BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours

59 K-8 substantial 10/05/25, 17:25 none 38

Field landing crash. The pilot intended to fly from one club to another, a straight line distance of about 100km into a wind reported as 13G20kn at the surface. The pilot trusted their flight computer and their own judgement that the glider was above final glide at 1,100ft and 1.5km downwind of the destination airfield. The pilot then reports encountering sink and having to make a rushed approach into one of the few uncropped fields. The field had more of a slope than the pilot had initially realised, the glider touched down far into the field and the pilot started a groundloop in an attempt to avoid the boundary fence. The rudder hit the wire, leaving a gouge and crumpling the trailing edge. The CFI's analysis of the trace suggest that the field was selected at late stage, there appeared to be no conventional circuit but the pilot did turn away from the field just prior to the approach, suggesting a recognition of an impending overshoot. The pilot reports being cleared to fly but the duty instructor remembers no mention of a cross-country flight and thinks it unlikely that he would have approved given the conditions, the glider type and the relatively late start. The pilot will receive additional field landing training and the club has reminded inexperienced pilots to make their intentions known before flying cross-country to allow for a suitable briefing.

60 LAK 17 minor 10/05/25, 15:05 none 7,950

Wheel-up field landing. After climbing to the base of airspace under a cloud the pilot was initially comfortably above final glide. As the glide continued through now blue conditions the safety margin eroded until the pilot chose to divert to a known hotspot with a landable field nearby. Ultimately the pilot started to extract the engine but the found some lift so stopped the process with the engine parially up. Feeling confident after a few turns the pilot then put the engine away. The lift was broken, however, and the pilot gradually lost height so flew a circuit into the chosen field, touching down with the wheel up and slightly damaging the underside. The pilot believes that they probably lowered the wheel before erecting the engine and then accidentally raised the wheel during the pre-landing checks.

63 LS8 substantial 25/05/25, 18:00 serious not reported

AAIB investigation.

68 Ventus 3 substantial 18/05/25, 13:30 none/– 572

Winch launch crash. The wind was from right to left across the winch launch take-off direction. The pilot reports the crosswind switching the glider from right wing down to left wing down while doing up his straps. The pilot was therefore well aware of the conditions and self-briefed to pull the release if unable to keep the wings level. When the left wing dropped early in the ground run the pilot immediately pulled the release but the knob slipped through his hand. The pilot was able to release at the second attempt but by now the glider had too much energy and was too far into the accident sequence to prevent an accident. The glider continued rotating around the dropped wingtip before coming to rest after turning through some 260°, fortunately the right way up, perhaps because of the pilot's successful second attempt to release. The launchpoint had also stopped the launch, followed by the winch. The pilot was uninjured. The glider fuselage broke, the tailplane cracked with the elevator partly detached and the base of the rudder creased. The canopy was also shattered and the right winglet broken. The release knob in the glider is a round ball on the left side of the instrument panel. The cable behind the ball is wrapped in some stiff plastic tube which prevents the release from drooping but also has the effect of separating the user's fingers, weakening their grip. The owners intend to explore with an inspector the possibilty of altering the release to guarantee a first-time release when required.

71 SF 25 minor 09/06/25, 17:40 none 426

Propeller strike. The pilot intended to fly several circuits to maintain currency. After a normal landing, the pilot released the spoiler lever to switch hands on the controls to apply power for a go around. As the spoilers closed the pilot felt the nose begin to pitch up and instinctively moved the control column forward. Before the pilot had a chance to open the throttle the propeller hit the ground, breaking the propeller and shock loading the engine.

72 SF 25 minor 13/06/25, 11:10 none/none 2,700

Engine and propellor struck ground. No further information.

73 Perkoz none 18/06/25, 12:00 minor 400

Landing PIO. After a seemingly normal approach, the glider was seen to touch down gently before bouncing back into the air. The pilot then moved the control column forward and the second touchdown was firm with the glider again bouncing back into the air. The third and final touchdown was nose first and hard. The pilot complained of back pain and was driven home by his wife before later visiting hospital to get a check-up. The glider was superficially undamaged but at the time of the report the club are awaiting a more detailed inspection.

75 K-13 none 21/06/25, 15:30 serious/none 209

Heavy landing after an introductory flight. The wind had increased during the flight. During the diagonal leg of the circuit the P1 recognised that they were too far downwind and turned in early, increasing speed and leaving the airbrakes closed. The short final approach to the runway was uphill and the pilot, aware of the "clutching hand effect", tried to maintain an adequate airspeed but had to slow to clear the boundary fence. While rounding out the glider ran out of energy and landed heavily on the upslope. The P2 was uninjured but the P1 fractured a vertebra. The glider appears undamaged but needs to be inspected before flying again.

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
77	ASG 29	minor	02/06/25, 17:00	none/–	900

Wheel-up landing. After returning from a cross country flight the pilot flew a normal circuit thinking that they had lowered the wheel. After touching down the wheel doors dug into the ground and the glider came to an abrupt halt. The pilot is unsure whether the wheel was not lowered or whether the wheel was extended but not locked down. Despite landing on grass there was some damage to the underside of the forward fuselage.

Incidents

58	Ventus	none	04/05/25, 13:20	none	556

Airbrakes came open during aerotow launch. The pilot was distracted before this first flight of the year, including having to do a FLARM firmware update. The brakes opened just as the pilot changed the flap setting soon after taking off leading to the glider briefly touching down again. The pilot was able to close the brakes and the launch continued.

61	SF 25	none	20/05/25, 10:35	none/none	12

The engine started running rough three minutes after take-off. The report attributes this to the number four spark plug being blown from the cylinder head of the Limbach engine.

