

BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
78	K-21	substantial	16/06/25, 15:55	none	5
Hard landing. The pilot recognised an undershoot developing on short final so closed the airbrakes. As the pilot rounded out, the glider ballooned, the pilot then opened the airbrakes and the glider touched down heavily on the main wheel. There were two further hard bounces before the glider landed. A witness said that it seemed the airbrakes were barely open during the initial roundout. The tail wheel hub broke and a cross member behind the nose wheel was cracked.					
80	Slingsby Vega	substantial	19/06/25, 13:30	none	279
Wheels-up landing. The pilot took a winch launch then climbed in lift and retracted the undercarriage. After losing height, the pilot lowered the wheels before again climbing in some lift. Losing height again the pilot carried out the pre-landing checks and, forgetting that the undercarriage was already down, moved the lever and retracted the undercarriage. The report notes that the difficulty in obtaining spares might lead to the glider becoming an insurance write-off.					
81	ASW 20	minor	29/06/25, –	none	454
Field landing damage. The pilot flew a circuit and touched down in a grass field. Towards the end of the ground run, the port wing caught in the 8-10-inch-long grass, groundlooping the glider. The pilot checked the glider for damage and discovered that the outboard trailing edge corner of the starboard flap had been chipped off.					
82	Antares	substantial	28/06/25, 19:00	none	3,000+
Field landing. The turbo was tested and functioned normally before starting the task but, when needed, the engine failed to start so the pilot landed at a gliding club some 18nm from take-off. An aerotow retrieve was requested and the tug arrived but since the club are not allowed to permit aircraft to take off after 19:00 there was little time to brief the tug pilot. The tow rope was handed to club members who attached both ends, a radio check between the tug and glider was performed, the glider pilot using a handheld as the panel mount radio was u/s. The combination took off with about 15 minutes to spare. Initially the take-off was normal but at around 1,400ft at the tug pilot was busy scanning for other traffic known to be nearby and also advising them of the combination's position. The glider pilot noted a 300fpm descent for over a minute during which the glider accelerated to 99 knots but felt it was unsafe to use the handheld radio to advise the tug. The tug started to climb again but soon after the rope released from the glider, possibly because the glider only had a CofG hook and the rope may have back released as the rope bowed. The pilot assessed that he was too low to turn downwind and land at the landout airfield but reports that the flight computer indicated that the glider could reach the lower elevation original launchpoint. As the glide progressed, the pilot made a radio call that the glide was marginal and the glider eventually landed in a barley field near to the club. The rapid deceleration damaged a wingtip, the fin and rudder.					
84	HpH Shark	substantial	07/07/25, 12:40	none	1119
Field landing. The pilot soared in wave up to 9,900ft amsl, noting the freezing level at around 5,000ft. At one stage the pilot had to accelerate to over 100 knots and use the airbrakes to descend through a wave slot before the gap closed. After another climb the pilot had to accelerate to almost VNE and then use the airbrakes to descend through a fast closing slot. When the pilot subsequently tried to close the brakes he found them jammed open and immovable. Even after slowing down the pilot was unable to close the brakes. Unable to reach a landable field the pilot had to land in an extremely rough field, bouncing off the uneven surface before landing heavily and collapsing the undercarriage. The glider came to rest with one wing against a fence post and the other against a tree stump. Both wings were damaged, a bolt in an undercarriage strut sheared and there was damage to the parcel shelf and seat back caused by the retracting wheel. Later ground testing of the airbrake mechanism could find no reason for the airbrakes to jam open. The report notes that the glider landed about two minutes after the pilot's first attempts, leaving little time for problem solving. It also recommends that the airbrakes should preferably be opened at or before VA rather than VNE.					
88	K-13	minor	26/07/25, 16:00	none/none	3104
Winch cable trace struck wing leading edge. The winch driver had been briefed to arrange a gradual power failure at 700ft ato. During the launch the P2 was having to pull hard into a steep climb to keep the glider below the placarded max winch launch speed. After the power had been shut off the P2 was slow to react so the P1 first prompted and then took over and lowered the nose. By now the glider was stalled and fell into a steep nose down attitude during which the winch trace was seen in front of the port wing. A left turn was initiated to avoid the trace and a safe circuit and landing was flown. After the flight some surface scuffing was noted on the leading edge of the port wing. The report notes that a glider will rapidly stall following a launch failure in a steep climb attitude so prompt action is vital. The instructor also suspects that the lightweight polyethylene cable may not have back released and fallen away as rapidly as a traditional steel cable. He also notes that he should have taken over immediately rather than first prompting.					
89	Pegase	minor	05/08/25, 15:35	none/–	113
Hard landing. The pilot set up an approach aiming to overfly a parked glider at a safe height before using more airbrake to steepen the approach. In the event the pilot overflowed the glider lower than planned but still at a safe height before applying more airbrake. The glider was already low and slowing in the 15G20 knot wind and the increase in airbrake caused the glider to drop to the ground, bending undercarriage support tubes. The CFI and club SO discussed with the pilot the risks of slow, shallow approaches in strong wind gradients.					

