

BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
118	Grob 109	minor	08/09/24, 10:20	none/none	2,830
Uncommanded canopy jettison just after taking off. The P2 reports that the jettison handle was closed before take-off. The report mentions three gentle bounces during the take-off run before the canopy came off a few feet above ground, it also suggests adding a jettison handle check to the pre-flight checks.					
121	DG-800	minor	30/07/24, 14:00	none	334
Wingtip caught in longer grass during self-launch, groundlooping the glider. The airfield's landlord was responsible for grass cutting and had started cutting when no flying was taking place. The visiting pilot had self-launched the previous day using the hard runway. On this day the pilot started his run from the grass adjacent to the same runway but after passing a cross runway the wingtip caught in longer grass and the glider groundlooped through 270°. The tail wheel yoke was bent, the wingtip wheel separated and there was further surface damage to the wingtip and flaperon.					
122	PA 25	minor	13/09/24, 15:10	none	870
Tug landed long due to congestion on the landing area, ultimately passing through a low wire fence. One of the propeller blades was left with a small nick.					
123	DG-800	minor	01/09/24, 13:05	none	1177
Self-launch take-off groundloop. The 10G15kt wind was nearly 90° across from the hard runway and the glider ran onto the adjacent grass during the take-off run. The ballasted wings flexed on the rough ground, eventually catching in the grass and groundlooping the glider. The tailwheel fork was bent and the wingtip wheel torn off with damage to the adjacent wing structure. The CFI reports viewing a video after the event which showed that the glider was not fully lined up at the start of the ground run and that the tailwheel was raised before the glider left the runway.					
125	Libelle	minor	29/09/24, 12:55	none	70
Canopy broken during a field landing.					
2025					
2	Grob 103	destroyed	03/10/24, 13:50	none/minor	890
Field landing crash. After about 50 minutes of wave soaring within 10km of the club the P1 flew an expedited return to the airfield using the airbrakes. Later analysis of the trace suggests that the airbrakes were closed at 1,100ft aal about 1km upwind of the airfield. The P1 reports that even after closing the airbrakes the glider continued to descend rapidly enough that he felt that returning to the airfield, even landing downwind, was unachievable. The P1 chose to fly crosswind to some closer landable fields but even these were out of reach. The glider impacted in an area of cleared forest that still contained tree stumps. The P2 had some bruising to his back. Both wings of the glider were badly damaged, the fuselage broken off in front of the fin as well as damage around the cockpit. The P1 later realised that closing the airbrakes earlier would have allowed more time to assess conditions. The RE's report concurs but he also points out that the P1 would have stood a better chance of escaping the strong sink by flying downwind rather than crosswind.					
5	ASG 29	minor	15/10/24, 11:55	none	not reported
Runway overshoot. After a two-hour wave flight the pilot set up an approach landing to the west. The wind at height was about 20kt from the SW but the report notes that on the ground at the time the wind had backed and was just east of due south. The pilot, wary of a possible strong headwind component, kept the baseleg close but as the glider had not lost height on the downwind leg the glider remained high. The pilot used some airbrake during the base leg but soon after turning final realised that he was still too high. The pilot opened the arbrakes fully and then put in a sideslip. After coming out of the sideslip the glider was flying too fast and the pilot realised that he would be touching down about three-quarters of the way down the runway. Witnesses report that the glider was still moving at about 45kt when it went off the end of the runway before crossing the glider parking area, passing through and damaging a fence and coming to a stop some 150m into the overshoot field. The glider had only minor cosmetic damage and a small chip to a wing. The pilot's analysis notes his failure to assess the surface wind and subsequent inappropriate circuit planning for the actual conditions. He also adds the failure to control airspeed during the sideslip as a factor and suggests that he could have immediately set landing flap when realising he was too high on approach.					
6	Std Cirrus	minor	22/10/14, 14:00	none	460
Wheel-up landing. The visiting pilot was positioning to join the circuit and about about to do the pre-landing checks when some lift was felt. The pilot made a brief effort to gain height before starting the downwind leg. Concentrating on the circuit at an unfamiliar airfield and making the required radio calls distracted the pilot who then forgot the pre-landing checks. The wheel-up landing on the hard runway damaged the winch hook and left minor scuffing to the nearby underside.					
