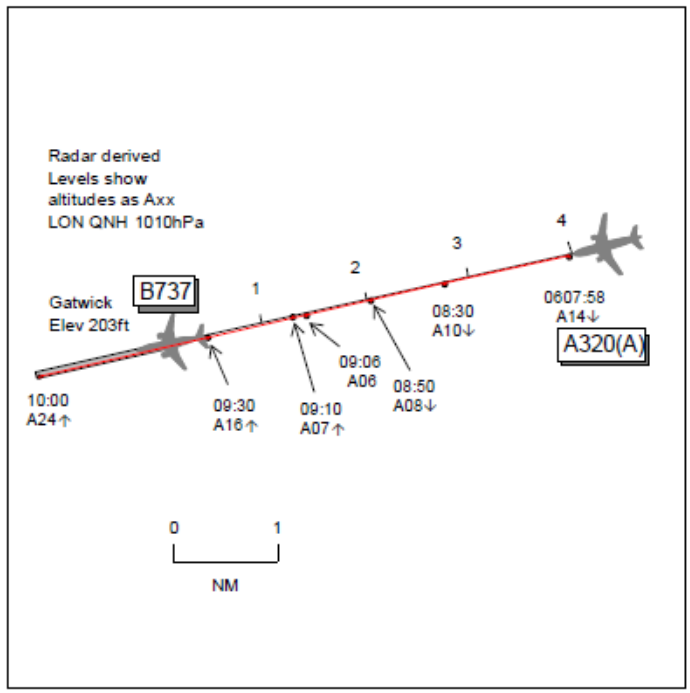
AIRPROX REPORT No 2012115

Date/Time:	4 Aug 2012 0609Z (Saturday)	
Position:	5109N 00011W (Threshold RW26L Gatwick - elev 203ft)	
Airspace:	ATZ	(*Class: D*)
	Reporting Ac	*Reporting Ac*
Type:	B737-400	A320(A)
Operator:	CAT	CAT
Alt/FL:	On ground QNH (1010hPa)	500ft↓ QNH
Weather:	VMC RAIN	NK NR
Visibility:	8km	NR
Reported Separation:	NR	NR
Recorded Separation:	>1500ft V/Nil H	



BOTH PILOTS FILED

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE B737 PILOT reports departing Gatwick, IFR and in communication with Gatwick Tower. They were cleared to, "line-up after the departing A320 on RW26L", which they read back and followed the A320 [A320(B)] onto the RW via Taxiway A. Entering the RW there was an ac on approach seen on TCAS at 1500ft and approximately 4·5nm. As A320(B) was airborne ATC cleared the ac on approach to land RW26L. Immediately the Capt advised ATC, "(B737 c/s) still on RW26L" but the approaching ac's crew confirmed, "clear to land". The Capt broadcast again, "negative, go-around, (B737 c/s) still on RW26L" before ATC gave the recently departed A320(B) flight a frequency change. The FO then broadcast, "(B737 c/s) still on RW26L" twice before ATC told the approaching ac's crew to go-around. The Capt commented that it was a busy morning, they were 1 of 5 ac at the hold with landing ac. Cloud was at 400ft with slight rain in the vicinity. They had considered clearing the RW at Taxiway B, the Capt called, "go-around" after the landing ac's crew confirmed landing clearance to mitigate the situation and prevent an accident.

THE A320 [A320(A)] PILOT reports inbound to Gatwick and receiving landing clearance at 500ft on final for RW26L. At the same time a B737 crew reported that they were still on the RW at the threshold. ATC immediately instructed them to go-around, which they did before performing another approach to RW26L. He assessed the risk as high.

THE GATWICK AIR CONTROLLER reports he had just launched an ac, an A319, on a BOGNA departure followed by an A320 [A320(B)] on a DVR departure 1min behind. A B737 was lined-up on the RW when the first departure, the A319, requested a L turn onto heading 220°, owing to Wx, which he approved level-capping the flight to 3000ft and coordinating with Radar. He asked Radar if he could keep the flight climbing to 5000ft which was approved. He then inadvertently selected the B737 strip as airborne (possibly incorrectly correlating it with the A320(B) radar return) and after looking at the Electronic Flight Progress Strip (EFPS) display and the final approach ATM he cleared the A320(A) to land. There was a blocked transmission and his immediate thought and reaction was to confirm the landing clearance. There was another blocked transmission which ended with a clipped transmission from the B737 pilot stating he was on the RW. He then realised he had inadvertently issued a landing clearance whilst the B737 was still awaiting take-off clearance. He heard a go-around transmission which he then acknowledged and instructed the A320(B) flight to

climb straight ahead to maintain 3000ft. A320(B) was subsequently turned onto 180°, the ac commencing the go-around at about 1·5nm.

ATSI reports that the Airprox was reported in the Gatwick ATZ (Class D airspace), which comprises a circle radius 2·5nm centred on the longest notified RW (08R/26L) up to 2000ft above aerodrome level (203ft), between a B737 and an A320 [A320(A)].

The B737 was operating on an IFR flight from Gatwick to Marseille and was in receipt of an Aerodrome Control Service from the Gatwick AIR controller on frequency 124·225MHz.

The A320(A) was operating an IFR flight from Geneva to Gatwick and was in receipt of an Aerodrome Control Service from the Gatwick AIR controller on frequency 124·225MHz.