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
Ref	Type				
90	Pegase	minor	27/07/25, 17:00	none	15
Wheel-up landing. The pilot attended a ground briefing for visitors that focused on the circuit and landing procedures for the expected runway. They later flew a check flight and were cleared to fly solo in their own glider. Later, a change in the wind direction necessitated a change of runway. The pilot was at the back of a four glider winch queue when a rain shower was seen approaching and the four gliders were advised to hangar land. The pilot and another visiting pilot discussed the best circuit to land by the hangar and came up with a plan. After releasing from the winch, the pilot raised the undercarriage and turned, unfortunately the wrong way to facilitate the planned circuit. Once down to circuit height the pilot realised that they were in the wrong position and rapidly came up with an alternative plan which then became unviable as vehicles cluttered the landing area to clear the launchpoint. The pilot then flew overhead the runway before making a low turn on to final, parallel to the original runway, to land by the hangar. While assessing and re-assessing the situation the inexperienced pilot, flying their second (and first solo) flight at an unfamiliar airfield omitted to lower the undercarriage. The wheel-up landing on grass left some minor damage to the gel coat on the underside of the fuselage.					
91	T-61 Venture	substantial	09/08/25, 11:00	minor/none	770
Very heavy landing. The aim of the flight was to conduct circuit training for the P2. After each circuit the P1 took control and flew a go around from around 300ft agl. The P2's familiarity with the TMG had increased during the flight so the P1 was content to let the P2 fly the approach and landing after the last circuit. Initially, the approach seemed to progress well but the airspeed started to reduce as the glider descended through the wind gradient. Just before roundout height the P1 prompted to watch the airspeed and the P2 immediately pushed the stick forward, the P1 was unable to prevent a very hard landing. Witnesses describe the TMG nose dropping rapidly to about 30° nose down and either no roundout or a very late roundout before the impact. The P1 complained of back pain and was extracted from the TMG by the emergency services. After being taken to hospital the P1 was released later that day having suffered soft tissue damage. The TMG mono wheel broke off in the impact and rolled across the airfield, both propeller blades also broke. The P1 points out that prompting at such a critical phase of flight was inappropriate and that taking over would have been preferable. He also notes that the object of the flight was to practise circuits and that allowing the P2 to fly an approach and landing in an unfamiliar aircraft, unbriefed and undemonstrated, was beyond the scope of the pre-flight briefing.					
92	Kestrel	minor	10/08/25, 15:00	none/—	433
Landing groundloop. The pilot deliberately flew a high approach to practise using the drogue chute. While rounding out the flap lever came out of the detent and the flaps retracted. The ensuing touchdown was firm but not excessively hard. However, the port wing touched the ground and the glider groundlooped through 120°, bending the undercarriage frame. The report notes that landing area was reported to be very rough but that the grass was not that long.					
96	K-21	minor	13/08/25, 11:30	none/none	768
Hard landing. The P2 was on the third day of the second week of a two week course and had flown two good landings earlier in the day. On the accident flight the approach was flown faster than planned and the float carried the glider further into the airfield than usual. The P1 reports that the P2 unexpectedly tried to force the glider on to the ground, touching down on a rough part of the airfield at a higher than desirable airspeed. The P1 was unable to prevent the initial forward control movement but took control as the glider bounced. Despite closing the airbrakes the P1 was unable to prevent a second, nose down, landing which damaged the nose wheel fairing. The report notes that the P2 had progressed quickly and was more advanced than the other students on their first week of instruction. It suggests that this might have led to greater confidence in the P2's ability undermining the P1's usual vigilance. The club are planning remedial ground works to address the rough section of the landing area.					
97	DG-505	minor	01/08/25, 13:00	none/none	205
Unusual noise in flight. The aim of the flight was to conduct spin awareness and recovery training so the tail ballast was adjusted to the appropriate CofG for the two pilots and the glider towed to 4,000ft agl. The P1 demonstrated and the P2 flew one type of potential spin entry with the correct recovery. The P1 then demonstrated a second type of possible spin entry but during the recovery, after the rotation had stopped, a loud noise was heard coming from the rear of the glider. The P1 chose to end the exercise and return to the airfield, assessing the control effectiveness before landing safely. After the flight the G-meter showed the maximum G was well within the glider's rated maximum. A later workshop inspection found unspecified damage to the tail that required further investigation.					
Incidents					
79	K-23	none	26/06/25, 17:05	none	550
The airbrakes came open during a winch launch. The report states that the positive control checks were done after the pre-flight checks and recommends that the pre-flight checks should be repeated after the positive checks in similar situations.					

