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1 INTRODUCTION

With the removal of barriers in the European Community, it is now convenient for General Aviation pilots to fly both from their local airfield/airport, as well as their farm strip, direct to the Continent. However, although British Customs & Excise and Immigration have simplified their systems, the French Authorities have not and it is still necessary to land at a French airport with Customs and Immigration facilities in order to enter France. It is not this leaflet's intention to describe the relaxed procedures operating for Customs here in the UK – readers are advised to contact their local Customs and Excise Office to discuss their own individual arrangements.

2 LEGISLATION

- a. VFR flight plans (FPLs) **must** be filed for the following flights:
- A flight to or from the United Kingdom which will cross the United Kingdom FIR boundary.
 - A flight within Class D control zones/control areas. However, this requirement may be satisfied by passing flight details by Radio Telephony (RT).
 - A flight within the Scottish and London Upper Flight Information Regions, (but since this will be above Flight Level 245, it seems

unlikely that many GA pilots will be concerned with this situation).

b. Other requirements exist for flights where an aircraft's maximum take-off weight exceeds 5700 kg (12500 lbs).

c. In addition, it is **advisable** to file a VFR FPL if the flight involves flying over the sea, more than 10 nm from the UK coastline or flying over sparsely populated areas where Search and Rescue operations might be difficult. In addition, a VFR FPL **may** be filed for any flight at the pilot's discretion.

d. The Terrorism Act 2000 applies to flights between the mainland UK and the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

e. Some European Countries do not accept aircraft which only have a Permit to Fly, (homebuilt aircraft/microlights etc). It is the responsibility of the pilot/ operator to obtain permission beforehand from the State concerned.

f. In addition, some if not all of the following documents may be required to be carried in the aircraft: Tech. Log; Certificates of Registration, Airworthiness & Maintenance Release; Radio Licence; Interception Procedures (*leaflet 11*); Load Sheet; Pilot's Licence; Insurance Certificates and your passport.

3 DEPARTURES FROM AIRPORTS

a. Assuming that the departure and destination aerodromes are both major airports, the operation of the FPL is as follows. You complete the FPL at the Air Traffic Service Unit (ATSU) of your departure aerodrome and they will file it into the system on your behalf. The effect of this filing will be to inform your destination airfield, together with any of your alternates, that the flight is going to take place.



b. Once you get airborne, the ATSU will file a 'departure (DEP)' message and this will 'activate' the FPL. Thus the destination airfield, knowing your estimated time en-route from the filed FPL, and now knowing your departure time, will have an estimated time of arrival (ETA) at their airport.

c. Once you arrive, they will 'close' the FPL on your behalf, and that marks the end of the operation. If, however, you do not arrive **within 30 minutes** of your ETA, they will institute overdue action and subsequently, Search and Rescue operations may commence. It is therefore essential that if you land at any airfield other than your destination, you **MUST** inform your original destination of this fact, otherwise they will institute overdue and Search and Rescue action, the cost of which may be passed onto you.

d. This has covered the ideal situation where others handle it for you.

4 DEPARTURES FROM STRIPS etc

a. If the aerodrome that you operate from is:

- an airfield or airport with an ATSU, but your operations are outside their normal hours, or
- an airfield without an ATSU, or
- a private strip.

The responsibility for filing, activating and closing a FPL now rests with the pilot.

