



Issue 19 –June 2023

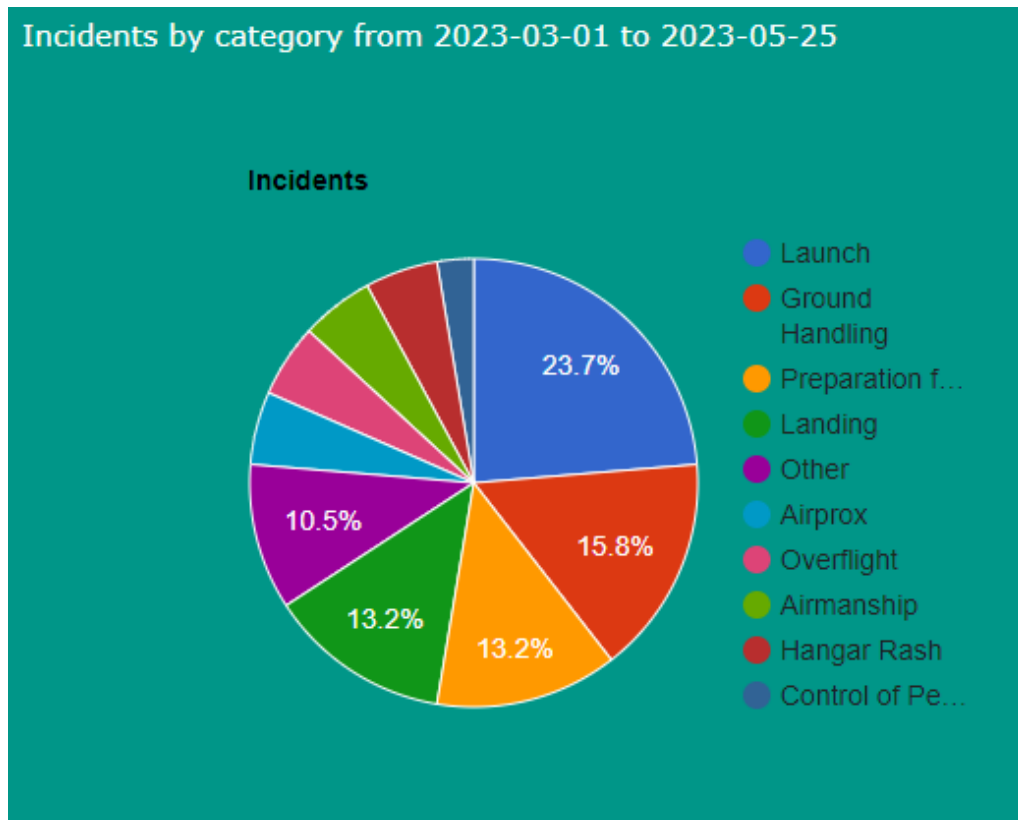
Foreword

Most of you will know me already, having been safety officer before. If you are new to the club, my role is to ensure we all follow safe procedures and keep safe. Safety is everyone's responsibility. If you see something unsafe, talk to an instructor or myself and record it in our *Flysafe* system at flysafe.scottishglidingcentre.com.

Accidents and incidents since last newsletter

Since the beginning of March we had 38 incidents, of which 9 were launch incidents, 6 ground handling, and 5 each of preparation for flight and landing.

3 incidents showed correct recovery actions by a pilot, but it's good that these instances are also recorded now; they help us to identify trends.



Basic analysis and conclusions:

Unfortunately, 3 of the incidents (2 ground handling and one heavy landing) resulted in damage to gliders. Two of these were club gliders.

In addition to these damaging ground handling incidents, several incidents related to driving the mule (see more below)

We still had 3 heavy landing reports, so please re-read the recent topic of the month about correct round out and fly with an instructor if you are not sure.

There were also a number of incidents related to aerotows, e.g. not releasing when a wing touches the ground (**release before it touches the ground!**) and getting out of position on tow. Hence the *Topic of the Month* is all about aerotow.

