

BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
29	ASW 19	substantial	30/03/24, 13:00	minor	42
Field landing crash. The pilot set off cross-country at 3,000ft at on a mostly blue with a few cumulus clouds day, occasionally getting uncomfortably low before finding lift. Eventually, arriving under a cloud at 2,000ft at the pilot was unable to climb. At about 1,500ft the pilot had selected a field, estimated to be 350m long and identified some potential obstructions at the approach end before starting the circuit at 1,000ft at. The CFI reports that the circuit was cramped, the pilot noticed that they were still high on base leg so flew a 360° turn before turning on to final approach. Due to the length of the field, the pilot intended to land short. Whilst concentrating on approach path and airspeed the pilot failed to notice a bare, leafless tree sticking out of the boundary hedge. The pilot report suggests that it may have blended in with the bare earth of the uncropped field. The starboard wing hit the tree, yawing the glider through 180° before it fell to the ground nose first. The glider was fitted with energy absorbing cushions and the only injury to the pilot was a slight sprain to some neck muscles. The wing was damaged by the impact with the tree, the canopy flew off and was destroyed while the fuselage was cracked just aft of the wing root. The CFI points out that, at that time of year, any crops would have been too low to damage the glider so prioritising a long but cropped field over a bare field may have been wiser. Even so, the CFI suggests that a 350m field should be long enough to place the approach reference point well into the field as the state of the ground would have likely have stopped the glider quickly after touching down. The pilot held a Silver badge but was still relatively inexperienced at cross-country flying and the CFI suggests that the pilot would have benefitted from a pre-flight briefing from an experienced instructor.					
31	ASW 19	minor	30/03/24, 12:55	none	43
Wheel-up landing. Unable to find lift after a winch launch, the pilot flew a circuit but forgot to perform any pre-landing checks. Although landing gently on to the grass surface a hairline crack was found under the seat pan.					
33	DG-505	substantial	16/04/24, 16:05	none/none	2950
Wheel-up landing. The P1 had been re-inforcing the need to do pre-landing checks on previous training flights with this P2 so, after an hour's soaring, watched as the P2 performed the pre-landing checks, verifying that the undercarriage lever was in the locked position. The subsequent wheel-up landing on a hard runway caused substantial damage to the underside of the fuselage. The CFI suggests that the most likely explanation is that the undercarriage was not retracted after the launch and then retracted during the pre-landing checks.					
34	Arcus M	substantial	16/04/24, 13:00	none/none	1,072
Landing accident. After a six-hour flight in wave the glider returned to the airfield where the wind was reported to be 20G30kt. The pilot rolled wings level at 500ft aal at an airspeed of 85kt. A half airbrake approach was flown but on short final the glider experienced strong sink. After closing the airbrakes the pilot was able to round out to a reasonable landing but the lack of airspeed over the rudder meant that the pilot was unable to prevent a groundloop breaking the tail boom. The pilot reports that several other gliders also groundlooped during landing and that, in retrospect, landing somewhere else would have been better.					
39	Astir	minor	04/05/24, 11:30	none	14
Heavy landing. This was the pilot's first flight in the Astir, having previously flown solo flights in a K-21. After a briefing on the glider he took a 2,000ft aerotow and, after a short flight, started the circuit. The pilot felt that he was a little low starting the circuit and was aware of another glider ahead of him but slightly higher. The pilot adjusted the circuit and changed his selected landing area before turning final. He reports that he may have allowed the speed to increase on final approach and that his roundout was late. The glider landed heavily and bounced and the subsequent touchdowns were uncontrolled. The impact slightly bent the tailplane mounting. The safety officer points out that that a 2,000ft aerotow and 11-minute flight was not really sufficient to get used to the handling characteristics of a new glider, particularly the pitch sensitivity of a first single-seat glider. The safety officer recommends that first flights should be to 3,000ft and also that pilots should be given training in how to cope with ballooned and bounced landings.					
40	Duo Discus	minor	01/05/24, 16:00	none/none	2709
Wheel-up landing. The two pilots took a couple of flights to test the engine. On the second, the engine was still not performing as expected so they decided to land with the engine out. As the P1 started the circuit the P2 prompted for the wheel to be lowered so the P1 instinctively moved the lever. Although the subsequent wheel-up landing was fully held off and not particularly heavy, both pilots heard a loud crack on touching down. An inspection later revealed some delamination to the support structure under the rear seat. The P1 has added a visual check of the undercarriage lever position to the landing checklist.					
41	DG-200	minor	05/05/24, 14:30	none	234
Wheel-up landing. Flying a competition flight from another club the pilot had just enough height to reach their home club. The pilot joined on a base leg to the runway in use but, seeing another glider on approach to the same runway, decided to switch to an alternative runway, announcing the decision over the radio. The wheel-up landing ground away the aluminium cheek plates either side of the recessed release. The pilot attributes the failure to do pre-landing checks and lower the wheel to the marginal glide to the airfield and the need to minimise drag. The low arrival height and the late change of runway were also distractions.					