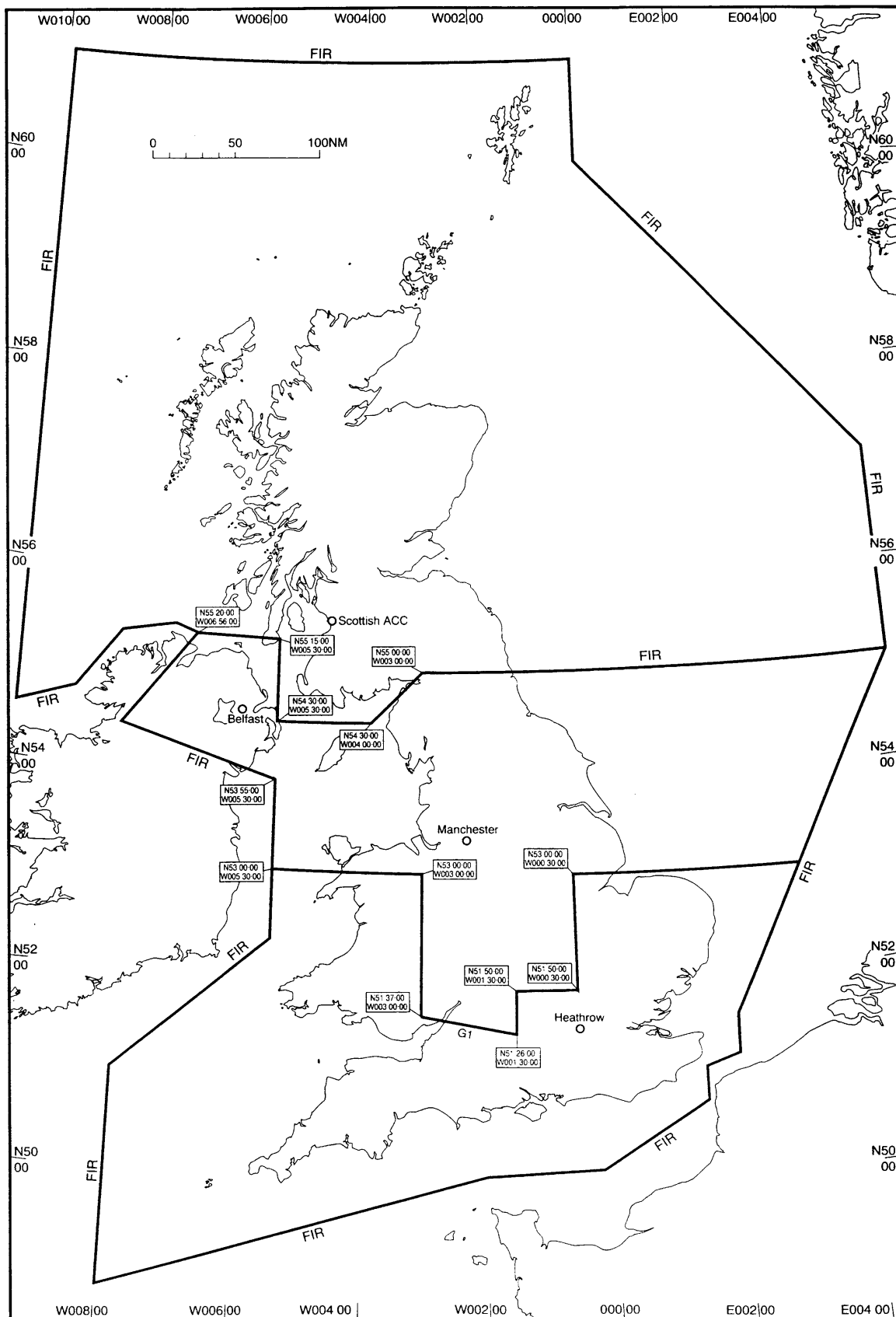
b. At this stage, it is important to understand the concept of the 'parent ATSU'. The UK is divided into a total of three areas, each of which has a parent ATSU and the map overleaf shows their areas of responsibility and the table beneath shows the telephone and fax numbers of the Flight Briefing Unit that you should telephone or fax when flight planning.

c. To file a FPL, telephone or fax the Flight Briefing Unit at least 60 minutes before the intended flight. A fax is cheaper than a telephone call. Prior to departure, arrange for a **responsible person** on the ground to telephone the Flight Briefing Unit as soon as you are airborne in order to pass a departure time. This has now activated the FPL. A suitable **responsible person** could be your spouse, relative, friend, fellow pilot or secretary. Alternatively, once airborne, you could ask any ATSU by radio to activate the flight plan, but this could lead to delay if the controller is busy. If it is not possible to file a FPL on the ground, it can be filed while airborne with any ATSU, but normally with the FIR controller responsible for the area in which the aircraft is flying. In such cases the message should begin with the words 'I wish to file an airborne flight plan'. Once again, when this method of filing is used, delays can occur due to controller workload.

