

BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
69	SZD Jantar	substantial	23/06/24, 13:45	none	52
Main canopy section detached during winch launch. The pilot had just signalled "too fast" to the winch and, after the speed reduced, the pilot re-applied back pressure. This induced a launch failure so the pilot lowered the nose at which point the main canopy section detached. After finding the canopy in long grass off the runway it was seen that the transparency had broken into several pieces and the frame itself had fractured below the left-hand-side lock. The pilot is sure that the canopy was securely locked during his pre-flight checks. It was a hot day and the DV panel had been open during the launch. The report suggests that those factors combined with the age of the airframe led to an over pressure in the cockpit during the signal, leading to the failure of the canopy frame during the launch failure recovery.					
75	EuroFOX	substantial	29/06/24, 14:30	none/none	13,000+
Rudder jammed. At about 300ft agl on final approach the right seat P1 reported the tug yawing to the right and being unable to use the left rudder pedal. Both the P1 and P2 verified that the P2's feet were clear of the rudder controls. The P1 was able to land safely but after touching down the aircraft veered to the right and struck a boundary fence after about 30m. The propeller was damaged as well as the spinner and port wing. A video taken soon afterwards showed the right rudder pedal being loose with the cables sagging although after recovering the aircraft to the hangar the club safety officer noted that the cables at the rear were taut and that the rudder pedals operated the nosewheel and rudder as normal. A full engineering assessment could find no reason for the control restriction.					
76	Antares	substantial	27/06/24, 15:55	none	3,000+
Field landing groundloop. The turbo engine functioned normally when tested before starting the task, however when required it failed to start. The pilot landed the glider in a pasture field but a patch of longer grass caught a wingtip. The subsequent groundloop damaged the wingtip and also the tail fin and rudder.					
77	Libelle	substantial	27/06/24, 16:20	none	103
Field landing groundloop. Struggling to make progress to an upwind turnpoint in deteriorating conditions, the pilot picked a field in good time and started the circuit. The pilot was aware of powerlines on the approach but anticipated a headwind of 15 knots on the approach and positioned the base leg and final approach accordingly. After clearing the powerlines with full airbrake the pilot added sideslip to steepen the approach but realised that the glider still wasn't coming down fast enough. The pilot lowered the nose to steepen the approach but after rounding out estimated the airspeed as more than 60 knots. After touching down, the pilot felt that the glider was still travelling at 55 knots and not slowing due to a slight downslope. With the far hedge approaching the pilot deliberately groundlooped the glider, snapping the rear fuselage. After exiting, the pilot noted that there was virtually no wind. The pilot reports starting the circuit from directly overhead, making it difficult to assess any slope in the field. The pilot had also earlier selected two more fields, slightly upwind that were later measured as longer than the landing field which only appeared longer because it was narrower than the other two.					
78	Grob Astir	substantial	21/06/24, 15:50	none	16
Stopped winch launch. Taking off with a crosswind from the left, the right wing touched the ground for a few metres during the ground run. The pilot pulled the release but not hard enough to actually release the cable. The stop signal was given to the winch but the glider took off and the wings levelled just before the winch driver stopped the winch. The glider reached a height of approximately three metres before the nose lowered and the glider started to descend, landing on the nose wheel before the tail wheel struck the ground hard. The pilot was able to regain control, opening the airbrakes and bringing the glider to a stop. The nose wheel burst and the tail wheel housing was pushed into the fin by the impact. The course instructor reports that if the wing is held exactly level at the start of a launch, any crosswind will get underneath the dihedral and exert a wing down force on the downwind wing. He points out that the wings should be held with the downwind wing slightly higher such that no up or down force is felt at the wingtip. He also cites the position of the release cable at the bottom of the instrument binnacle as a hindrance to aileron authority by restricting control column movement. He suggests replacing the round knob with a T handle and lengthening the release cable such that the pilot's arm does not obstruct the controls. The course instructor mentions that there is no specific exercise to demonstrate and practise releasing during a wing drop. He realises that the BGA policy of stopping the launch in the event of a wing drop has greatly reduced cartwheel accidents but has instead increased the number of low-level power failures that frequently end in accidents. He mentions that early-solo pilots may never have experienced a wing drop before and may be slow to recognise it. The instructor recommends a deliberate wing drop exercise with both the winch driver and launchpoint controller pre-briefed to not go all out and for the wing to be released and allowed to drop with the glider moving slowly at take up slack power.					
81	LS 7	minor	01/07/24, 16:45	none	2,400
Field landing accident. The pilot had selected a freshly-cut stubble field but shortly before touching down he heard a loud noise from the rear of the glider and the nose pitched down slightly. After landing, the pilot found that the rear wheel had been ripped from its mounting and forced up into the tail wheel box with significant damage to the wheel and surrounding fairings. Re-tracing the landing and approach run, the pilot found a large rock with paint smears on it. Further markings on the rock showed that it had been half submerged and the impact with the wheel had moved it more than a metre. A more detailed inspection of the glider back at the club revealed further cracks in the fuselage under the cockpit, as well as a slow leak from the tail ballast tank into the fuselage.					

