

BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
116	K-13	substantial	12/09/20, 11:40	none/none	180
Nosewheel first landing after winch launch failure. The glider moved forwards as the slack came out of the cable and overran the cable by a few inches. The P1 reports that the glider was then snatched some six to eight feet into the air in a shallow climb angle before the drogue chute inflated and the P1 released. He was able to lower the nose to a shallow descent attitude, but with insufficient energy to round out the P1 was unable to prevent the glider from landing on the nosewheel. The fuselage frame around the nosewheel was bent. The club has reminded all pilots that a winch launch cable overrun should lead to an immediate release.					
118	K-13	substantial	18/09/20, 14:10	none	43
Wing hit fence after a winch launch failure. The pilot felt the starboard wing go down at the start of the launch and was able to correct this, but over corrected. As it took off, the glider turned to the left, the pilot released at about 40ft ato and was able to recover from the launch failure, but felt that he was too low to turn to line up with the runway so chose to land in an adjacent field. As he lifted the port wing to clear a small tree, the starboard wing hit a boundary fence, breaking the wing. The glider yawed and landed heavily, damaging the nose.					
119	Junior	minor	12/09/20, 13:30	none	32
PIO during round out ended in heavy landing. After flying a low circuit, the pilot opened the airbrakes and then shut them to overfly a glider in the landing area. The glider floated down the landing area in a fast, flat approach, bounced after touching down and eventually made a hard landing. The gel coat under the nose was cracked and the coaming mounted release handle broke the glass on one of the instruments.					
120	K-21	substantial	19/09/20, 14:55	minor	1194
Undershot approach ended in trees. The wind was between 15 to 20 knots, there was a steep downslope starting just downwind of the hilltop airfield. Witnesses report that the glider appeared to be further from the airfield and lower than would be usual during the base leg; some witnesses also report that the airbrakes were open during the base leg and the turn on to final approach. The pilot describes the glider sinking rapidly after turning on to final approach and that lowering the nose to increase airspeed had no apparent effect. The glider sank into the trees, breaking off the port wingtip and snapping the fuselage before coming to rest in a nose-down attitude some 8ft above the ground. The pilot, although bruised, was able to climb from the cockpit onto the shoulders of one of the rescue team.					
121	Grob 103	none	02/09/20, 12:05	minor/minor	611
Strong jolt during aerotow take-off ground run left both pilots with a sore back. The P1's legs lifted off the pedals and unlatched the airbrakes, although this was swiftly corrected after take-off. The take-off run was used only occasionally for aerotowing in crosswinds and passed over an old concrete runway, now grassed over. The report suggests that as the first in the aerotow queue, the glider had not reached an airspeed that would have supported some of the weight of the glider and cushioned the jolt. The next pilot in the queue reported nothing unusual during the ground run.					
123	Discus Bt	destroyed	29/09/20, 14:35	minor	not reported
Crash in field. After a couple of hours and 200km of cross-country ridge soaring, the pilot had a 5km gap in the ridge to cross to return to the home ridge and the airfield. He reports flying through strong sink while crossing the gap, but arrived at the next section of the ridge level with the top. Unable to climb in the first bowl, he flew to the next bowl and then on to the main face of the ridge, expecting to find some lift. When debriefed by the club safety officer, he reported that he had been in a similar position a few weeks earlier and been able to return to the airfield without difficulty, so he was convinced that he would be able do the same on this occasion. In the event, the glider continued to lose height and eventually a wingtip clipped a tree, the glider stalled and landed heavily in a sloping field before groundlooping and running backwards down the slope into a fence. The pilot had cuts and bruises on his head and was treated by emergency services. The glider fuselage snapped behind the engine bay, one wing was damaged and the canopy and instrument panel were also broken. Another pilot had crossed the same gap earlier and had made an early decision to land in a field. He reports that the wind on the ground after landing had dropped and backed from earlier reports. The accident pilot told the safety officer that he had not made a field landing for many years and that his last field landing practice some seven years earlier was an unusual approach to the airfield exercise not involving any element of field selection.					

Incidents

103	HpH Shark	none	31/08/20, 13:50	-	-
	Ventus	none		-	-

The Shark pilot, already established in the thermal, was alerted by a red FLARM warning to a Ventus joining above it. The report of this incident in the previous issue omitted reference to UK Airprox report 2020102, which found that the Ventus pilot had positioned a little too close for the Shark pilot to be comfortable. The Ventus pilot clearly believed that they had allowed enough separation, but that the Shark pilot was not content with what they perceived as a conflict and so had to take action to extend out of the thermal to generate more separation. There was no risk of collision because the Ventus pilot had the Shark in view, not because of the separation, although normal safety standards and parameters for glider operations had pertained.

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.

