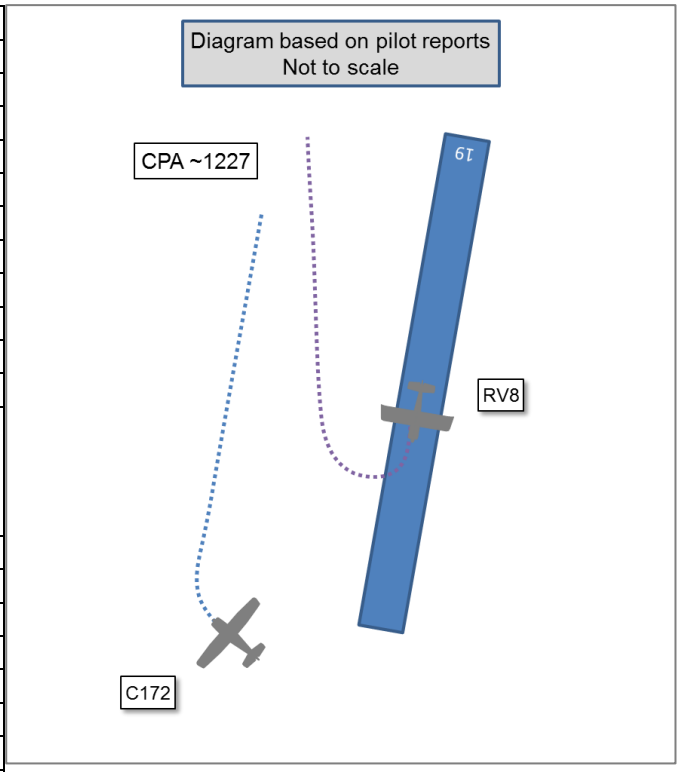
AIRPROX REPORT No 2015102

Date: 5 Jul 2015 Time: 1227Z Position: 5628N 00524W Location: 1nm W Oban airfield (Sunday)

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	RV8	C172
Operator	Civ Pte	Civ Trg
Airspace	ATZ	ATZ
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	FIS	FIS
Provider	Oban FISO	Oban FISO
Altitude/FL	NK	NK
Transponder	A/C/S	A/C
Reported		
Colours	Blue	White/maroon
Lighting	Wing-tip strobes, 2x wing mounted landing lights	Standard anti-collision, wing-mounted strobes
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	10nm
Altitude/FL	300ft	1000ft
Altimeter	NK	QNH
Heading	340°	010°
Speed	120kt	85kt
ACAS/TAS	Not fitted	Not fitted
Alert	N/A	N/A
Separation		
Reported	700ft V/200m H	700ft V/0.5nm H
Recorded	NK	



THE OBAN AERODROME FLIGHT INFORMATION SERVICE OFFICER (AFISO) reports that after obtaining start-up clearance, aerodrome information, and having passed relevant booking out details for a GA flight to Perth (located to the east of the aerodrome), the RV8 pilot was informed of a C172 in the established circuit entering the early downwind position performing touch-and-goes. On take-off, he reported that the RV8 pilot made a sharp right turn cutting in front of the C172 as it approached the right-base position. The RV8 was at approximately 300ft. The pilot informed the AFISO that he was departing direct to the north at low-level. The AFISO asked the C172 pilot if he was visual with the departing traffic, which he confirmed he was. Normal circuit height for an RV8 is 1000ft. [All circuits are to the west.]

THE VAN'S RV8 PILOT reports that he entered and back-tracked RW19 at Oban behind traffic performing a touch-and-go. He then departed with the traffic in sight at circuit height downwind. As his intention was to depart at low-level over the Loch to the north-west, he made a right turn and, in level flight, announced his intentions on the RT and the fact that he was remaining at low-level. The traffic concerned announced that he had him in sight. He passed beneath the downwind leg and the aforementioned traffic. At no stage did he consider that there was any conflict between their flight paths because they were well separated vertically. Both pilots could see each other and if his transmission was heard were both aware of each others' intentions.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'None'.

THE CESSNA 172M (C172) PILOT reports that he was aware that the pilot of the RV8 had been using Oban as a base for local flying. He was flying the C172 downwind right-hand for RW19 and was in full two-way communication with the AFISO. The RV8 pilot took off from RW19 and he was mindful of the high performance of the type and their relative positions. As he recalled, after the RV8 took-off (which he was able to observe with some difficulty due to colour/terrain camouflaging), he heard the RV8 pilot announce that he intended to depart at low-level to the north-west. He then saw the RV8 turn well below them but on a 30-40° converging course and within the confines of the reasonable circuit shape and pattern. The RV8 had higher speed in low, and seemingly level, flight (he estimated 300-400ft above the sea) and departed the circuit beneath the standard circuit downwind track. Because of the speed difference he perceived that there was minimal collision risk but, if they had been perhaps twenty seconds later on in the circuit, they would have begun a descent on base leg thereby diminishing the vertical separation further, perhaps being unaware of the lower RV8, regardless of lookout.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'Low'.