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
Ref	Type				
42	Dimona H36	substantial	09/05/24, 13:55	none/none	435
Undercarriage failure. The P1 was flying the TMG for 90-day currency purposes with an experienced pilot as a safety pilot P2. The first landing was normal, the second landing was described as firm so the P1 chose to go around. The P2 offered to demonstrate so flew the next landing, a normal safe landing. After 300m of taxiing over smooth ground the P1 noticed the starboard wing starting to go down so shut down the engine. The starboard undercarriage leg had delaminated, collapsing the undercarriage.					
43	Grob Astir	minor	05/05/24, 11:45	none	440
Wheel-up landing. The pilot performed the usual pre-landing checks, lowering the undercarriage but then tried to gain height in a thermal in the circuit, ultimately without success. On final approach the pilot assumed that the wheel was still up so moved the lever, raising the undercarriage. The landing on a grass surface damaged an undercarriage door. The report cites tiredness, the distraction of thermalling at low level and a rushed circuit as factors.					
Incidents					
27	Discus	none	21/01/24, –	none	195
Wheel-up landing. The pilot did not usually retract the wheel unless soaring but this had, on occasion, led to him forgetting to retract the wheel on cross-country flights. The weather conditions on the day enabled winch launch heights in excess of 2,000ft ato so the pilot decided that it was a good day to get into the habit of retracting the wheel soon after releasing from the cable. He intended to lower the wheel at 1,500ft agl but descended through this height while trying to centre a weak thermal and subsequently omitted the pre-landing checks. The glider landed on grass and was undamaged.					
28	K-13	none	23/03/24, 17:40	none/none	256
Near miss with falling cable. The glider launched on the first of the last pair of cables of the day, intending to hangar land at the upwind end of the airfield. The wind was strong but straight down the runway, therefore little expectation of drift during the winch launch. The glider remained close to the airfield and was descending through 700ft agl when the second glider began its take-off run. At this point the glider encountered heavy sink so the pilot turned onto base leg about halfway down the airfield before turning on to final approach at 500ft agl. The winch driver reports that the second cable was carried slightly to the south during the launch, the same side of the airfield that the glider was on approach to land. The driver was able to manipulate the cable to keep it clear of the landing glider. After touching down the P1 noticed the cable falling to the right of the glider so closed the airbrakes to extend the ground run and increase separation. The cable came to rest a few metres from the glider wingtip.					
30	Grob Astir	–	03/02/24, –	–	–
Flight outside of placarded weight limits. The glider had recently been re-weighed and a new placard with the new weight limits fixed to the glider, although the old placard was left inside the DI book. A pilot noticed from the club WhatsApp feed that the maximum weight had been reduced but that the new stated weight did not match the placard from the DI book. Bringing this up with a DCFI led to a search of the fuselage that eventually found the new placard in a hard to see location with the maximum weight reduced by 10kg. The club surmise that the glider had been repaired but not re-weighed before it was loaned to them. The glider had been flown five times outside the new limit after the re-weighing. The club have removed the old placard and pointed out to the inspector that the new placard placement was not helpful.					
32	Arcus M/ASG 29	none	30/03/24, 16:00	none/none	3,000
Near miss during take-off run. The undulating airfield has areas that are out of sight from the launchpoint. The club has protocols to mitigate the lack of visibility and on the take-off run on the day in question it would usually be the winch driver who would spot obstructions, such as landed gliders, and warn the launchpoint. On this day the ground was too soft to use the cable retrieve truck so the winch was not in use. The ASG 29 came back from a cross-country at the same time as a few other pilots so chose to land on a cross runway, landing long to leave room behind for another glider. This put the landed ASG 29 in the path of the take-off run of the runway in use. The ASG 29 pilot was well aware of this so, after turning off the instruments, made a call on a handheld radio and started to pull the glider away from the take-off run. Due to the undulation, the call was not heard at the launchpoint although both tug pilots assumed that it had been heard and did not pass the information on to the launchpoint or the Arcus. The Arcus pilot started the take-off run, extended due to the soft ground, and lifted off just before reaching the dip. The pilot was very surprised to be suddenly faced with a landed glider in front of them but was able to just clear the ASG 29. The report points out that the Arcus take-off run was slightly off the usual direction, somewhat negating the ASG 29 pilot's efforts at moving the glider. The club have issued advice to all pilots to radio before landing in a non-standard area, advising airborne aircraft to inform the launchpoint of potentially obstructing gliders and also to leave the FLARM turned on after landing to possibly alert other aircraft taking off or landing.					

