

A Letter of Agreement Between:**National Air Traffic Services Bristol and the British Gliding Association****Contents**

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**A LETTER OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN NATS BRISTOL and THE
BRITISH GLIDING ASSOCIATION**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this agreement is to define permitted areas of operation for gliders flying under the auspices of the British Gliding Association (BGA) within the Bristol Control Area 6 (GD CTA-6) and Area 8 (GD CTA-8). The intent of this agreement is to allow a fair and flexible use of airspace to local gliding organisations and to other airspace users.

2. Procedures

- 2.1 The responsibilities and procedures to be employed by Bristol Radar, the BGA and the pilots of aircraft operating in accordance with the LOA are detailed in this Agreement as follows:
- a. Part One: The Bath Gap and The Bath Gap B
 - b. Part Two: Procedures
 - c. Part Three: Airspace Maps

3. Application and Review of the Letter of Agreement

- 3.1 Permanent amendment to, or withdrawal of, this Letter of Agreement is to be effected only with the written consent of the signatories or their successors.
- 3.2 This Letter of Agreement becomes effective at 0001 on 1st April 2010
- 3.3 This LOA shall be reviewed during March 2011 and thereafter biennially from the date of signing. The method of review shall be acceptable to both parties.
- 3.4 This LOA shall be resigned in March 2016 and every 5 years thereafter.

4. Parties to the Agreement

- 4.1 It is hereby declared that the parties to the said Agreement are NATS Bristol and the British Gliding Association.

Mr G Paterson
General Manager
NATS
Dated:

BGA Airspace Committee
Dated:

PART ONE**Definition of the Bath Gap and the Bath Gap B****1. Lateral Limits**

1.1 Within this Letter of Agreement (LOA) the lateral limits of the airspace (hereafter referred to as the Bath Gap) to be ceded to the BGA for the routine operation of gliders launching from designated sites, participating in competitions or otherwise complying with this LOA are defined as follows:

- a) The boundaries of GD CTA-6 but excluding that portion of GD CTA-6 (hereinafter called the Doynton Fillet), which lies to the west of the line from N51 28 42 W002 23 38 to N51 26 05 W002 24 40 (approximately that portion of CTA-6 which lies to the west of the foot of the Cotswold escarpment). The boundaries of GD CTA-6 are shown on the current ICAO 1:500000 aeronautical chart as that section of Bristol CTA overhead Bath and extending in an arc to the north and south from Bath with a base of 3500ft.

This definition shall only be used by glider pilots navigating with visual reference to the surface with the assistance of an electronic moving map derived from GPS position and current digital database which displays appropriate airspace.

- b) The northern, southern and eastern boundaries of GD CTA-6 and the following geographical features to the west:
 - The A367 main road from Radstock to the southwestern edge of Bath;
 - The western edge of the built up area of Bath to Bath Racecourse;
 - The clearly defined minor road from Bath Racecourse running north towards the village of Wick at the foot of the Cotswold escarpment; and
 - The foot of the Cotswold Escarpment northwards to Dyrham Park.

This definition shall be used by glider pilots navigating without the benefit of an electronic moving map.

1.2 Glider pilots must remain to the east of the western boundary of the Bath Gap at all times when operating in GD CTA-6 under the terms of this LOA.

- 1.3 The Bath Gap B shall be the Bath Gap (GD CTA-6) as described above and area GD CTA-8 as shown on the current ICAO 1:500000 aeronautical chart, which is the controlled airspace above Colerne Airfield with a base of 4500ft. Pilots should note the close proximity of Lyneham controlled airspace from the surface to 3500ft.
- 1.4 For glider pilots navigating without the benefit of an electronic moving map, GD CTA-8 can be described as the airspace adjacent to the M4 motorway that is East of the Cotswold Ridge as far as the Motorway services and then southwest bound, south of Colerne Airfield to the eastern edge of the Bath conurbation and then north, following the eastern boundary of CTA-6 (above).

2. Vertical Limits

- 2.1 Within this LOA the vertical limits of the Bath Gap are defined as follows:
 - a) Lower limit: 3500ft Bristol QNH
 - b) Upper limit: 4500ft Bristol QNH
- 2.2 The vertical limits of the Bath Gap B are defined as follows:
 - a) Lower limit: 3500ft (CTA-6) and 4500ft (CTA-8) Bristol QNH
 - b) Upper limit: 5000ft Bristol QNH

3. Times Of Activation

The Bath Gap shall only be activated between 1000 local and 1900 local or official night (whichever is earlier). The length of activation will be commensurate with a flexible and fair use of airspace in blocks consisting of multiples of one hour, Eg; 3, 4, 5, 6 hours etc. Gliding organisations should only request activation from the earliest likely ETA of their first glider at the Bath Gap boundary until the latest realistic time of exit of their last glider from the Bath Gap airspace. Longer activation periods would be expected for major gliding competitions.