8	DG-100	minor	22/10/24, 15:50	none	66
Canopy came off during winch launch. The pilot continued the launch before landing safely. The pilot reports opening the canopy in the queue to be told of a 10-minute delay before closing the canopy and moving the locking pins. The report notes that the spring loaded pins have to be turned to fully lock them in place but the pilot failed to do this, allowing the pins to retract during the bumpy groundrun. The weak link at the rear hinged canopy allowed the canopy to separate and the locking pins were found in the engaged but not locked position.					

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT					PILOT
Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	Injury	P1 hours
Incidents					
117	K-8	minor	04/08/24, 13:00	none	16
Pilot accidentally kicked the canopy while exiting the glider, leaving large cracks in the transparency.					
119	SZD Puchacz	none	01/09/24, 12:50	none/none	1,027
Canopy came open during spin recovery. The pilots were able to catch the canopy and lock it closed. The P1 confirmed that the canopy was fully closed and secure during the pre-flight checks and that neither pilot handled the canopy latch during the spin recovery.					
120	K-13	none	25/08/24, 12:05	none/none	453
Introductory flight field landing. The visitor had bought a 5,000ft aal introductory flight which, given the airspace immediately above and into wind of the club required an aerotow to somewhere downwind and north of the airfield. The wind on the airfield was reported as 15kts from SW at 15G20kts. The glider P1 agreed a release position some 8km from the airfield with the tug pilot, confident that they would be able to return. After a few introductory exercises the glider was down to 3,000ft aal, below the airspace ceiling above the airfield, when the pilot decided to return. After turning towards the club the P1 realised that the glider had drifted further east than he had realised and that the return glide was now directly into a wind that was stronger at height than at ground level. At 2,000ft aal the pilot started picking fields while still gliding to the club. At 1,000ft aal the P1 assessed that reaching the airfield might be possible but that a field landing in a nearby large stubble field was achievable and the safest option. The CFI reports that it would have been better to release the glider from the tow vehicle after other times of year a successful field landing might be harder to achieve.					
124	K-13/Janus	minor/none	28/09/24, 17:20	—	—
Ground collision. The Janus was towed to the hangar and parked some 20m from the K-13. The two pilots and tow driver went to help re-packing the hangar, leaving the tow vehicle still attached. After moving a few gliders another member went to the tow vehicle, intending to put it away but didn't realise that it was still attached to the glider. The Janus was towed over the wing of the K-13, leaving a large hole in the top surface and another in the leading edge. The CFI suggests that it would have been better to release the glider from the tow vehicle after stopping if leaving both unattended, and also suggested checking that any parked tow vehicle was unattached before moving off.					
126	Discus	minor	28/09/24, 16:40	none	55
Wheel-up landing on to soft grass. The pilot had been distracted by another glider in the circuit and forgot to do any pre-landing checks. An instructor and other helpers lifted the tail to allow the P1 to lower the wheel. In doing so an internal frame become unbonded from the fuselage skin due to excessive flexing. There may also be damage along the fuselage join.					
127	Perkoz	—	19/08/24, 12:40	minor	—
Ground handling incident. The trial flight passenger was briefed on what to do when helping to tow the glider off the landing area and asked to walk by the cockpit. After a short while the tow was paused to make way for another glider landing, after which the tow driver and P1 were ready to resume but the passenger was still watching the landing glider. The resumption of the tow knocked the passenger over and he fell on his elbow, causing some slight bruising. Two days later the club received an email informing them that the passenger had visited hospital and been diagnosed with a fractured collarbone. The safety officer reports that the club subsequently implemented a policy of not using trial flight passengers to assist in towing gliders.					
128	Discus	—	12/06/24, 12:30	—	6,970
Canopy latching mechanism not fully engaged. The pilot noticed that, although secure, the canopy emitted a loud whistling noise in flight so after landing inspected the canopy latching mechanism. When working properly, closing the locking handle moves the rearward locking rod until it passes through a guide block and engages in the rear locking pin; the guide block then acts as a stop so that further movement of the locking handle moves the front locking rod until the two parts of the front rod engage in their respective locking pins. The pilot discovered that the rear guide block had degraded and no longer acted as a stop. The rear locking rod moved further than designed and the front rod not enough, leaving the front rod locking parts short of locking into the lock pins. This would not be visible when sitting in the cockpit before flight.					