CAA ATSI had access to recordings of RT from Gatwick Tower together with area radar recordings, and recordings from the Gatwick ATM and ASMGCS. ATSI also had access to written reports from both pilots and the AIR controller and a copy of a Human Factors interview carried out with the AIR controller.

The Gatwick METARs are provided for 0550 and 0620 UTC: EGKK 040550Z 19004KT 160V220 9999 SCT010 SCT018 15/14 Q1011= and EGKK 040620Z 17005KT 130V210 9999 FEW009 SCT015 15/14 Q1011=

Prior to the incident A320(A) was on final approach for RW26L at Gatwick with 3 ac due to depart ahead – an A319, another A320 (A320(B)) and the B737.

At 0606:10 the A319 flight was cleared for take-off.

At 0606:40 the B737 flight was instructed to line up after the departing A320(B).

At 0607:10 the A320(B) flight was cleared for take-off.

At 0607:20 A320(A) flight checked in on the AIR frequency and was instructed to continue approach.

At 0608:00, as A320(B) became airborne, the previously departed A319 requested a L turn for Wx avoidance onto 220°. The AIR controller instructed the A319 flight to maintain 3000ft and approved the turn onto 220°. A320(A) was approaching a 3·5nm final.

The AIR controller coordinated the turn and a climb to 5000ft for the A319 with the Radar controller. At the completion of the coordination phone call, A320(A) was 2·5nm from touchdown. The B737 was still on the RW awaiting take-off clearance.

The AIR controller was surprised at how much closer the A320(A) was to touchdown at completion of the phone call. The EFPS for the B737 was still in the RW bay of the display but the controller assumed that he had forgotten to move the strip during the phone call. The controller moved the strip into the departure bay without observing the ATM or looking out of the window.

At 0608:30 the AIR controller cleared the A320(A) flight to land.

When the A320(A) crew read back the landing clearance the transmission was blocked. According to the written report from the pilot of the B737 they immediately transmitted that they were still on the RW when the A320 flight was given landing clearance – it is likely that this is the transmission that blocked the A320(A) crew's read back.

The controller re-iterated the landing clearance to the A320(A) crew which was read back.

Immediately after this at 0608:50 the AIR controller instructed the A319 flight to climb to altitude 5000ft. The read back from the A319 crew was partially blocked by the FO of the B737 stating,

"????? ????? (B737 c/s) on runway two six left". The Capt of the B737 then broadcast (0609:00) to the A320(A) "*(A320(A) operator) go around I say again go around*." The controller stated that he heard the tail end of the FO's transmission and looked out of the window to see the B737 still on the RW.

The A320(A) crew read back the instruction to go-around and immediately afterwards, having become aware that the B737 was still on the RW, the AIR controller instructed the A320(A) flight, *"(A320(A) c/s) continue er go around straight ahead er maintain three thousand feet"*, which was correctly read back (0609:10). A320(A) flight initiated the go-around at 1·25nm from touchdown, minimum altitude 600ft QNH.

The AIR controller had formulated a plan for the 3 departures ahead of A320(A) which required precise execution. When the A319 flight requested a turn for Wx avoidance which required a rapid response the controller's execution of the plan for the 3 departures was interrupted.

After the coordination phone call the controller was surprised at how much closer A320(A) was to touchdown than prior to the phone call and his priority became giving A320(A) flight landing clearance.

Although the electronic flight progress strip for the B737 was still in the RW bay the AIR controller made the mistaken assumption that the B737 was airborne and that the strip was in the wrong place. The controller did not look out of the window or check the ATM to confirm his assumption.

The situation was resolved by the Capt of the B737 instructing A320(A) flight to go-around quickly followed by the AIR controller giving positive instructions to the A320(A) crew to go-around and climb to altitude 3000ft.

An Airprox was reported when a B737 and A320(A) came into conflict at Gatwick when A320(A) flight was given landing clearance by the AIR controller whilst the B737 flight was still on the RW awaiting take-off clearance.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from the pilots of both ac, transcripts of the relevant RT frequencies, radar video recordings, reports from the air traffic controllers involved and reports from the appropriate ATC authorities.

It seemed that the telephone call to Radar to coordinate the A319's L turn and climb had distracted the AIR controller. His 1st action after that call was to move the EFPS of the B737 from the RW bay into the departure bay, without looking at the ATM or out of the window, before clearing A320(A) flight to land. The B737 crew showed excellent SA, which led the crew to broadcast that their ac was still on the RW but this transmission was blocked by the A320(A) crew's read back of their landing clearance. AIR, on hearing the blocked read back, re-iterated the landing clearance, which was read back correctly. AIR had then cleared the A319 to climb but the crew's read back was partially blocked by the B737 FO repeating that their ac was on the RW. With the B737 lined-up the crew was concerned about the A320(A) approaching from behind unsighted, which led the B737 Capt to broadcast go-around instructions to the A320(A) flight; this was read back by the A320(A) crew. Meanwhile, AIR had become aware of the B737's position from the FO's transmission and the Capt's instruction to go-around and when the A320(A) crew called going-around AIR had re-iterated the instruction and added an altitude restriction. The radar recording shows the A320(A) commencing the go-around at 1·25nm from touchdown having reached a minimum altitude of 600ft. Although this had had the potential to become a very serious incident, the actions taken by the B737 and A320(A) crews were enough to allow the Board to conclude that any risk of collision had been removed.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The AIR controller cleared A320(A) flight to land while the B737 was on the RW awaiting take-off clearance.

Degree of Risk: C.