



# AIRSPACE NEWS

## NAVIGATING BUSY AIRSPACE

by John Brady



**T**he TAG business aviation base at Farnborough handles over 100 jet aircraft a day, up to 737 size, coming and going through the busy airspace between Heathrow, Gatwick and Southampton. With aircraft flying from Odiham, Fairoaks, Blackbushe and Lasham as well as transit aircraft from further afield, this is an important area of airspace that is shared by many of us. If you are based locally, you probably know all about the Farnborough operation and understand the procedures that enable you to integrate with them and with the other local users. But if you are just passing through, you probably have no idea where they fly so let's put that right.

It is probably fair to say that none of us want to get in the way of other airspace users but we have to use this area because the controlled airspace

associated with the London and Southampton airports funnels us there as we fly to or from the South-East of England and Europe. Take a look at the chart; Farnborough traffic rarely tracks north of the Runway 24/06 centreline east of RAF Odiham and for 78% of the time Runway 24 is in use.

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Inbounds to Runway 24 all come eventually to a left base (i.e. from the South) descending to 2,400ft QNH (to give Fairoaks traffic headroom and just below the London TMA) to join the ILS at 6nm hard against the Heathrow CTR. This approach area is busy with crossing GA aircraft and it is really important that they are in contact with Farnborough so they can be deconflicted. Inbounds for Runway 06 are very complicated because of the interaction with Odiham and Lasham so the majority of aircraft will fly short pattern visual approach avoiding the Odiham ATZ; this is another area where it is really important to be in r/t contact with Farnborough.

Departures from Runway 24 usually turn onto a heading of 220° or 285° climbing to 2,400ft towards 'GWC' or 'CPT' just below the base of CAS at 250kt awaiting clearance to enter. Departures from Runway 06 usually turn right

**(left) Farnborough's area of influence is mainly to the south and east of Odiham and they handle up to 100 jets per day. If you are in the area, talk to them!**

onto 165° climbing to 2,400ft and are then radar vectored to avoid other VFR aircraft.

So if you fly anywhere near Farnborough in the area depicted on the chart but particularly through the centrelines out to 10nm or in the area to the south, please call Farnborough LARS West so they know who you are and do not have to take the huge avoiding action needed on unknown aircraft.

Blackbushe also has lots of commercial traffic that is controlled by Farnborough so the area is busy to the north too. Odiham to the southwest has helicopter traffic and gliders at weekends and beyond that Lasham has 85,000 glider movements each year, sometimes 200 an hour and it has some jet traffic too. So be careful out there!

The best advice is to plan your flight according to your experience, competency and currency – it is a complicated area with Heathrow, Danger Areas and five airfields aligned along the same 20nm corridor. Farnborough LARS West (125.250) is available from 0800 to 2000 and will welcome your call and give you the help you need. If you are going within 10nm of Farnborough, please call them; it's to everybody's benefit. They work with Farnborough Approach and RAF Odiham co-ordinating traffic flows and smoothing the passage for any aircraft in contact with them. If you are flying further west, near the Odiham MATZ stub, please call Odiham on 131.30 so you can avoid their Chinooks. And watch out for gliders too!

But please do call Farnborough LARS West on 125.250 when you are approaching the area – they may be busy but they will always welcome your call – and they are very used to helping the GA community; that is after all, why they are there.

**LONDON SOUTHEND AIRPORT**

You may recall that last year easyJet began operations from Southend with three Airbus A-319 operating about 70 departures and 70 arrivals per week. Because it is in Class G airspace, we asked you to call Southend Radar if you were transiting the area and that worked very well indeed with no relevant safety issues during 2012. The ATC team at Southend pass on their thanks to the GA community for helping the operation work over the last year when over 700,000 passengers passed through the airport, more than in its heyday of the late 1960s. For 2013, easyJet have four aircraft operating a similar schedule to last year, early departures away by 0800 local with returns and departures late morning then quieter until another busy period around tea time, then quieter again until a late evening return. Aer Lingus Regional also operates three times a day, along with other ad-hoc flights.

Departing aircraft will not normally take off unless they have a clearance to enter CAS and they will climb as quickly as possible but often have to level just below the base of CAS at 3,000ft. Aircraft on approach will stay in CAS as long as possible but they have to descend at some stage towards the ILS which then puts them into Class G airspace. It is common for them to leave CAS just north of Detling or south of Chelmsford so the 15nm circle on the chart represents a good area to be in contact with Southend. You can see the position of the approach lanes on the chart and you can expect aircraft to join the centreline at about 8nm at 2,000ft.

Once again Southend would like you to call them on 130.775 if you are anywhere near them because once they know who you are, they don't have to give easyJet aircraft a massive 5nm avoidance on you, something that could stop them taking off or making an approach. This is not controlled airspace so nobody is going to refuse you access or tell you where to go, although if it appears that there is a conflict, ATC may sometimes ask you to change your routing or maintain a certain level. By talking to them you can make life safer for you and everybody else.

Please do call rather than just listening out as then ATC can make a plan for aircraft about to depart and those that are inbound but still on another frequency. And you won't be any bother to them, even if they sound busy. Also, do make sure your transponder is on with Mode C or S so ATC know your altitude even before you call.

They are waiting for your call right now on 130.775... don't be shy; give them a try! ■

**MAKING THE CALL TO SOUTHEND OR FARNBOROUGH RADAR**

It may seem complicated but it is very simple. After an initial check-in with callsign you say:

- Who you are (aircraft type)
- Where you are flying from and to
- Where you are (position/altitude)
- Where you are going just now
- What you want

Be ready for what you expect back which will probably be:  
 Squawk... (4 digits)  
 QNH... (3 digits followed by Hectopascals) or (4 digits only)

Which you then read back... Easy peasy, eh?



easyJet and Aer Lingus Regional operate into and out of Southend in Class G airspace. Call Southend on 130.775 if you are operating within the prescribed circle.