Continued on p60

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
83	DG-505	none	29/06/25, –	none/none	not reported
Near miss with tug on final approach. The pilot noted that the glider radio was not functioning during the pre-flight checks. The launchpoint controller verified that the radio was switched on and the pilot chose to continue with the flight as both the controller and tug pilot were aware of the u/s radio. During the tow the tug radio also became u/s as one of the headset jacks disconnected from its socket. Later, the glider and tug flew simultaneous opposite side circuits with neither one of them aware of the other's presence until crossing the airfield boundary on short final. The report estimates that the aircraft came within approx. 50ft of each other before the tug took avoiding action. Both aircraft landed safely. The club operating procedures require all aircraft to be fitted with a serviceable radio and for downwind calls to be made at the start of the circuit, with further base leg and final calls if two aircraft are close. The club intend to further emphasise the requirement for a serviceable radio before any flight.					
85	Mosquito	none	08/07/25, 13:40	none	1371
Wheel-up landing. After an aerotow to 2,000ft the pilot omitted to retract the undercarriage. Finding only strong sink the glider soon descended to circuit height so the pilot performed pre-landing checks, inadvertently raising the wheel. The subsequent landing on grass left the glider undamaged. The report notes that a family emergency leading to a late arrival and missing the competition task start may have stressed the pilot, possibly putting the pilot the wrong side of an IMSAFE assessment.					
86	LS8/Discus	substantial	13/07/25, 12:40	–	–
Ground collision. The LS8 was towed to the back of the launch grid, unhitched from the car and then positioned behind the Discus. As the pilot was putting the tow out gear back in the car the glider rolled forward and impacted the trailing edge of the Discus rudder, taking a chunk out of the rudder. The ground was dry and hard, offering little rolling resistance and the LS8 had just been fitted with a high pressure/ low rolling resistance tyre allowing the glider to roll down an almost imperceptible slope. The club intend to move the grid launchpoint forward, away from the slope, when a large grid is expected.					
87	LS7	none	13/07/25, 17:10	none/–	1500
Wheel-up landing. The pilot did the usual pre-landing checks intending to land out at a gliding club. Both the navigation device and the variometer were sounding warnings about entering the club 'airspace' and the pilot was trying to silence the alarms while flying. The subsequent wheel-up landing on grass left a stain on the belly that was later cleaned off.					
93	K-13	minor	15/08/25, 19:10	–/–	–
Towing incident. After the glider had been towed to the back of the winch queue the buggy driver assumed that the glider had been released and drove off without verifying the release or stowing the tow rope. The K-13 glider in front had two occupants so rested on the nose wheel with the tail in the air. The towed glider was pulled under the tailplane, receiving some paint scuffs on the canopy and the canopy handle tore a three-inch gash in the front glider's rudder. The canopy was found to be difficult to open and close so it is believed that the locking mechanism is also damaged. Standard practice at the club is for the buggy driver to stow the rope after release before driving off.					
94	K-13	minor	09/08/25, 11:00	–/–	20,000
Tug dropped the tow rope before landing, standard procedure at the club. However, the pilot misjudged the tow rope momentum and crosswind drift so the rope fell over a glider being retrieved. One end punctured the leading edge D-box of the glider.					
95	K-21	none	09/08/25, 15:05	none/–	<1
Landing undershoot. The wind was 12G20 knots, there were strong thermals and the associated sink. The pilot initially thought that the approach looked comfortably high so opened first half airbrake and then full airbrake, still expecting to land slightly long. About 700 metres short of the airfield the pilot noticed the reference point moving up in the canopy so closed the airbrakes. It soon became apparent the glider was going to land short so the pilot turned slightly to land in a stubble field adjacent to the airfield. As the landing ground run slowed the glider neared a fence, the pilot was unable to steer away but was able to lower the port wing such that the glider stopped with the starboard wing overhanging the fence. The duty supervisor notes that the runway in use was not the usual runway and suggests that the inexperienced pilot was caught out by strong sink on approach.					

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.