62	K-23	none	20/05/25, 16:30	minor/–	–

Retrieve buggy drove off with the glider still attached. The glider had reached the usual staging area, a wing had been lowered and the member by the nose turned to ask the next pilot whether they wanted to winch or aerotow. The buggy driver assumed that the rope had been released and drove off, knocking the member over the wing and to the ground behind the trailing edge. The member was cut and bruised and had some swelling but expects a full recovery. The glider was undamaged. The buggy driver reports making the assumption that the rope had been released without visually checking.

64	Ventus	none	20/05/25, 15:30	none	850

Wheel-up landing. The visiting pilot had only nine previous flights in the glider and the combined distractions of a new glider and unfamiliar airfield led to the pilot omitting any pre-landing checks.

65	DG-100	none	27/04/25, 16:00	none	236

Airbrakes opened during winch launch. Before the flight the pilot ran through the usual cockpit checks and believed that the airbrakes had been locked. The pilot reports that the airbrakes on the glider need a reasonable force to lock closed. The brakes came open as the glider became established in the full climb, resulting in a lower than expected launch height. An instructor radioed the pilot that the airbrakes were open but the pilot did not hear until after the cable back released, following which the pilot closed the brakes. The club have challenge and response checks before the launch helper attaches the winch cable but as the pilot believed that the brakes were locked this didn't prevent the incident.

66	K-13	none	17/05/25, –	none/none	306

Winch launch picked up tug tow rope. The tug had landed on the grass runway beside the hard runway being used for taking off before backtracking and taxiing to the usual parking area. Due to the layout of the launchpoint this necessitated crossing the winch cables laid out between the parallel hard and grass runways, leaving the tow rope over the cables. The P1 in the tug was doing some refresher training and after shutting down the engine began to debrief the P2. The report notes that club members are usually very prompt at removing the tug tow rope rope but on this occasion the rope was missed. As the K-13 launched, the winch cable lifted the tow rope into the air, eventually pulling the rope out of the release without disturbing the tug. The club intend to remind tug pilots that it is the their responsibilty to exit the tug to pull the rope clear of the winch cables.

67	K-18	none	18/05/25, 15:00	none	55

Field landing by non-XC rated pilot. The pilot was briefed to attempt a silver height qualifying flight. The glider was equipped with a navigation device and a vario with a moving map. The duty instructor briefed the pilot to soar locally under the lower local airspace and when high enough move to under the higher airspace just west of a town some 5km away, staying within easy gliding range of the airfield. The instructor also briefed on local landmarks and how to use the vario moving map to mark the airspace boundary. During the flight the best climb was found over a town some 13km west of the airfield but the max achieved height was only 3,200ft ato. The pilot turned to the south east, aiming for a range of hills that he expected to provide better lift. No lift was found and by the time the pilot turned back towards the airfield at little more than 1,500ft ato the glider was some 10km downwind of the club with a 10kt headwind. The pilot had received a long brief on field landings but not yet any flight training. Nevertheless, the pilot was able to select a suitable field and made a safe landing. The report notes that the wind direction was not conducive to finding lift over the range of hills. The club intend to use the incident as a discussion point at the next instructor's meeting.

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BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
69	DG-500	none	30/05/25, –	none/none	339

Trial flight field landing. The P1 had come from a flatland club and underestimated the complexities of flying from a hill site. The P1 received further training and all instructors have been reminded of the importance of staying within gliding range during trial flights.

70	–	–	31/05/25, 11:30	–/–	–

Broken cable struck bystanders some 10-12ft behind the cable retrieve winch safety cage. The glider released under tension at about 900ft ato to avoid climbing into cloud. A “release” call was made by the main winch, albeit slightly late. The retrieve winch driver started to disengage the clutch, although not enough to engage the retrieve drum. Once the cable had fallen to the ground the clutch was completely disengaged and the drum started the retrieve. Enough slack had built up that when the retrieve cable came taut it snapped and whipped back over the corner of the safety barrier. Of the two bystanders who were struck, one was hit on the chest leaving a mark but not breaking the skin, the other was hit on the leg.

74	AS 33	none	18/06/25, 11:00	none/–	3,800

Trim obstruction. After a short period in flight the pilot realised that they could not trim further back than neutral trim. Looking down, the pilot saw that the end of the parachute left leg harness strap had managed to insert itself into the slot for the trim lever, blocking the rearward half of the slot. The pilot tried to remove the strap but the folded back and stitched end was caught under the seat pan, preventing the strap’s removal. Although the pilot was not overly concerned with the trim issue, the knowledge that they would not be able to exit the glider without first removing the parachute presented a further, potentially dangerous, hazard. The pilot decided to land and was able to remove the errant strap with the aid of a screwdriver. Before take-off the parachute leg strap ends had been fastened in the bungee wraps between the pilot’s legs. Afterwards the left side bungee was found to be perished and ineffective so was replaced. The pilot thinks that the extended ground run due to nil wind, high temperature and uneven grass surface jolted the strap enough for it to fall into the trim slot.

76	–	–	09/06/25, –	–/–	–

Mower ran over aerotow rope. The tug taxied several metres in front of a glider parked at the front of the queue before turning to face the other way to keep the glider in sight, parking at the edge of the airfield in front of and to the left of the glider. The pilot remained in the tug and left the rope lying along the route it had been towed. A tractor towing a grass mower headed down the runway in the downwind direction aiming to pass well to the starboard side of the glider. As the mower ran over the tow rope the rope became tangled in the blades. The tension increased until the rope released from the tug but the stored tension caused the rope to recoil rapidly towards the tractor, narrowly missing the parked glider. The tug pilot reported not feeling any effect in the tug. The potential for damaging the tug and the glider was noted in the report. The duty instructor tested at what angle and load the rope would “forward” release from the tug and found that up to 20° offset from the tug centre line a small load would cause the rope to release; beyond 20° the rope did not release under any load.

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.