

BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
4	Vega	substantial	09/10/25, 11:50	minor/-	1,113
Head hit canopy during aerotow. At about 900ft ato the combination flew through severe wave rotor. The glider dropped rapidly and despite the straps being tight the pilot's head hit the canopy, punching a hole through it. The pilot released and landed safely but was left with some soreness in his shoulders caused by the straps. The experienced tug pilot later described the turbulence as "exceptional".					
5	Puchacz	minor	18/10/25, 14:45	none/none	393
Damage to tailplane and rudder. After a landing described as "firm", the club CFI and a BGA inspector examined the glider and, finding nothing damaged, cleared the glider for flight. On the subsequent flight an unusual noise was heard and the P2 commented that the controls felt different. Initially the P1 felt no difference and handed control back but when the P2 persisted, took control again and agreed, flying the glider to a smooth landing. After landing, it was noticed that the tape over the gap in front of the fin between the two halves of the horizontal stabiliser had split, there was also a crack in the leading edge of the starboard stabiliser inboard of the root rib. The fin top rib that holds the upper rudder hinge fixture was also broken, about a quarter of the circumference surrounding the rudder hinge fixture was missing, leaving the top of the rudder unsecured. An inspection report from a BGA regional technical officer suggests that the damage was cumulative rather than the result of a single firm landing. The crack in the stabiliser, the split in the tape and the rudder leaning to one side were obvious after the final landing and would have been noticed by any heavy landing inspection. His report notes impact marks in the fin top rib just in front of the rudder hinge point, suggesting that the rudder had previously been slammed hard over, whether on the ground or in flight, possibly fracturing the wooden rib which then eventually failed. Item 17 of <i>technical news sheet 2-2025</i> also refers to potential oil contamination weakening the wood. The damage to the horizontal stabiliser was assessed to be the result of excessive flexing, the cause remains to be discovered.					
7	Duo Discus	minor	05/10/25, 12:45	none/none	187
Damage to parked car. The P2 was to fly the full climb and release, and the pre-flight briefing mentioned the crosswind and the need to bank slightly into wind to prevent the glider drifting downwind during the launch. After handing over control at about 300ft ato the P1 had to prompt the P2 to lower the wing and the P2 was reminded to keep the wing down for the rest of the launch. At the top of the launch the weak link broke and the strop back released from the glider. As the strop fell it drifted downwind and hit the side of a car parked outside the airfield perimeter, leaving a dent in a door panel. The estimated repair cost was approx £2,000. The club has revised its procedures and stated clearly defined safe cable drop zones and the crosswind limits that apply to them.					
9	EuroFOX	substantial	02/11/25, 13:45	none/-	900
Propeller strike. After five normal two-seat glider tows the tug started to tow a K-21 but the initial acceleration was slow. This could be attributed to the soft surface and an uphill start but when the acceleration remained sluggish the glider P1 aborted the tow. The tug took off, flew an abbreviated circuit and landed but, at slow speed, the tug yawed into wind and tipped on to the nose. The propeller was broken and the engine gearbox damaged, with further damage to be assessed by the manufacturer. When the aircraft was initially inspected in situ the parking brake lever was in the off position and both main wheels rotated freely unless the brakes were applied. However, the pilot reported leaving the parking brake lever "not fully off" before the flight. If the lever was too close to the fully on position even a slight application of the toe brakes would pressurise the brake system and maintain that pressure until the lever was moved towards the off position. The club safety officer assesses that the brake system was partially pressurised before the take-off, leading to the slow acceleration, and that perhaps accidental application of the toe brakes during the flight may have further increased the brake pressure, leading to the aircraft tipping on to the nose at slow speed.					
12	Puchacz	substantial	30/11/25, 15:10	minor/-	489
Hard landing. Due to the low sun this was to be the last flight of the day and the pilot positioned for a hangar landing. Turning on to final approach the low sun blinded the pilot and after crossing the airfield boundary he lost sight of the ground completely. The pilot attempted to roundout but didn't take into account the upslope and landed heavily. A witness reports seeing a late and insufficient roundout before the glider impacted nose wheel first, bouncing and settling on to the ground some 10m further. The pilot had a cut lip and later reported some bruising from the straps. The glider had a 4" crack in the top of the fuselage starting at the access hatch, the PTT button also fell off.					
13	Grob Astir	minor	03/12/25, 11:00	none/-	449
Wheel up landing after a short winch launched flight on a calm winter's day. The pilot reports that they would not usually raise the wheel for such a short flight so forgot to lower the wheel. The only damage was a broken undercarriage door.					