Factual Background

The Oban weather was:

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EGEO 051220Z 17005KT 120V220 9999 -SHRA FEW014 SCT028 18/10 Q1014=
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The Oban ATZ is a circle 2nm radius centred on longest notified runway 01/19, with an upper limit of 2000ft.[1]

Analysis and Investigation

CAA ATSI

ATSI Note: There is no useable radar cover in the area of Oban Airport. The following events have been analysed based on written reports and RT recording.

The C172 pilot had entered the RW19 circuit at 1215. At 1220, the pilot of the RV8 booked-out on the RT for departure to Perth and at 1222 reported ready for taxi. At 1225 the pilot of the RV8 reported ready for departure. The AFISO passed Traffic Information to the pilot of the RV8 on the C172 in the circuit and then cleared him to back-track RW19 and to report lined-up. The AFISO then asked the pilot of the C172 whether he copied the outbound (RV8) traffic, which the pilot of the C172 affirmed. At 1226 the AFISO issued a discretionary take-off clearance to the pilot of the RV8. At 1227, the pilot of the RV8 reported that he was departing to the north and remaining low-level. At 1227:33 the AFISO asked the pilot of the C172 if he was visual with the (RV8) traffic, which the pilot of the C172 affirmed. At 1228 the pilot of the C172 reported turning right base, being visual with the other (RV8) aircraft, and confirming he was well clear. The reporter stated that the RV8 made a sharp right turn cutting in front of the C172 in the circuit. The AFISO had issued Traffic Information to both pilots on each other, and both pilots' reports confirm that they were visual with each other before, during and after this manoeuvre.

UKAB Secretariat

FISOs may issue advice and shall issue information to aircraft in their area of responsibility, useful for the safe and efficient conduct of flights. FISOs are not permitted to issue instructions, except in certain circumstances when aircraft are on the manoeuvring area or when relaying a clearance from an air traffic control unit. Pilots therefore are wholly responsible for collision avoidance in conformity with the Rules of the Air. [2]

[1] UK AIP AD 2.EGEO-5.
[2] Flight Information Service Officer Manual, CAP 797.

Both pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard[3].

An aircraft operated on or in the vicinity of an aerodrome shall:

(a) observe other aerodrome traffic for the purpose of avoiding collision;

(b) conform with or avoid the pattern of traffic formed by other aircraft in operation.[4]

Summary

The Airprox occurred in Class G airspace of the Oban ATZ; both pilots were in receipt of a FIS from the AFISO. The C172 pilot was carrying out right-hand training circuits on RW19. Prior to the RV8's departure both pilots had been informed about each other. After departing, the RV8 pilot made an early right turn and reported on the frequency that he would remain low-level. He passed through the downwind leg ground track just in front but below the C172 by 700ft according to the reports of both pilots. They had each other in sight.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from both pilots, the AFISO concerned, RTF recordings and reports from the appropriate ATC and operating authorities.

The Board noted that the AFISO had provided appropriate Traffic Information to both pilots before the RV8 pilot had taken off. Although no radar recordings were available it was apparent that the RV8 pilot had turned right after departure to pass through the downwind circuit ground track close to the lateral position of the C172. However, the Board observed that as he did so he had reported that he would be remaining low-level over the Loch, below and with the C172 in sight. Some members wondered if this had been a conventional and appropriate course of action but it was considered that, although unusual, there had been no reason why the RV8 should not have carried out this action; especially since the RV8 pilot had been aware that the C172 pilot also had him in sight.

The Board noted that the C172 pilot had been concerned that if he had been further into the circuit he may have descended towards the RV8. However, this situation had not occurred, and the Board does not deal with what might have happened, instead confining themselves to assessing what had actually happened which, in this case, had been that the C172 was still at circuit height.

The Board could understand why the AFISO had decided to file an Airprox report given that he had observed the RV8 depart and turn unexpectedly towards the C172. However, they noted that the RV8 pilot had confirmed that he would remain below the C172, and that the AFISO was aware that both pilots had each other in sight. Accordingly, the cause was considered to be that the AFISO had perceived a conflict between the RV8 and the C172 that had not in fact existed, and the Board decided that, because normal safety standards had pertained, the Airprox should be categorised as risk Category E.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The AFISO perceived a conflict between the RV8 and the C172.

Degree of Risk: E.

[3] SERA.3205 Proximity.
[4] SERA.3225 Operation on and in the Vicinity of an Aerodrome.