

# LONDON LARS AN UPDATE FOR GA PILOTS

## WHAT'S THE STORY SO FAR?

Farnborough LARS has been available to pilots of aircraft operating to the west of London for a number of years and is a well utilised service. In September 2007 coverage extended to the area around the Gatwick CTR/CTA with a further extension around Luton and Stansted's airspace coming on line in March 2008. All three services are referred to collectively as London LARS with the callsign Farnborough Radar.

## I HAVEN'T HEARD ABOUT LARS – WHAT IS IT AND HOW DO I GET IN CONTACT?

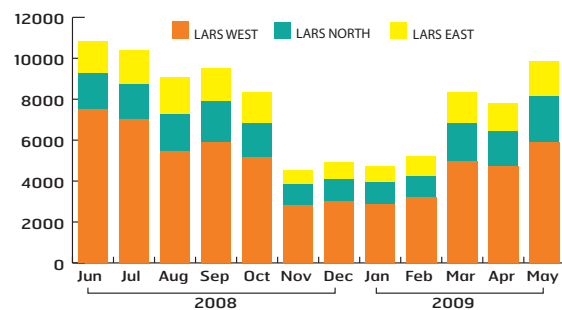
Controllers based at Farnborough provide radar surveillance based Air Traffic Services outside Controlled Airspace (ATSOCAS) to pilots operating in Class G Airspace in the London area. Most users opt for a Basic Service with around 15% asking for a Traffic or Deconfliction Service. Services are available for between 10 and 12 hours daily within three sectors:

SECTOR	FREQUENCY	OPENING HOURS (local)
NORTH	132.800 MHz	0900 - 1900
EAST	123.225 MHz	0900 - 1900
WEST	125.250 MHz	0800 - 2000

## HAVE GA PILOTS BEEN USING THE NEW SERVICE?

Yes, over 85,000 in 2008 and nearly 10,000 in May 2009. Whilst the majority of traffic is still calling LARS West, the new sectors have really

started to become accepted by the GA community with a 100% increase in services provided by LARS North and East combined in May 2009 as compared to a year earlier – that's equivalent to 40% of the total traffic loading as opposed to approximately 25% in 2008.



## WHAT'S THE BENEFIT TO ME?

We all know the environment outside controlled airspace in the South East presents a navigational and operational challenge for GA pilots, but London LARS can help you by:

- ▶ Identifying most flights and keeping an eye on your position in relation to ATZs and controlled airspace.
- ▶ Issuing a discrete squawk so that other radar units can monitor your progress and deconflict you from some of their traffic.
- ▶ Providing generic traffic information to assist with your situational awareness.
- ▶ Normally issuing a warning if we see a definite risk of collision.
- ▶ Providing weather information and navigational assistance.
- ▶ Providing assistance to pilots in emergency situations.

## WHY IS NATS PROVIDING THE SERVICE?

The answer is twofold. As we have said, we want to help general aviation pilots have a safe flight, but the airspace beneath which they fly handled nearly 1.2 million aircraft movements in and out of the major London airports last year. An inadvertent infringement of such crowded skies can have a significant impact on the safety and efficiency of the air traffic operation. London LARS helps us prevent such infringements.

## WHAT IS A 'PREVENTED INFRINGEMENT' AND HOW OFTEN DO THEY OCCUR?

Whenever a Farnborough controller takes positive action (a suggested heading, level or warning) to assist a pilot in remaining outside the TMA we record that as a prevented infringement – no paperwork gets filed, we just log the stats. Farnborough recorded 377 such occasions in 2008. In the first five months of this year a further 202 prevented infringements were recorded: that's a lot of risk removed from congested airspace.

## WHAT CAN A GA PILOT DO TO PREVENT AN INFRINGEMENT?

Talk to the appropriate Farnborough sector; we do prevent infringements, but there is no absolute guarantee that we'll spot a navigational error. So what can pilots do to help reduce the risk?

- ▶ Plan your route carefully paying particular attention to airspace bases.
- ▶ Select your transponder on with Mode C if you have it.
- ▶ Don't rely on the GPS – navigate.
- ▶ If the weather deteriorates or you are unsure of your position call Farnborough, D & D or another radar unit without delay.

## WHAT IF A PILOT DOES NOT WANT TO TALK TO ANYBODY?

Even if the frequency is busy (and we know it gets that way at times) we would always prefer pilots to call to get the benefits we have discussed, but there are 'listening squawks' pilots can use:

Select the correct listening squawk and monitor the appropriate frequency:

SQUAWK	AIRPORT	FREQUENCY
0012	GATWICK	126.825 MHz
0012	LONDON CITY	132.700 MHz
0013	LUTON	129.550 MHz
0013	STANSTED	120.625 MHz

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I END UP INSIDE CONTROLLED AIRSPACE?

- ▶ **Firstly DON'T PANIC; do what the controller advises as quickly as possible.**
- ▶ **If you are not talking to ATC, leave the airspace by the shortest route and make contact with a radar unit or D & D.**
- ▶ **DON'T WORRY; keep flying the aeroplane and keep yourself and passengers safe.**
- ▶ **If you've been unable to speak to ATC, report the event when you are on the ground.**
- ▶ **The incident will be logged and probably investigated to learn any lessons, but controllers are there to help you not to police the skies.**
- ▶ **Receiving a service from us will probably make the infringement less severe and we may well prevent it happening.**

## WHY NOT CALL FARNBOROUGH NEXT TIME?

- ▶ **We would love to hear what you think of the services and would be very grateful if you could fill in our Farnborough LARS questionnaire. Please request a questionnaire from [LLARS@nats.co.uk](mailto:LLARS@nats.co.uk)**