5 RETURNING TO THE UK

a. Prior to departure for the return flight to an airfield without an ATSU (when closed for instance) or to a private strip, pilots are responsible for informing a **responsible person** at the destination of the estimated time of arrival. The responsible person is required to notify the parent ATSU if the aircraft fails to arrive within 30 minutes of the ETA. This action will then trigger the parent ATSU into alerting, overdue and Search and Rescue action. Obviously this person **MUST** have the telephone numbers of the appropriate parent ATSU. If the parent ATSU fails to hear anything, it will assume that the flight landed safely i.e. NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS and no further action is required. If the responsible person does inform the parent ATSU of your non-arrival, then the parent ATSU will go back to the filed FPL to check departure times, routings and so on as part of the Search and Rescue procedures.

b. It can be seen that the **responsible person** is crucial to this operation. If no one is expecting you, no one will be looking for you if you do not arrive. If, in an extreme case, the pilot fails to find a **responsible person** at his destination, then he may contact his parent ATSU prior to departure and request then to act in the capacity of the **responsible person**. Should the pilot follow this course of action, he will be required to contact the parent ATSU within 30 minutes of landing at his destination or diversion airfield, to confirm his arrival. Failure to do this, will automatically result in the parent ATSU initiating alerting action.



FLIGHT BRIEFING UNIT

TELEPHONE NUMBER

FAX NUMBER

SCOTTISH ATCC – EGPXYFYX
 MANCHESTER – EGCCZQZX
 LONDON/HEATHROW – EGLLZPZX

01292 692679
 0161 499 5502/5500
 020 8750 2615/2616

01292 671048
 0161 5504/5501
 020 8750 2617/2618

6 COMPLETION OF THE FLIGHT PLAN

(Note that this is an abbreviated explanation intending to cover simple VFR flights. Full details are obtainable from CAP 694 (The UK Flight Plan Guide). An ICAO poster on completing Flight Plans is available from Documedia Solutions at Cheltenham.

Enter all details in block capitals.

Leave the top part of the form blank, i.e. start at item 7.

ITEM 7 AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION

INSERT AIRCRAFT REGISTRATION
when the radiotelephony call sign will be the aircraft registration (OMIT THE HYPHEN)

ITEM 8 FLIGHT RULES

TYPE OF FLIGHT

INSERT **V** – VFR to denote the category of flight rules (other letters apply if you plan to fly under IFR)

INSERT **G** – General Aviation to denote the type of flight

ITEM 9 NUMBER

TYPE OF AIRCRAFT

WAKE TURBULENCE CAT

INSERT Number of aircraft only if more than 1

INSERT AIRCRAFT TYPE DESIGNATOR or ZZZZ if no designator or formation flight comprising more than one type (see item 18 TYP) Note: Aircraft Type Designators for most types are shown in Annex A to this leaflet.

INSERT **L** – Light (17 000 kg or less)

ITEM 10 EQUIPMENT

INSERT Preceding the oblique stroke one letter as follows:

N – if no COM NAV Approach aid equipment for the route to be flown is carried, or the equipment is unserviceable. OR

S – if standard COM NAV Approach aid equipment for the route to be flown is carried and serviceable. (Standard equipment is considered to be VHF RTF, ADF, VOR and ILS unless another combination is prescribed by the appropriate ATS Authority.) Individual letters apply to each item of navigation equipment.

THEN following the oblique stroke
INSERT one of the following to describe the serviceable SSR equipment carried

- N** – nil
- A** – Transponder Mode A 4096 Codes
- C** – Transponder Mode A 4096 Codes and Mode C

ITEM 13 DEPARTURE AERODROME

TIME

INSERT LOCATION INDICATOR of the departure aerodrome or ZZZZ if no ICAO location indicator assigned (see item 18 – DEP).

INSERT ESTIMATED OFF-BLOCK TIME in Universal Co-ordinated Time (UTC).
Note: Location Indicators are given in UK AIP and most flight guides.