129	K-21	minor	08/09/24, 09:30	—	—
Vehicle reversed into the glider tail dolly, damaging the rudder beyond repair. The club reminded members that gliders must be hand pulled up to the tow vehicle to hook up, vehicles should not reverse up to the tow hitch.					
2025					
1	K-21	none	03/10/24, 11:30	none/none	167
The glider wing hit a large bird, thought to be a buzzard, during the downwind leg. There was no visible damage to the wing but the P1 performed a no airbrake approach out of an abundance of caution. An inspection found no damage and the glider returned to service.					

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BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT					PILOT
Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	Injury	P1 hours
3	EuroFOX	minor	04/10/24, 14:00	none	—
Trim cable broke in flight. The tug pilot reports experiencing extreme elevator flutter almost immediately after taking off, notifying the glider pilot over the radio. The glider pilot had already realised the problem and released before landing safely ahead. After the tug landed and was inspected it was discovered that the lower cable attached to the elevator trim tab actuating horn had failed where it loops through the clevis attachment. The engineers felt that the sharp edges of the clevis contributed to the fraying of the cable, damage that could be hard to see unless the cables were closely inspected during the DI.					
4	Duo Discus	substantial	17/10/24, 15:00	—/—	--
Ground damage. After the flight the glider was left near the trailer park with the tail dolly still attached, waiting to be pushed into position. One of the ground crew stood by the glider, waiting for the others to return to help. The crew member walked away to speak with another pilot when a gust of wind started the glider moving, aided by a slope. The ground crew managed to reach the cockpit while another pilot grabbed a wingtip but they could not prevent the outboard aileron trailing edge hitting a trailer, damaging the aileron as well as the actuating tab attached to the inboard aileron.					
7	Discus	none	23/10/24, —	none	429
Airbrakes came open during aerotow ground run. The pilot reports being hurried into taking the launch due to the airfield being busy. The club intend to remind members that “airbrakes and canopy closed and locked” should be affirmed by the pilot before the helper attaches the rope.					
9	DG-500	none	02/11/24, 15:00	none/none	—
Undercarriage retracted during landing. The pilot performed the pre-landing checks, physically attempting to move the undercarriage lever backwards to ensure that it was in the locked position. Again, on base leg, the pilot checked that the wheel was down. The wheel collapsed soon after touching down without damaging the glider. The CFI believes that the lever must not have been in the fully locked position.					
10	Junior	none	12/11/24, 14:25	none	2
Winch launch continued after stop signal. While the winch was taking up slack the pilot thought that the wrong cable was being pulled so called stop, pulled the release and then, seeing the cable stop moving, opened the canopy. The wingtip helper repeated the stop command and raised an arm to give the stop signal. The launch controller did not hear the stop command due to the winch in progress warning sounds, then interpreted the raised hand as the all out signal so passed the all out on to the winch. The glider pilot was holding the canopy open with the left hand so used the right hand to pull the release. The launch controller then gave the stop signal but the glider was pulled some 30m before the cable released, eventually coming to a stop some 100m from the launchpoint. The report points out that pilots should hold the release open after a stop until they are sure that the cable is no longer attached. The wingtip helper should also repeat the stop command at least twice to ensure that the signaller has heard it.					
11	K-8	—	01/11/24, 11:40	—	344
Orographic cloud disorientated pilot. The pilot was ridge soaring above the cloud which obscured his view of the ridge, although he could see ground downwind of the ridge. After a few beats, the glider started to drift downwind of the ridge and the pilot began to lose situational awareness. He turned and flew in a generally downwind direction, trying to avoid the scattered remnants of the orographic cloud. The ground sloped gently downwards so the ground clearance varied between 130ft to 230ft, although the recorded ground speed suggested that the airspeed was barely enough to avoid stalling the wing. The report points out that flying downwind at low level can give the illusion of high speed. After a few minutes the pilot turned crosswind towards a landable field, barely missed some power lines before landing downhill in a cut field, managing to avoid some large bales. The report notes the pilot's lack of currency, recently averaging around 10 hours a year and with just eight hours over 11 flights in the previous 12 months. The club requires pilots lacking currency to receive a daily briefing from the duty instructor before flying but the pilot does not recall obtaining a briefing on the day.					
12	DG-1000	minor	26/11/24, 10:45	none/none	700
The undercarriage was accidentally raised during the DI. The person involved intended to open the airbrakes but reached for the wrong handle. The concrete apron damaged the underside of the fuselage.					

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.