

BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	P1 hours
Ref	Type			Injury	
98	LAK 17	substantial	16/08/25, 14:45	serious/—	not reported
Airbrakes came open during winch launch and the glider descended rapidly after releasing. A radioed warning was not heard by the pilot and, despite starting the FES, the glider continued to descend until hitting a line of trees some 400 metres from the winch. The glider remained stuck in the tree at about 10ft agl. The pilot suffered cracked vertebrae, cracked ribs and a broken finger. The glider had substantial damage to the wings, fuselage and tail.					
99	Slingsby Vega	substantial	17/08/25, 18:50	none/—	45
Hard wheel-up landing. After releasing from an aerotow retrieve the pilot positioned for an approach on to the grass landing area. Just after cracking the airbrakes open the pilot realised that he had neglected to lower the wheel. The pilot took his hand off the control stick to unlock the undercarriage lever but realised that it was too late and returned his hand to the control column. The pilot's report notes that the trim was slightly nose heavy and that although holding off as much as he could the glider landed heavily and bounced. The canopy came open during the first impact before falling off at the second impact when the glider came to a halt. Witnesses report that the airbrakes appeared to be open throughout the impact sequence. One witness reports seeing the undercarriage come down at about 15ft agl. The pilot was able to get himself out of the glider unaided but was taken to hospital as a precaution. Although the canopy detached it seemed to be intact, the tail boom was partially separated and there were cracks around the main wheel wheelbox, the undercarriage doors detached and the tail wheel broke off. The pilot reports that while in the ambulance at the club a policeman asked if he had his licence with him, which he hadn't. Fortunately, the legal requirement to carry a Part-SFCL licence (and other documents) had yet to become law. The pilot also passed a breathalyser test.					
100	Grob 102	minor	18/08/25, 15:55	none/—	180
Field landing damage. The pilot landed in a stubble field that already contained two gliders. The field surface consisted of a high density of dirty chalk or brown coloured stones of various sizes, camouflaged by the stubble. After landing the pilot found a couple of chips in the gelcoat and a 15cm long crack in the underside of the tail boom, just forward of the tail wheel. On further inspection, significant delamination was identified within the tail boom structure that was not related to this landing.					
102	Perkoz	minor	27/06/25, 14:50	none/none	141
Hard landing. The P2's flying from take-off to final approach was reported to be at an acceptable standard by the P1, although the P1 was guarding the controls closely on short final as the P1 felt that the P2 had a history of inconsistent roundouts and landings. The P1 reports that the start of the roundout was slightly late and he was about to take control when the P2 abruptly pulled back on the stick. The P1 was able to prevent further rearward movement but had to lower the nose to a more appropriate attitude. The P1 had over-corrected and was unable to prevent a hard landing. The glider was inspected by an inspector and initially no damage was found. A subsequent, more detailed, inspection found that the main wheel mud guard had been damaged.					
106	PIK 20	minor	05/09/25, 13:35	none/—	228
Downwind field landing. After getting low while flying cross-country the pilot turned towards a nearby gliding airfield. They then realised that it was out of range so turned back and returned to some landable fields. The pilot reports that they may have lost track of the wind direction at this point (reported as 250°/8 knots.) They then turned on to final approach and opened the airbrakes without having checked the wind direction. Realising they were high the pilot sideslipped, then saw that they would hit the far hedge so closed the airbrakes, carefully retracted the flaps and flew over a small gorge before landing uphill into the adjacent field. The surface of the field contained rocks, some of which punctured the underside of the wing near the wingtip, as well as leaving other scratches in the wing surface.					
110	Ventus 2	minor	21/09/25, 16:05	none/—	7,666
Landing groundloop. The pilot flew an approach with a 10G15 knot wind about 60° left of the landing direction with a tree line just upwind of the landing area. The glider touched down normally but the left wingtip immediately fell to the ground. The pilot would usually raise the flaps after touching down to aid aileron control but was now too busy applying right aileron and rudder to reach for the flap control. The glider started a turn to the left that gradually tightened until it had groundlooped through about 130°. The wingtip rubbing block was torn off and there was possible damage to the elevator drive shaft that requires further investigation. After the event, the pilot re-read the approach section of the flight manual and reports that the main section recommends the same technique that the pilot flies. However, a subsequent note describes a reduced flap approach to aid in aileron control which the pilot believes would have been preferable.					
112	Grob 102	substantial	21/09/25, 12:25	minor/—	74
Wingtip hit wire on approach. The pilot positioned the approach to fly between gliders parked waiting for a launch and the clubhouse side of the airfield but on short final the wingtip caught on a cable stay supporting a powerline pole on the airfield boundary. The glider rotated around the wingtip before the nose dropped and the glider impacted the ground nose first at an almost vertical attitude before falling back on to the main and tail wheel. The impact shattered the canopy, left multiple cracks in the fuselage and wings as well as destroying the main undercarriage mounting frame. The pilot was left with a stiff shoulder. When the club first moved to the site a powerline ran along the airfield boundary, a line that was subsequently buried. The pole supported by the stay struck by the glider was in the corner of the airfield and was where the buried portion of the powerline started. As a relatively short airfield, the launchpoint was always positioned close to the airfield boundary with gliders landing in front of the queue. The report points out that this can put pilots under self-induced pressure to land as short as possible to minimise delaying launching. It also points out that there was plenty of room to land on the other side of the launchpoint. Positioning to approach in the narrow space between parked gliders and the clubhouse likely added to the pilot's workload and resulted in him failing to notice the powerline pole stay.					