ITEM 15 CRUISING SPEED

LEVEL

ROUTE

<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>

INSERT CRUISING TRUE AIR SPEED for initial or whole cruise as follows:

N (knots) followed by 4 digits (e. g. N0125)
(K = kilometres per hour)

Note: there is no provision for statute mph

INSERT CRUISING LEVEL for initial or whole cruise as follows:

A – Altitude in hundreds of feet (use 3 digits e.g. A025)

F – Flight Level (use 3 digits e.g. F055). OR

VFR – for uncontrolled VFR flights.

INSERT the ROUTE to be flown as follows:

for flights OFF designated routes, list points normally not more than 30 minutes flying time apart and enter DCT (DIRECT) between successive points. Points may be navigation aids, or bearing/distances from these (as “DVR05010”, or co-ordinates.

ITEM 16 DESTINATION AERODROME

TOTAL EET

ALTN AERODROME

AERODROME

INSERT LOCATION INDICATOR of the designation aerodrome or ZZZZ if no assigned indicator (see item 18 – DEST)

INSERT TOTAL ESTIMATED ELAPSED TIME (EET) en route as a four figure group expressed in hours and minutes.

INSERT LOCATION INDICATOR(S) of no more than two alternate aerodromes or ZZZZ if no assigned indicator(s) (see item 18 ALTN).

ITEM 18 OTHER INFORMATION

INSERT 0 (zero) if no other information OR any other necessary information in the preferred sequence shown hereunder, in the form of the appropriate indicator followed by an oblique stroke and the information to be recorded

EET/ – Significant points or FIR boundary designators and accumulated Estimated Elapsed Times to such points or FIR boundaries, when so prescribed on the basis of regional air navigation agreements or by ATS authority (e.g. EET/EGTT0020 LFF0105 Or EET/ EINN0204)

TYP/ – TYPE(s) of aircraft, preceded by the number(s) of aircraft in a formation flight, if ZZZZ is used in item 9.

DEP/ – Name of DEParture aerodrome if ZZZZ is inserted in item 13.

DEST/ – Name of DESTination aerodrome, if ZZZZ is inserted in item 16.

ALTN/ – Name of ALTerNate aerodrome(s) if ZZZZ is inserted in item 16.

DOF/ - Date of flight if not the date of filing

RMK/ – any additional information.

ITEM 19 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION (NOT ALL TRANSMITTED IN FPL MESSAGES)

ENDURANCE – used a four- figure group to express fuel endurance.

PERSONS ON BOARD –includes passengers and crew, use TBN if number not known at time of filing.

EMERGENCY RADIO –cross out equipment not available.

SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT –cross out equipment not available including S if none carried.

JACKETS – same as above and cross out J if no jackets carried.

DINGHIES – cross out both D and C if no dinghies carried.

REMARKS – enter other remarks regarding survival equipment or cross out N if no remarks.

FILED BY – insert name of the unit, agency or person filing the flight plan.

FLIGHT PLAN

ATS COPY

PRIORITY

<<= FF

ADDRESSEE(S)

FILING TIME

ORIGINATOR

____ → _____ <<=

SPECIFIC IDENTIFICATION OF ADDRESSEE(S) AND/OR ORIGINATOR

3 MESSAGE TYPE

<<= (FPL

7 AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION

- G B O M Z

8 FLIGHT RULES

- V

TYPE OF FLIGHT

G <<=

9 NUMBER

-

TYPE OF AIRCRAFT

P A 3 8

WAKE TURBULENCE CAT.