Continued on p58

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
35	K-13	none	20/04/24, 13:10	none/none	3,387
Tug upset. Before take-off the P1 was informed of a slightly loose nut in an airbrake fitting in the rear cockpit and advised to check its security before taking off. At around 3-400ft at the P1, the PIC, again checked the security of the nut for a few seconds and, after looking back, saw that the tug was not visible. He then asked the P2 where the tug was at which point the P2 pointed down and to one side. On spotting the tug the P1 realised that they were too far out of position and pulled the release. The tug pilot reports the tail of the tug being pulled up until at about a 45° nose-down attitude before also releasing. The CFI was surprised that such an experienced instructor could be distracted by such an insignificant problem at an important phase of the aerotow. The report also points out that the P1 should have released at once rather than asking the P2 where the tug was.					
36	K-21	none	22/03/24, 15:30	none	22
Winch launch failure. The pilot had a check flight with an instructor, who informed him that the duty winch driver tended to give powerful launches and that the P2 would need to keep the stick back in the climb to keep the speed under control. After the check flight the pilot was authorised for solo flight. The pilot reports the next launch as the strongest acceleration he had experienced. After rotating to the full climb attitude the speed continued to increase so the the pilot continued to pull the stick back. The pilot was aware that the glider was at a steep attitude but also that the speed was still high. When the weak link broke the pilot moved the stick forward but states that the glider seemed to take a while to respond even as dirt floated up from the cockpit floor. Once a nose-down attitude had been attained, the pilot waited for an acceptable speed before raising the nose and, eventually, landing safely on a cross runway. Witnesses report seeing the glider rotate to an ever steeper attitude before the launch failed at about 550ft ato. Released from the pull of the cable, the nose continued to pitch up, possibly even beyond the vertical according to some reports, before a rapid nose-drop stall to a steep nose down attitude, reported by the pilot to be 70° nose down, possibly steeper, before pulling out at just under 300ft agl. The report mentions the importance of flying no steeper than 45° nose up during the full climb and that pilots should know how to find the maximum winch speed. The DCFI's debrief of the pilot revealed that he did not know what the placarded maximum winch speed was for a K-21, or how to find it, and that he had received very little training, if any, on the too fast signal to the winch. The report also mentions the need for consistent teaching of the appropriate recovery attitude and the club intends to instigate a protocol to advise the winch driver whether a two-seat glider is being flown solo or dual.					
37	SF 25C/PA 18	none	27/04/24, 13:40	-/-	-/-
Near miss. The TMG was flying upwind at 1,000ft aal on the dead side of the airfield, intending to fly crosswind to join the circuit. The aerotow combination took off and later started a climbing left turn. The tug pilot made a late sighting of the TMG at about 70-80° relative bearing and slightly higher so started to turn away to the right. The tug then heard a radio call that he thought signalled that the glider had released so tightened the turn and started to descend although the glider was still on tow. The combination passed under the TMG about 100ft below on a perpendicular flight path, with the TMG pilot not spotting the combination until just before flying over them. At some point the glider released and all aircraft landed safely. The tug reported an intermittent radio fault giving poor reception. All three aircraft were fitted with working, up-to-date FLARMS; no warnings were reported by any of the three pilots.					
38	ASW 15	none	26/04/24, 11:30	none	533
Wheel-up landing by visiting pilot in private glider on grass surface. The club have briefed the pilot of the importance of pre-landing checks and to confirm gear down in the circuit radio call.					

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.

SAVE THE DATE:

The BGA Sporting Conference is on Saturday 22 February,
at Holywell Park Conference Centre,
Loughborough University



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