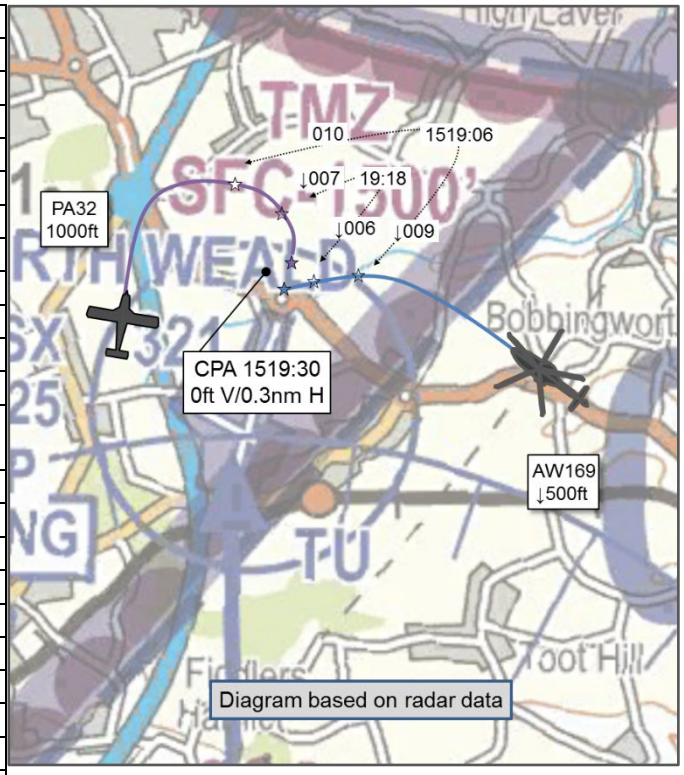
AIRPROX REPORT No 2018239

Date: 27 Aug 2018 Time: 1519Z Position: 5143N 00009E Location: North Weald

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	AW169	PA32
Operator	HEMS	Civ FW
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	AGCS	AGCS
Provider	North Weald	North Weald
Altitude/FL	500ft	500ft
Transponder	A, C, S	A, C, S
Reported		
Colours	Red, Yellow	NK
Lighting	Strobes, HISLs, Nav, Landing	NK
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	10km	NK
Altitude/FL	500ft	600ft
Altimeter	NK	NK
Heading	200°	200°
Speed	100kt	80kt
ACAS/TAS	TCAS II	Not fitted
Alert	TA	N/A
Separation		
Reported	0ft V/0.5nm H	NR
Recorded	0ft V/0.3nm H	



THE AW169 PILOT reports that after joining on a left-base from the east and being advised that there was traffic in the downwind position in a right-hand pattern, he called final for RW20. There was then a call from another pilot also calling final to land. He received a Traffic Alert and saw the other aircraft over his right shoulder. He called 'going around' and turned right to position behind the PA32.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE PA32 PILOT reports that he was on final approach to land at North Weald RW20, having made his radio calls in the circuit as normal. Suddenly a helicopter appeared above and slightly ahead, descending and also on final to land. The helicopter was making a steeper descent, down and across their flight path. He felt he had right of way, could see the helicopter, and waited to see whether there would be enough space to land after it because the helicopter often flies away from the runway straight towards its hangar. He felt he could go around at any time if necessary and so was happy with the situation. Moments later the helicopter pilot spotted them close to him and, being surprised to see them, elected to go around.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'None'.

THE NORTH WEALD A/G OPERATOR reports that the PA32 was in the visual circuit and established downwind. The AW169 pilot called and asked to make a non-standard join from the north-east to join for a straight-in approach. The PA32 pilot called downwind and shortly afterwards the AW169 pilot called finals for RW20 and was given the wind direction and speed. The AW169 looked to be going slower than the PA32 so he assumed the helicopter would give way to it, which would be normal practice. However, instead he made an abrupt right-turn and circled back onto finals. Robust words were exchanged between the pilots.

Factual Background

The weather at Stansted was recorded as follows:

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METAR EGSS 271450Z AUTO 26008KT 230V300 9999 BKN034 OVC040 18/11 Q1013=
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Analysis and Investigation

CAA ATSI

ATSI had access to reports from the AGCS Operator, the AW169 pilot and the PA32 pilot. In the absence of radar replay data from North Weald, the minimum distance stated at CPA has been derived from the radar synopsis provided by the RAC at Swanwick. ATSI did not have access to the R/T recordings.

The information provided within the radar synopsis indicates that the AW169 was slightly ahead of the PA32 with both aircraft indicating 500ft at CPA.