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
83	Slingsby T-61	substantial	13/07/24, 14:45	none/none	~28,000
Undershoot crash. After three solo circuits the P1 took a pre-solo pilot up for a mutual flight. Returning to the airfield after about 30-40 minutes, the P1 flew an approach intending to fly low over the tall reeds growing out of a drainage ditch on the airfield boundary before landing short on the grass runway. At about 20ft agl the airspeed reduced and the TMG began to descend rapidly; despite the P1 closing the spoilers and before the P1 could open the throttle, the aircraft hit the reeds and the edge of the ditch before stopping on the airfield and groundlooping through 90°. The right wing and the tail boom were both damaged. The pilot reports not realising that the wind strength had increased during the flight. The wind was some 40° off the runway direction and trees and high bushes bordering the upwind side of the runway were now creating some wind shadow and a steeper wind gradient at low level than during the P1's earlier solo flights.					
84	Skylark 2	minor	17/07/24, 13:35	none	477
Glider rolled into hedge. During the aerotow ground run, a gust of wind lifted the port wing and the glider turned to starboard. The pilot was unable to correct with either the ailerons or rudder so released from the tow. The starboard wingtip caught on the ground, yawing the glider further. The glider rolled off the runway and, despite the pilot having put the nose skid down, the glider rolled into the boundary hedge at walking speed. The glider had mostly superficial scratches as well as a slightly bent pitot tube. The report points out that this glider has little control authority at slow airspeeds and the tailskid "spoon" provides no lateral stability on hard surfaces.					
86	Jonker JS1	minor	16/06/24, 17:05	none	1,566
Landing overrun. The pilot crossed the finish line at 300ft agl at high speed. Competition rules allowed for a straight in approach to land to the south on the N/S runway or climb with a left turn and fly a circuit to land to the west on the E/W runway, stopping short of the N/S runway, a landing distance of about 450m. The pilot chose to land on the E/W runway but on final approach realised that the glider was not descending. The pilot reports that he may have had his hand on the flap lever instead of the airbrake lever. The pilot turned left to avoid overshooting the main runway and then erected the jet sustainer and started the engine. After climbing to about 300ft agl the pilot shut down the engine and made another approach to the E/W runway. Again, the pilot realised that he would overshoot, although one witness reports seeing the airbrakes out on this approach. The pilot turned left to land on the grass next to the runway. The glider bounced a few times before coming to rest in the boundary hedge. The glider had some impact damage to the underside of the cockpit, a damaged hinge and some minor cosmetic damage from hitting the hedge.					
88	SZD Junior	substantial	11/07/24, 13:20	none	299
Canopy opened during soaring flight. The pilot reports checking that the canopy was closed and locked during the pre-flight checks but during a steep thermalling turn the canopy came open. The transparency shattered and the frame was damaged but the pilot was able to close what remained before landing safely.					
90	PIK 20	minor	18/07/24, 14:55	none	457
Wheel-up landing. The pilot reports being unable to lock the wheel down during the pre-flight checks. An inspection revealed that damage to the undercarriage mechanism rendered its operation very stiff, requiring two people to lower the wheel during the inspection. The report mentions a landing the previous day without any further detail other than the importance of investigating possible damage from any unusual landing. It points out that if the glider had been de-rigged the previous day then the damage would have been noticed the next day when lowering the wheel during rigging.					

Incidents

70	Grob Astir	none	23/06/24, 15:20	none	78
Groundloop after landing. The approach reference point was a little too far into the runway, the touchdown was not fully held off so the glider landed a bit fast. Concerned about a parked glider further down the runway, the pilot steered towards the side of the runway. The wingtip either caught on the runway or in long grass just off the landing surface, groundlooping the glider through 180° such that it ran backwards until partly off the runway. The glider was grounded until an inspection confirmed that it was undamaged.					
71	EuroFOX	none	27/06/24, 12:10	none	600
Partial power failure during aerotow. At about 450ft at the tug pilot noted a sudden power surge followed by a rapid loss of power and severe engine vibration from the Rotax 914. The pilot requested that the glider release and the glider pilot was able to land downwind on the runway. Despite gradually losing height the tug pilot was able to fly an abbreviated circuit before landing into wind.					
72	PA 25	none	20/06/24, 14:00	none	1,000+
The tug had been borrowed from another club for the duration of a competition. During the take-off ground run prior to fuelling at a nearby airfield the engine stopped. It was discovered that the fuel tank was not vented and that a vacuum led to fuel starvation stopping the engine. The tank itself was also borrowed while the club that owned the tug was having the original tank repaired or replaced. The report also mentions that the fuel tank cap was from a car, not the usual manufacturer's cap, that the tug's climb rate was poor, as well as a few other technical problems.					