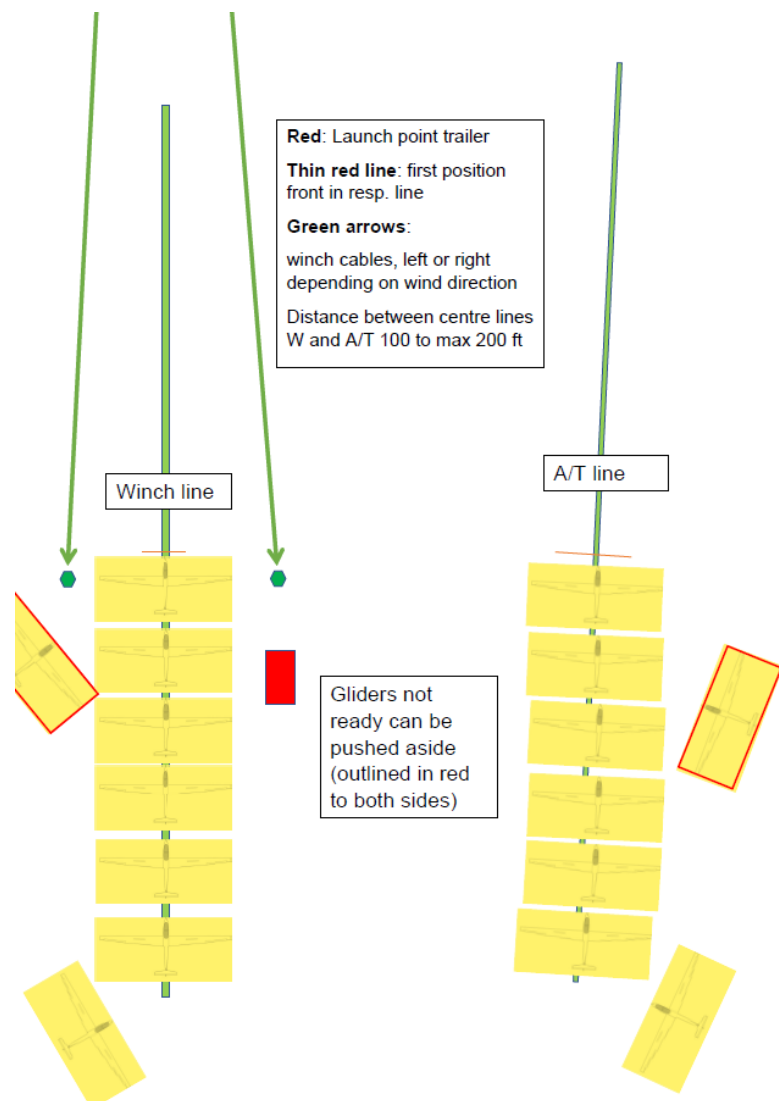
Launch Point

There have been some discussions about the launch point layout recently. Perhaps the reasoning and background to the layout weren't made clear to everybody at the time.

Last year we had a safety audit by the BGA, which, amongst other things, highlighted supervision as a red flag for SGC. Since we don't have enough instructors to guarantee supervision at separate winch and aerotow launch points, the only option was to combine the two, so that the supervising instructor can be responsible for both.

To further enhance the supervision, a single winch line was adopted to oversee launches from the caravan (see the layout picture). The single winch line also leaves more space for landing, which is especially important during easterly wind operations. The winch line always must be on the downwind side, so that the downwind cable is used first. Crossing of Dyneema cable creates friction heat damage resulting in cable breaks and we already had a number of cable breaks due to this.

Some of you commented that the set-up slows the launch rate. However, delays with launching are usually due to the pilot at the front not being ready when winch and cable are ready. This happens regardless of single or dual line launching. With dual line launching, if the downwind glider is not ready and the crosswind is not too strong, we often launched the upwind glider first. Never do this with Dyneema.



To avoid delays at the launch point when both cables are out, always have the 1st glider in position far enough in front of the caravan so that the 2nd glider also has its wingtip in front. Make sure that pilots in both gliders are ready to launch. As soon as they are launched, the next 2 gliders are moved forward while the cables are retrieved.

Ground Handling and towing aircraft

As mentioned already, we had several ground handling incidents, some of which ended up with major damage to aircraft. Whenever you handle or tow a glider on the ground keep your eyes open and your brain in gear. Don't use your phone while driving a mule or handling an aircraft.

When you tow a glider, situational awareness is important. Keep the glider and the wing walker in sight, either in the mirror (adjust if necessary) or by looking round frequently. When you stop, change to neutral and switch off the engine. As the wing walker, release the cable when stopped for any length of time (not when you stop to wait for an aircraft landing, but when there is some delay at the launch point). When releasing the cable, make sure it is clear of the glider, make it visible to the driver of the mule. As the mule driver, when the rope is disconnected, make sure it's really disconnected from the glider before winding it in. Never drive with the tow rope trailing behind, always stow it.

And finally

The Safety Topic of the Month for June has just been sent out and we had a glider going high on an aerotow with the tuggie ditching the glider before there was a tug upset. All landed safely, but unfortunately the rope was not recovered (at the time of writing this).

Please read the Safety Topic of the Month and make sure you stay correctly positioned behind the tug. On another note relating to aerotows, the latest S&G magazine contains an article by the safety team on preparing for launch failures during an aerotow. Do you know where you could land in case of a low-level launch failure? If you don't have a subscription to the S&G magazine, there are some at the club for purchase and I will leave some copies of the article at the clubroom next time I am at Portmoak.

We have had information from the BGA about the dangers of rigging errors in the past and it is included in Managing Flying Risk at <https://members.gliding.co.uk/bga-safety-management/safe-rigging/>. This has now also been taken up by the European Gliding Union who have issued a special safety newsletter on the subject of "safe rigging". Please take care when you rig your glider. If you are not sure, get help from someone who knows the glider type and how to rig it and re-read the BGA guidance.

Safe and enjoyable flying,

Wolf