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
113	Grob 103	minor	24/09/25, 11:35	minor/none	192
Canopy opened during winch launch. The canopy came open at about 500ft ato, the P1 tried to close it again but the frame had twisted and would not latch closed. Most of the transparency had separated so the P1 suffered a small cut to the hand in the process. The P1 released the cable and was able to fly an abbreviated circuit to a safe landing. The report is unsure whether the canopy came open because it was not locked closed in the first place or because it became unlocked during the take-off.					
114	LS4	minor	31/08/25, 12:50	none/—	94
Wheel-up landing. The pilot released from an aerotow at 1,500ft ato in lift but the thermals were broken and the ridge lift inconsistent. At about 600ft ato and in a good position to start a circuit the pilot chose to land. While flying the downwind leg the pilot assessed where would be the best place to land to avoid delaying the dozen or more gliders and tug waiting to launch. He omitted to do any pre-landing checks and subsequently landed wheel-up on the grass surface, slightly damaging one of the gear doors. The pilot reports that the strong wind, short downwind leg and gusts on approach contributed to neglecting to put the wheel down. Prior to joining the syndicate, all his gliding had been on fixed undercarriage gliders so WULF checks were theoretical. Even after joining the syndicate some 10 months previously, the pilot had developed a habit of putting the wheel down when thinking about landing rather than consciously doing pre-landing checks. The pilot's 900 hours on complex powered aircraft with retractable undercarriage included gear position indicator lights and low RPM activated warning horns, neither of which were available on the LS4. Discussions with other pilots had suggested that it was almost impossible to actuate the airbrake lever with the undercarriage lever in the gear up position. During a debrief with an instructor the pilot thinks he might have held the airbrake lever at the top of the handle. The instructor's report mentions the lack of pre-landing checks during the hurried return to an unplanned early landing as a factor. It also points out that selecting a landing area in case of a quick return should be a part of pre-flight eventuality planning.					
2026					
1	LS8	minor	04/10/25, 17:00	none/—	1,198
Hard landing. After a mixture of ridge and wave soaring the pilot set up an approach in the 25G35 knot wind. An approach speed of 85-90 knots was flown and the approach was initially stable. After crossing the airfield boundary and at about 150ft aal the glider flew into air sinking over the downslope just short of the runway. Despite closing the airbrakes and lowering the nose, the combination of the clutching hand effect and wind gradient prevented the glider from regaining sufficient airspeed to properly hold off. The glider pancaked on to the grass short of the runway. The undercarriage collapsed into the wheel bay and the glider then slid forward on to the runway, causing further damage to the underside of the fuselage.					
Incidents					
101	Grob 102	none	18/08/25, 14:00	—/—	—
Incorrect total energy tube placement. The TE tube was inserted into one of the two tubes protruding from the fin leading edge during the daily inspection. As part of the DI another member blew into what they thought was the pitot tube and the member conducting the DI reported afterwards that the ASI had appeared to move. In fact, the TE tube had been inserted into the pitot tube and the glider was subsequently winch launched and flown to a safe landing with an inoperative ASI by a very early solo pilot. The glider had not been flown for a few years prior to the club's purchase and the subsequent ARC was the first in a while. The club has fitted clear labels marking the TE receptacle and the pitot tube.					
103	Ventus 2	minor	24/08/25, 11:15	—/—	—
Tow out damage. While being towed behind a car using standard tow out gear the glider's main wheel fell into an unseen pothole. The lower half of the tail dolly separated at the hinges just as the driver braked the car and the glider's residual momentum carried it into the rear of the car. The rudder trailing edge was damaged enough to render the glider unserviceable until repaired.					
104	—	—	24/08/25, 10:10	minor/—	—
Launch vehicle tyre explosion. When it was noticed that a launch vehicle tyre was under-inflated, a portable powered inflation kit was attached and the maximum pressure was set with reference to the 121 psi marked on a label above the tyre. At some point during inflation the tyre exploded, spraying out tyre debris and fragments of the wheel hub. A 15-year-old son of a member was hit on the knee and taken to hospital as a precaution, ultimately diagnosed with minor abrasions and soft tissue damage. The tyre had recently had an inner tube installed in attempt to cure a slow leak, this tube was rated to only 36 psi but the out-dated pressure label had been left attached to the vehicle. The report suggests that the inner tube ruptured first and damaged the outer tyre and wheel hub. The club has since fitted correct labels to this vehicle and all other club vehicles.					
105	T-21	none	05/09/25, 13:30	none/—	4,000+
After recovering from a winch launch failure, the pilot felt a control restriction and noticed that the left seat control was disconnected. Fortunately, the pilot was sitting in the starboard seat so was able to move the port control column out of the way before landing safely. The bolt connecting the port control column to the control column inter-connect had sheared.					

