accelerate, further attempts at pulling the release having no effect. Neither winch driver (trainee and instructor) saw a stop signal and the launch continued normally until the top of the launch. The winch drivers saw that the glider did not release and promptly guillotined the synthetic cable. Meanwhile the launchpoint had been radioing the winch to request that the guillotine be used but were not heard until after the power was reduced at the top of the launch. The pilot circled over the winch until it was confirmed that the cable was still attached but had been cut and he was able to fly a circuit and land safely. The stop was found to be wrapped around the wheel hub, getting jammed between the undercarriage frame and the wheel.					
98	K-21	minor	13/07/23, 11:30	—	—
Another K-21 was being pulled forward in the launch queue when it overran, allowing the wing to strike the rudder of the parked K-21, damaging the trailing edge.					
99	K-21	substantial	17/07/23, 10:30	—	—
Ground collision. The Gator was being reversed towards the tail of the glider to attach the towing arm when it lurched backwards and struck the rudder before the driver was able to stop the vehicle. The rudder trailing edge was badly damaged, possibly beyond repair. The club intends to mandate that vehicles should be reversed no closer than one vehicle length and that the glider should be pulled towards the tow vehicle.					
101	DG-500	none	25/06/23, 15:40	none/none	811
Wheel-up landing. After a comparatively low winch launch the pilots flew a handling exercise before joining the circuit. The P1 forgot to carry out pre-landing checks and the glider landed wheel up on the grass airfield.					
102	DG-500	none	09/07/23, —	none/none	—
Wheel retracted during landing. The P2 did the pre-landing checks and lowered the undercarriage but didn't move the handle far enough to lock the undercarriage down. Neither pilot noticed that the handle was not in the down and locked position and the wheel retracted about 15m into the landing ground run.					
106	Cirrus	none	26/07/23, 13:10	none	35
Low-level aerotow launch failure. At about 350ft the tug and glider hit some turbulence and the tow rope released. The pilot had briefed for this possibility during pre-flight checks and was able to land safely on a cross runway. The pilot speculated on two possible reasons for the uncommanded release. One was that having removed the seat back cushion the pilot's arm was almost straight when holding the release and may have inadvertently pulled the release. The other was that the type of release fitted, a CofG only type with the parallel guides either side of the hook, would allow the rope ring to be attached almost diagonally, preventing the hook from closing fully and allowing the ring to release if the rope went slack.					

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BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT

Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
110	K-21	none	04/08/23, 13:25	none/none	2127
Car crossed winch cable just as the all out signal was given. The car's approach was initially hidden from the launchpoint by raised ground and, once spotted, the glider released and the winch also stopped the launch. The glider P1 tracked the car and its three passengers down to the club caravan area. None of the three were club members and, after being informed that they were trespassing, quickly left the airfield. The club were later informed by the police that an illegal encampment of vehicles some 20 miles away had been served an eviction notice and that the occupants may have been investigating alternative sites.					
115	K-6	substantial	07/08/23, –	–	881
Wingtip caught on trailer while towing the glider to its parking spot. The pilot was closely watching the port wingtip to ensure that it cleared parked gliders but the starboard, outer wing hit a badly parked trailer. The wings had been rebuilt using modern glue so only the aileron was damaged. The fuselage had not been rebuilt and the impact parted several glue joints and creased the plywood fuselage side.					
116	Open Cirrus	none	09/08/23, 13:15	none	100
Unsafe flying. The glider was seen to be relatively low but close in to the airfield on base leg (despite having made a 'final' radio call). The glider then flew past the extended centre line before turning away from the airfield to fly a 270° turn before lining up on the runway in use. The witness reports that the glider could have landed on the runway but there seemed to be a delay in opening the airbrakes, making an overshoot likely. The pilot then closed the airbrakes and made a well banked, low-level turn to line up on a different runway. Onlookers feared that a wingtip would catch on the ground, leading to a cartwheel accident but the glider came out of the turn and flew down the runway. No airbrakes were seen and the glider eventually crossed over a public footpath bordering the airfield at low level, continued on down the ridge for a while before eventually landing safely in a field in the valley. The club intends to require more training before allowing the pilot to fly solo again. The pilot had received some bad news in a phone call before arriving at the club and the club intend to highlight the IMSAFE mnemonic to the members.					
117	K-23	none	29/05/23, 17:00	none	220
Winch stop fell off the airfield after a weak link failure. The report suggests that the pilot may not have been fully correcting for drift in the crosswind. The winch driver reported that the stop had fallen within the airfield so the club stopped winching to look for it before resuming operations, despite not finding the stop. A security guard at a neighbouring commercial premises later found the stop on the perimeter track a few metres outside the airfield boundary fence. The club has asked the duty instructors to remind pilots and winch drivers that winch launches should be stopped at a safe height if pilots are not correcting adequately for drift. They have also reminded instructors that launching should not restart until the stop has been found or the loss had been reported so that the club can inform their neighbours that a stop may have fallen on their premises.					

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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