When the PA32 pilot called final, the AW169 was already on final and according to the AGCS Operator's report had reported as such on the R/T.

The PA32 pilot's report does not confirm whether they heard the final call from the AW169 pilot or whether they were aware that the AW169 was already on final approach when they themselves turned onto final approach.

CAP452 – Aeronautical Radio Station Operator's Guide states:

> *Air Ground Communications Service (AGCS) is a service provided to pilots at specific UK at aerodromes. However, it is not viewed by the UK as an Air Traffic Service because it does not include an alerting service as part of its content.*
>
> *AGCS radio station operators provide traffic and weather information to pilots operating on and in the vicinity of the aerodrome. Such traffic information is based primarily on reports made by other pilots. Information provided by an AGCS radio station operator may be used to assist a pilot in making a decision; however, the safe conduct of the flight remains the pilot's responsibility.*

UKAB Secretariat

The AW169 and PA32 pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard[1]. An aircraft operated on or in the vicinity of an aerodrome shall conform with or avoid the pattern of traffic formed by other aircraft in operation[2]. When two aircraft approach the runway at the same time, aircraft at the higher level should give way to aircraft at the lower level[3].

Summary

An Airprox was reported when an AW169 and a PA32 flew into proximity in the North Weald circuit at 1519hrs on Monday 27th August 2018. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, in the visual circuit at North Weald and in receipt of an AGCS.

[1] SERA.3205 Proximity.
[2] SERA.3225 Operation on and in the Vicinity of an Aerodrome.
[3] SERA.3210 (4) Landing.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, radar photographs/video recordings, reports from the Air/Ground Operator involved and reports from the appropriate ATC operating authorities.

The Board first looked at the actions of the AW169 pilot. He joined the circuit at left base and was given Traffic Information on the PA32 'downwind'. It was unclear whether the AW169 pilot had visually acquired the PA32 at this point or had proceeded on the basis that he could likely make his approach before the PA32 arrived on final. Because of the lack of R/T recordings, the Board couldn't be sure who called final first, although they noted that the A/G operator had reported that the AW169 pilot had made the first call. Irrespective, the AW169 pilot was required to arrange his join such that he integrated with the aircraft already in the circuit, and members cautioned against joining from a non-standard position without full situational awareness on the circuit traffic.

Turning to the PA32 pilot, members noted that he had called downwind and, although it appeared that he didn't get Traffic Information from the Air/Ground Operator, he had heard the AW169 pilot call for his left-base join. Although he could reasonably expect the AW169 pilot to integrate with him, GA members commented that, once he saw the AW169 turn ahead of him, it may have been a wiser course of action to go-around at an early stage, rather than follow the slower aircraft on final. By doing so, he would have taken control of the situation rather than being at the mercy of someone else's (unknown) actions, and would have ensured that the risk of downwash from the AW169 would not affect him.

With regard to ATC procedures, the Board were told that both HEMS and NPAS had recently moved their aircraft to North Weald to operate from there. Noting that the AW169 was trying to fit into a standard fixed-wing circuit pattern from a non-standard approach, and that the A/G operator had differing expectations as to the AW169 pilot's course of action compared to what transpired, the Board resolved to recommend that North Weald would benefit from promulgating defined helicopter procedures to facilitate their integration in a standard manner.

In determining the cause of the Airprox, the Board quickly agreed that the AW169 pilot had not integrated with the PA32 already in the visual circuit. However, in assessing the risk, they thought that because the PA32 pilot was visual with the AW169 as it joined ahead, although safety had been reduced, there had been no risk of collision, Category C.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The AW169 pilot did not integrate with the PA32 in the visual circuit.

Degree of Risk: C.

Recommendation: North Weald consider promulgating specific helicopter procedures.

Safety Barrier Assessment[4]

In assessing the effectiveness of the safety barriers associated with this incident, the Board concluded that the key factors had been that:

ANSP:

Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance were assessed as **partially effective** because North Weald does not have any helicopter procedures.

[4] The UK Airprox Board scheme for assessing the Availability, Functionality and Effectiveness of safety barriers can be found on the UKAB Website.

Flight Crew:

Regulations, Processes, Procedures, Instructions and Compliance were assessed as **ineffective** because the AW169 pilot did not integrate with the traffic in the visual circuit.

Tactical Planning was assessed as **partially effective** because the AW169 pilot did not sufficiently modify his join plan to account for the PA32.

Situational Awareness and Action were assessed as **partially effective** because the PA32 pilot had only generic situational awareness on the AW169 until he saw it join ahead, and the AW169 pilot did not sufficiently act on the initial information he was given about the PA32 downwind.