16	K-21	substantial	27/12/25, 13:50	none/-	486
Rear canopy came open during aerotow launch ground run. An initial investigation suggests that only the left side of the rear canopy was fully secured before the launch. During the ground run, the rear canopy opened, detaching the perspex and breaking the canopy frame welds.					
19	Grob 109	minor	03/01/26, 14:00	none/none	759
TMG departed runway after landing. The pilots flew to a paved power airfield to practise touch and goes. After the final landing, as the aircraft slowed, it was hit by gust which yawed the aircraft off the runway. The TMG then rolled through some undergrowth bordering the side of the runway. One propeller blade was broken. The airfield is known to experience turbulence and wind shear in certain wind directions and the local CFI and instructors brief visiting pilots about it.					

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
20	EuroFOX	destroyed	27/12/25, 11:10	serious/—	not reported
Tug crashed soon after take-off. The tug and K-13 combination initially had a slow acceleration but ultimately took off normally. At an estimated 50ft at the tug rolled to a steep bank angle away from the 90° crosswind. The glider P1 immediately released and landed ahead on the airfield. Witnesses report that at some point the tug seemed to pull up and then drop a wing as if stalled before impacting the ground. The pilot broke a leg and had some minor cuts to his head. The aircraft was substantially damaged in the impact but in the event the emergency services cut the aircraft to free the pilot before he was airlifted to hospital. The AAIB attended the scene and later removed the aircraft, including the FLARM, and may interview the pilot when available. As of writing, the the accident does not appear in the AAIB's list of current field investigations.					
21	K-13	destroyed	04/01/26, 14:00	minor/—	0
First solo undershoot. The pilot flew three check flights and was then cleared for solo flight. The wind was almost calm and the visibility 10km. After a normal launch the pilot joined the circuit but felt that he was a little high at the high key area so widened the circuit. He still judged that he was high during the diagonal leg. Approaching a ridge at the end of the diagonal leg the pilot felt some lift so turned away from the airfield along the ridge before turning back. Witnesses report the glider flying a 360° turn before turning on to the base leg. When established on final approach the pilot realised that he was now low and aimed for a gap between two trees. The gap was not wide enough and the glider hit both trees, detaching both wings and crashing nearly 30m short of the runway. The pilot was able to get out of the cockpit before help arrived. He had a bloody lip but was able to walk back to the clubhouse where he was assessed by paramedics, taken to hospital and found to have a cracked vertebra. Both the check flight instructor and another witness report the airbrakes being opened as the glider turned on to final approach and remaining open until the impact with the trees.					
Incidents					
6	K-21	minor	18/10/25, 14:45	—/—	—
Ground towing incident. The glider was being towed back to the hangar behind a buggy with two members accompanying the glider. There is a concrete ramp that slopes down towards the hangar entrance so the normal club practice was to stop with glider on level ground, disconnect the tow rope and move the buggy before manhandling the glider into the hangar. On this occasion the glider was towed on to the ramp and started to roll down the slope. The person next to the front fuselage had walked a few metres ahead of the glider so when the buggy stopped they were unable to prevent the glider hitting the back of the buggy. The glider was left with a hole to the underside of the nose where it hit the tow bar, as well as surface marks on the top of the nose. The club has fitted longer ropes to each of its buggies and will brief the club's standard practices at daily briefings, as well as when towing back to the hangar.					
8	Fournier RF 5	substantial	25/10/25, 11:55	—/—	—
Runaway TMG. The TMG had recently had the spark plugs and ignition harness replaced so the pilot intended to do some ground run engine tests and a test flight, weather permitting. After two successful static engine runs the weather improved so the pilot prepared for a test flight. At this point the pilot had experienced difficulty with the starter motor so asked another pilot to pull the propeller through a few times. Both the helper and the (still in the cockpit) pilot confirmed that the magneto switches were off and the helper pulled the engine through a few times. The pilot then started the engine and began to taxi towards the runway. When the pilot turned the radio on there was a lot of interference, the engine ran rough and then stopped in a position where the starter would not work. The pilot switched off the mags again and left the cockpit to turn the engine over. This time the engine started at a high power setting; the pilot got on to the wing in an attempt to open the canopy but was blown off before he could do so, not helped by the closed DV panel. The pilot was able to hold on to one wing about halfway down the span, holding the TMG in a series of turns that the pilot could adjust by varying his restraint. Other members tried to grab hold of the other wing but were unable to do so. After about five minutes the pilot began to tire so manoeuvred the TMG towards a boundary fence before letting go. The aircraft struck the post and barbed wire fence and came to a stop. The propeller was shattered on impact and there was further unspecified damage to the left wing that the report suggests may render the aircraft beyond economic repair. When stopping the engine afterwards the pilot confirmed that the magneto switches were in the off position. The report also points out that the standard procedures for hand starting an aircraft engine include applying the brakes and setting the throttle to low rpm.					