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
115	Discus	none	10/09/20, 14:00	none	64
Near tug upset at 800ft ato. The tug pilot reports feeling the tail of the tug being lifted. As he reached for the release he could see the underside of the glider in the mirror; just as he was about to pull the release he saw the glider adopt a nose-down attitude so decided to continue the tow. He points out that the tug would not have been visible from the glider and estimates that he was less than a second away from a fully developed tug upset. The glider pilot reports momentarily glancing at his watch and when he looked ahead again he could not see the tug. As he reached for the release, the tug came into view again.					
117	K-21	none	18/08/20, pm	none/none	1600
Winch launch stopped after a wing drop. The P1 saw the wing go down, but then saw the student correct the wing drop with the ailerons. He believed that the wing did not touch the ground so allowed the launch to continue. Moments after taking off, the glider stopped accelerating but as the P2 had not yet allowed the glider to rotate the P1 was able to take control and land ahead. The launchpoint controller reports that the acceleration after all out was slower than desirable and that when he saw the wingtip touch the ground he immediately gave the stop signal. The wing runner felt some upward pressure on the opposite wing before the glider started to move and reports that next time he would stop the launch.					
122	K-21	none	19/09/20, 17:00	none/none	374
	DG-505	none		none/none	732
Near miss in the circuit. The P1 in the K-21 saw the DG approaching head on on an opposite side base leg. He took control and was able to manoeuvre to avoid the DG. Neither pilot in the DG saw the K-21 until it took avoiding action. The club operates using simultaneous left and right circuits with the rule that gliders should not cross the launch runway extended centre line on base leg; the report notes that sometimes pilots line up with a ground feature rather than the launch run and that pilots should leave an adequate buffer from the centre line to ensure separation. Both gliders were FLARM equipped, neither received a warning. Range analysis of recorded traces showed that the K-21 FLARM had very poor range.					

Historic report summaries

Due to the shortage of recent reports we have dug into the archives to see how much things haven't changed. Thanks to Hugh Browning for the suggestion – well worth reading as we return to the skies.

Winch wing drop

- 2005** The glider was being winch launched with a slight crosswind. As the downwind wing runner relinquished his hold, the wing dropped and the pilot tried to lift it with aileron. The nose yawed to left then rose and rotated about the left wingtip. It came to a rest facing the launch point with a smashed canopy and a snapped fuselage.
- 2009** Cracked fuselage after the glider groundlooped during a winch launch. The wingtip touched the ground during the ground run, the pilot was slow to release, the glider yawed round the wingtip as it took off.
- 2013** Wingtip dropped to the ground at the start of the winch take-off. By the time the pilot released, the glider had enough momentum to groundloop 180° round the wingtip, damaging the nose skid.
- 2014** Tailplane attachment damaged. After landing out at the club during a cross-country flight, the pilot took a winch launch to fly back to his home club. During the later stage of the ground run a wingtip caught on the ground and the glider started to roll as it took off. The pilot released, but the glider landed heavily and groundlooped. Sloping field, long grass and lack of currency, particularly at winch launching, were all cited as factors.

Late take over

- 2000** At about 40ft on the winch launch, the cable went slack just as the student rotated the glider into the climb. P1 had just looked sideways to assess the angle of climb and during this time the speed fell rapidly. Taking control he lowered the nose, but could not prevent a very heavy landing in a stalled condition.
- 2008** After touchdown, the P2 allowed the glider to weathercock off the landing area. By the time the instructor took control, the glider was rolling through an uneven area of the field; an airbrake caught the ground, damaging a pivot arm.
- 2012** Cracking and deformation to fuselage skin in nosewheel area and possible damage to main wheel structure following hard landing. The instructor intended to test the P2 with a simulated launch failure at an awkward height. The subsequent recovery put the glider in a position on final approach with full airbrake, but possibly insufficient landing room so the instructor took control and entered a sideslip, still with full airbrake. At 50ft the instructor straightened the sideslip and attempted to shut the airbrakes, only to find the P2 holding the airbrakes fully open. Despite the instructor pulling the control stick back the glider impacted heavily on the nosewheel and then the main wheel.

continued on page 71

Historical report summaries *continued*

Tug upset/distraction

- 2009** Distracted by an open DV panel, the pilot allowed the glider to rise dangerously high behind the tug soon after take-off on his first flight on type. After the pilot lowered the nose to recover, a bow developed and the rope back released.
- 2012** Tailplane and canopy destroyed, fuselage damaged by groundloop while landing in a crop field. The tug pilot reports feeling the tug starting to be tipped at about 350ft agl and by immediately releasing was able to recover just above the top of the trees. The glider pilot saw that the tug had descended out of sight below the nose and had tried to recover using the elevator. After being released, the glider pilot was faced with a very limited choice of fields.
- 2012** Tug upset broke the aerotow weak link at the tug end. The glider pilot was trying to turn on the master switch at about 600 ft ato; the tug pilot allowed the glider to pull the tug tail up to about a 40° nose-down attitude with full back stick before reaching for the release.
- 2015** Tug upset. Early in the aerotow the glider pilot realised that the canopy was unlocked. While dealing with the canopy he was not concentrating on the tug and when the pilot looked up and realised that the tug was now out of sight below the nose he pulled the release. The tug pilot reports the aircraft tail being lifted and the tug being in a steep dive despite aft stick. The tug pilot pulled the release and the dive bottomed out below the height of some nearby pylons.

Out of range

- 2002** The pilot winch launched to 1,800ft through a gap in the broken cloud cover. Not wanting to come back through the same gap and meet another glider, he circled at first then descended through cloud to emerge 700ft above the ground. He chose a field, but landed crosswind and ran into the side hedge at about 5mph, breaking the canopy.
- 2004** After two previous flights the pilot took a third launch, not realising that the wind had picked up. Looking for lift he allowed the glider to drift downwind. Realising that he might not reach the airfield, he decided to land in a ploughed field. On the approach he saw it had deep furrows and, despite landing along them, they damaged the glider.
- 2005** After a winch launch to 950ft, the basic instructor turned downwind towards a good cloud with several gliders circling under it. At 750ft he turned back to the airfield, but hit sink and decided to land in a field. He was too close in so changed fields and hit a 5ft wire fence, which rotated the glider and resulted in a nose-down, sideways landing.