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BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT				PILOT	
Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	Injury	P1 hours
73	Slingsby T-61	none	21/06/24, 13:00	none/none	72 (slmg)
Field landing. The pilots had been thermalling with the engine off, when down to 2,000ft agl the engine was re-started but failed to deliver power above 2,000rpm. A suitable field was selected and the usual engine checks made but the engine still would not deliver power. Once on the ground, the engine was inspected. There were no signs of carburettor icing; the engine was able to be started and provided full power. The TMG was road retrieved by a maintenance organisation which inspected the engine but found no problems and subsequently flew the aircraft back to the owner's club. The TMG had a history of problems with the Rollason engine and, suspecting fuel starvation, the owners intend to strip and inspect the fuel system.					
74	Grob 109	none	26/06/24, 19:00	none/none	2,140
Near collision with landed glider. The TMG P1 noted the glider landing to the right side of the runway and initially intended to wait for it to be cleared. After edging forward the P1 decided that there was sufficient clearance so began the take-off run. After raising the tail the TMG veered to the right and headed straight for the landed glider. The combination of the light crosswind from the right and the P1 having consciously removed his feet from the toe brakes meant that he did not feel able to steer to the left of the glider, so the P1 closed the throttle and steered the TMG between the glider and the boundary hedge. The glider P1 reports that the TMG port wing passed over the glider's wing and missed the canopy by inches. The TMG P1 reports switching hands on the control column after opening the throttle and that this might have delayed closing the throttle to abort the take-off. The engine fitted to this TMG rotates anti-clockwise when viewed from the cockpit, requiring left rudder to maintain a straight line during the take-off ground run; most other engines rotate clockwise, requiring right rudder to stay straight during take-off.					
79	Grob Astir	none	14/07/24, 14:10	none	12
Wheel-up landing. The pilot reports forgetting to lower the undercarriage during the pre-landing checks. The glider was undamaged after landing on the grass airfield.					
80	LS8	none	13/07/24, 14:35	none	1,545
Undercarriage retracted during the landing ground run. The report mentions that the undercarriage lever is held in place in the down position by a catch but that it can be difficult to see if it is properly engaged. The pilot reports lowering the wheel during the pre-landing checks but was unable to visually verify that the catch was placed correctly.					
82	DG-400	-	05/07/24, 11:30	-	1,300
Airspace infringement. While slowly climbing in wave the pilot was surprised at not receiving the usual warning when approaching FL125. Looking at the airspace file the pilot realised that a section of the airway was missing. By now at FL140, the pilot rapidly descended and received a squawk from the airspace controller. Later discussion with the club CFI revealed that the latest airspace update had been sourced from the continental manufacturer of the popular portable device. After installing a file downloaded from a UK supplier the missing airspace re-appeared.					
85	Cirrus	none	13/07/24, 15:20	none	485
The pilot pulled the glider into the winch launch queue, leaving the tail dolly on. On the final move forward the pilot was distracted by a helper having difficulty opening the canopy and omitted to remove the dolly before getting into the glider, fastening the straps and doing the pre-flight checks. It was only when the CFI pointedly asked the pilot if he had completed ABCDE checks before getting in that the pilot belatedly realised that the tail dolly was still on the glider and asked a helper to remove the dolly for him.					
87	K-13	-	14/07/24, ~10:00	-	-
K-13 found with incorrectly rigged aileron control during the DI. The glider had been rigged a few days previously after returning from maintenance and had been flown on the previous two days. The spring loaded pin that secures the aileron pushrod to the rod end bearing on the root rib bellcrank is mounted inside a U-section with holes for the safety pin on both sides of the U-section and the pin. The duty instructor doing the DI discovered that the safety pin had been placed through only one of the holes in the U-section, bypassing the hole in the pushrod bellcrank connecting pin altogether. The connecting pin had already moved and the aileron control was barely connected.					
89	K-21	substantial	21/07/24, 10:35	-	-
Tail dolly failure. The dolly had been placed at the hangar and checked by an instructor but halfway to the launchpoint the dolly hinges failed. The tow driver could see that the glider's tail was oscillating and carefully slowed but the tailplane struck the back of the truck, damaging the elevator trailing edge. The rivets holding the hinge to the lower half of the dolly had all failed. There were signs of corrosion on the failed rivets that would have gone unnoticed under the foam lining. The club intends to inspect all club tow gear and dollies.					
91	K-21	-	09/06/24, 14:00	-	-
During the DI a pin fastening the hand-operated rudder control was found to be missing. The glider was marked as u/s until a replacement was sourced, the original pin was found under the rear seat pan.					

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.