Continued on p62

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT		Damage	Date, time	PILOT	
Ref	Type			Injury	P1 hours
107	EuroFOX	minor	04/09/25, 13:15	none	550
After several tows the tug was found to have a completely flat tyre. The tyre was inflated and the tug then began to taxi back to the hangar to have the tyre replaced. Unfortunately the pilot forgot to disengage the wheel brake before moving and, after a long taxi, the brakes seized and tipped the tug on to its nose. The propeller was damaged beyond repair, the gearbox was nearing end-of-life so the club intends to replace it rather than strip it for inspection. The build up of pressure during the taxi also damaged the brake lines.					
108	PW6	none	06/09/25, 14:25	none/none	563
Heavy landing following late takeover of control. The pre-solo P2 was flying an approach in a 90° crosswind when, at about 150ft agl, the glider flew into turbulence and the airspeed began to reduce. The P1 prompted for an increase in approach speed and although the P2 lowered the nose the combination of full airbrake and wind gradient prevented any increase in airspeed. The P1 took control, closed the airbrakes and was able to roundout but not prevent a hard landing. The glider was later inspected, no damage was found and the glider was returned to service.					
109	Duo Discus	minor	06/09/25, 13:00	-/-	-
Damaged wingtip. After a lunch break, the members left the clubhouse to drive the launchpoint and tow vehicles back to the launchpoint. One tractor was slightly hemmed in and had to reverse to clear another vehicle. The roll bar caught on the wingtip of the Duo parked in its usual parking area outside the clubhouse; the driver then moved forward but caused further damage. The wingtip of the Duo was snapped off the wing. The club is reviewing its tractor driving training.					
111	K-21	none	14/09/25, 14:35	none/none	155
Broken winch cable landed across public road. The crosswind increased throughout the day (as forecast) so this flight was to be the penultimate flight of the day. The P1 flew the launch to ensure the appropriate lay off but at about 800ft at the lightweight polyethylene cable broke and the glider end of the cable back-released from the winch hook. The winch driver was able to recover the unbroken length of cable back to the winch but the 4-500ft of broken cable drifted as it descended. The parachute and strop landed first, lodging in a tree on the downwind boundary of the field while the cable descended more slowly, drifted across a road and ended in a car park on the other side of the road. Fortunately, the portion of cable over the road remained at treetop height so posed no danger to traffic. The duty instructor had briefed all pilots on the need to compensate for the crosswind when winching but had not foreseen the possibility of a cable break. The club intends to update its rules to state the maximum acceptable crosswind component when winching, to communicate to winch drivers that they can and should stop winching if conditions are unsuitable, as well as remind instructors to consider the potential cable drift in the event of a cable break.					
2026					
2	-	-	05/10/25, am	-/-	-
Winch incident. The steel cable broke at the ferrule fastening the end loop at the glider end of the cable. The winch driver wound in the cable but was distracted watching the falling parachute. The end of the cable arrived at the winch still at high speed and whipped into the safety glass of the driver's cab. This caused some spalling of the inside surface, the pieces being directed towards the winch driver who, fortunately, was spared potentially serious injury as he was wearing glasses. The club is now looking into fitting Lexan or Perspex sheets inside the cab glass to protect against similar incidents.					
3	JS1	minor	06/10/25, 13:30	none/-	2,700
The glider was extracted from the hangar using tow gear behind a car. The driver needed to make a 70° left turn to align with the peri track but first got out to check the clearance between the starboard wingtip and the hangar. Assessing the clearance to be close but adequate, the driver eased forward, watching the wingtip in the left mirror as he turned. At some point the driver straightened up to increase clearance, losing sight of the wingtip in the process and soon after the outer wing section struck the hangar and was torn off the wing. The retaining pin and bush were broken out of the main wing rib. The report notes that the tug had recently landed, taxied along the peri track and was now waiting behind the car. The driver may have felt some pressure to move so as not to delay the tug.					

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.