/ L

10 EQUIPMENT

- S/C

13 DEPARTURE AERODROME

- E G K A

TIME

1 1 0 0 <<=

15 CRUISING SPEED

- N 0 1 2 0

LEVEL

V F R

ROUTE

→ DCT SAM DCT YVL DCT

16 DESTINATION AERODROME

- Z Z Z Z

TOTAL EET
HR MIN

0 0 4 5

ALTN AERODROME

→ E G T E

2ND ALTN AERODROME

→ E G H H <<=

18 OTHER INFORMATION

- DEST/DUNKESWELL

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION (NOT TO BE TRANSMITTED IN FPL MESSAGES)

19 ENDURANCE

HR MIN

-E/ 0 3 0 0

PERSONS ON BOARD

→ P/ 0 0 2

EMERGENCY RADIO

→ R/ UHF VHF ELBA

SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT

→ S

/ POLAR

DESERT

MARITIME

JUNGLE

→ JACKETS

/ LIGHT

FLUORES

UHF

VHF

DINGHIES

NUMBER

→ D / 0 1

CAPACITY

→ 0 0 8

COVER

→ C

COLOUR

→ YELLOW <<=

AIRCRAFT COLOUR AND MARKINGS

A/ BLUE/WHITE

REMARKS

→ _____ <<=

PILOT IN COMMAND

C/ EDWARDS) <<=

FILED BY

SPACE RESERVED FOR ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

7 SOME GENERAL TIPS FOR VFR FLIGHT PLANNING

a. The procedures as outlined above will work when filing FPLs over inhospitable areas or mountainous terrain in the UK. In this case, it can be seen that you will need a **responsible person** at both your departure and destination airfield and both of those will need to have the telephone number of the parent ATSU's in both your departure area and your destination area if they are different.

b. To make the process of filing a FPL over the telephone as speedy as possible, have a copy of your FPL ready filled in, so that you can pass the information quickly in the correct order.

c. Many pilots now file their FPLs by fax. It is suggested that you include a contact telephone number in the remarks section, or better still, **phone the office direct to confirm that the plan has been received.**

d. A test showed that it took well over a minute to fax the top copy of the FPL due to the shaded area, while the non- shaded COM copy took under 15 seconds. Either copy is acceptable for this purpose.

e. If your FPL is for a future date, make sure that the date (maximum 144 hours ahead) is entered clearly in item 18 using the ICAO convention (e.g. DOF/060127 for 27th January 2006).

f. It is essential that ATC is advised of cancellations, delays over 30 minutes and changes to FPL details. To prevent a double entry into the computer which would lead to confusion, always cancel the first FPL and resubmit.

g. When departing from smaller airfields, do not assume that the Air Ground Operator or FISO will automatically telephone a departure time to the parent ATSU on your behalf, check with them or, once again, find a **responsible person** to do this for you.

h. All in all, the procedure is intended to simplify VFR FPLs and to move the onus for safe operation on to pilots.

ANNEX A

ICAO TYPE DESIGNATORS

(This list only covers some common light aircraft/ helicopters on the UK Civil Register. The complete list is in ICAO Document 8643, available at most large aerodromes or through the ICAO web site <http://www.icao.int/anb/ais/8643/index.cfm>)

AGUSTA	A109
AGUSTA/ BELL	
206 Jet Ranger, Long Ranger	B06
BEAGLE Pup	PUP
Terrier	AUS6
BEECH (RAYTHEON)	
most as types e.g. 19	BE19
CESSNA (INC REIMS)	
most as numbers e.g.	C152
except some complex e.g.	C82R
DE HAVILLAND as types e.g.	
Tiger Moth	DH82
and Chipmunk	DHC1
DIAMOND DA-20/22 Katana	DV20
EUROPA	EUPA
FOURNIER as types e.g.	RF4
FUJI FA-200	SUBA
GROB most as types	
except complex e.g.	G109
GRUMMAN AMERICAN	
most as type e.g.	AA5
JODEL most as types	
e.g. D-9 and series	D9
LUSCOMBE Silvaire	L8
MOONEY M-20, 201	M20P
231 etc (turbo charged)	M20T
MORANE SAULNIER Rallye	RALL
MUDRY most as number	
e.g. CAP- 10	CP10
PIPER most as type nos e.g.	J3
but most PA28 piston, fixed gear	P28A
PA28 Arrows	P28R
PA28 RT	P28T
PA23 Aztec	PA27
ROBIN DR- 400 series	DR40
ROBINSON as type nos e.g. R- 22	R22
ROCKWELL Commander	
112, 114 etc	AC11
RUTAN Varieze	VEZE
SLINGSBY T67 Firefly	RF6