10	K-21	none	01/11/25, 15:00	none/none	—
Aerotow rope released from both aircraft. The tug pilot reports experiencing turbulence in the 15G25kt wind on the previous three launches, especially just after the upwind end of the runway. On this take-off, the turbulence after passing the end of the runway was even more severe. The tug pilot reports the aircraft banking to 60° or more at about 250-300ft ato. After levelling the wings the tug pilot looked in the mirror and, seeing the underside of the glider, reached for and pulled the release. Just before pulling, the pilot felt the glider release. The glider P1 reports seeing the tug being tipped into a steep bank and dropping below the glider so the P1 pulled the glider release and took control. Both aircraft landed safely on the airfield. The rope was found just beyond the airfield boundary on unused land.					

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BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
11	–	none	09/11/25, 15:30	none/none	–
Falling winch cable struck a member's caravan, breaking the rear window. The club has reviewed winch positioning, accepting a lower launch height from a safer position if necessary, and set crosswind limits. The CFI also received unconfirmed reports that the P1 had been advised by another pilot of a change in the wind direction, and the consequent need to lay off the climb, when in fact there was no change in wind direction. Winch pilots were reminded to abort the launch if the glider strays too far to one side.					
14	Grob Astir	none	03/12/25, –	none/–	3,123
Wheel retracted during landing ground run. After touching down, for some reason the pilot thought that they had not lowered the wheel so switched hands on the stick, reached for the undercarriage lever and unlocked it. Unable to lock it down again, the wheel retracted.					
15	K-21	none	14/12/25, 12:10	none/none	2,880
Aerotow rope break at about 300ft ato. The P1 took control, landed safely on the airfield and was surprised to see the rings were still attached to the nose hook. The rope had failed at the loop around the rings. The tug pilot had inspected the rope before the first flight as well as before this, the third flight, but a splice very close to the rings may have hindered the inspection. The club uses polypropylene rope that is known to be prone to UV damage but feels that as the ropes are stored out of direct sunlight this was unlikely to be a factor. The club has experimented with various protection methods for the glider end of the rope but found that they tend to wear rapidly and further complicate inspecting the rope. The club has experienced very few rope breaks as usually whenever a rope started to fray at the glider end it would be re-spliced on to the rings. In the future the club intends to replace ropes more frequently.					
17	Grob Astir	none	08/11/25, 13:25	none/–	1,800+
Wheel-up landing. The pilot usually flew his own glider but during the winter flew a club single-seater to maintain currency. After releasing from a low aerotow the pilot retracted the undercarriage and soon after joined the circuit. The pilot would normally lower the wheel before joining the circuit so when performing “downwind” checks looked at the undercarriage lever and believed it to be in the wheel down position. The pilot reports that the label next to the lever was not clear although the club safety officer points out that the cockpit placards were the standard control placards.					
18	Duo Discus	substantial	03/01/26, 12:00	–/–	–
Ground tow incident. While towing the glider behind a car close to the edge of the airfield the owner was aware of gliders landing in the opposite direction. While being careful to avoid the landing gliders, the owner strayed too far to the edge of the airfield and a wingtip caught on a bush, yawing the glider. The wingtip split and the yaw led to the rudder catching on the tow bar, cracking the lower part of the rudder.					
22	SF25C	substantial	27/12/25, 15:30	–/–	–
Canopy damage. The TMG's chocks had been placed on the cowling prior to the aircraft being moved into the hangar. Once in position in the hangar a member opened the canopy, inadvertently lowering it on to a chock and leaving a significant crack in the canopy.					
23	Janus B	none	14/01/26, 15:00	–/–	3,000+
Possible flutter during spin recovery. The aim of the flight was some wave soaring coaching followed by spin recovery training for the pre-solo P2. At 6,000ft the P1 demonstrated two spin entries and recoveries. By now down to less than 5,500ft, the P1 entered another spin and handed control for the P2 to recover. After stopping the spin and centralising the rudder the P2 recovered from the dive with an initial pull reported by the P1 to be around 3G, well within the glider's maximum limit (+5.3G). Early in the pull the P1 felt significant shaking in the wings and the sound of control rods “clacking” within the wing. The effect only lasted for a second or two before the pull eased. The report points out that at no time did the glider exceed VNE or the maximum G, the flaps were at the 0 setting and the ASI remained within the yellow arc. The glider belonged to a visiting club and the P1 and CFI of the visiting club agreed that the glider should be inspected before flying again.					

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.