PART TWO**BGA and Bristol Radar Procedures****1. Notification and Activation**

1.1 The activity status of the Bath Gap shall be available as a voice message on the Gliding Activity telephone in Bristol ATC. Pilots should call this number 01275 473820 for the activity status.

1.2 The Bath Gap may only be activated by one of the following authorised persons:

- a) A Director of a regional or national gliding competition;
- b) The Duty Instructor or authorised person of one of the following gliding clubs:
 - Bannerdown Gliding Club (Keevil)
 - Bath, Wiltshire and North Dorset Gliding Club (The Park)
 - Bristol and Gloucestershire Gliding Club (Nymphsfield)
 - Cotswold Gliding Club (Aston Down)
 - Mendip Gliding Club (Halesland)
- c) Avon Hang-gliding and Paragliding Club (Separate LOA)
- d) Bristol International Air Traffic Control (see paragraph 6)

1.3 The authorised person shall request activation for a specific time window with the Bristol ATC Watch Manager by telephone (01275 473857 or 473712). This activation time window would be commensurate with the principle of a flexible and fair use of airspace.

1.4 Subsequent authorised persons can request additional activation time which may extend the original window.

1.5 The Bristol ATC Watch Manager shall authorise activation of the Bath Gap except in the following circumstances:

- a) When weather forecasts indicate that Category 2/3 ILS approaches to runway 27 are likely to be flown in the period.
- b) When the minimum equipment requirement in paragraph 9 can not be met or maintenance is planned that will preclude compliance.
- c) Where a scheduled major event, such as the Bristol Balloon Fiesta or Red Arrows display, introduces additional traffic management hazards, for the duration of that event.

- 1.6 The Bristol ATC Watch Manager shall note the details of the caller including contact telephone number and confirm the current Bristol QNH.
- 1.7 When a refusal is made the Watch Manager should contact the requesting organisation if conditions change to allow activation.
- 1.8 Following the telephone notification call and subject to paragraph 1.5, the Bristol ATC Watch Manager shall activate the Bath Gap at the appropriate time, by:
 - a) Ensuring that IFR flights are vectored clear of the affected airspace and VFR flights are issued appropriate traffic information on the glider operations.
 - b) Appending the appropriate message to the Automatic Terminal Information Service (ATIS) – 126.025MHz with the specific opening time window agreed with the authorised person.
 - c) Switching the contact telephone message to the Bath Gap Active Message. This will confirm the Bath Gap specific opening time and provide the Bristol QNH at the time of activation.
- 1.9 Gliders operated under the auspices of one of the clubs listed in paragraph 1.2b, participating in a regional or national competition, or non-radio gliders from other gliding clubs whose pilots are appropriately briefed on the details of this agreement, may then operate within the Bath Gap up to 4500ft Bristol QNH in accordance with agreement. Glider Pilots should obtain the up to date Bristol QNH from the Bristol ATIS or from Bristol ATC. The Bristol ATIS is broadcast on Local Call Rate telephone number 0844 8481022.
- 1.10 Subsequent callers are to listen to the contact telephone message 01275 473820 (or the ATIS broadcast) and on hearing the appropriate message, may assume the Bath Gap is active for the specific time window. If a subsequent authorised person wants to extend the notified period, then contact should be made with the Watch Manager on 01275 473857 / 473714.
- 1.11 Bristol Radar, the nominated clubs and competition directors shall maintain a log containing details of each occasion the Bath Gap is activated. This shall form an official record of compliance with the agreement and assist with the periodic reviews of the operation.

2. Activity Status Display

The activity status of the Bath Gap shall be clearly displayed at all appropriate radar consoles by selecting the appropriate 'filled map'. The specified Opening Time window shall be clearly displayed.

3. Glider Flight Rules

Gliders operating within the Bath Gap are to operate in accordance with VFR at all times.

4. Radio Equipped Gliders (Bath Gap)

- 4.1 Pilots of radio equipped gliders shall not request activation of the Bath Gap, but shall request crossing clearance in accordance with para 4.2. (See para 5 below, Bath Gap B procedures).
- 4.2 If the Bath Gap is inactive, radio-equipped gliders must contact Bristol Radar and request a crossing clearance. Bristol ATC shall, subject to the minimum delay necessary to ensure separation from other flights, authorise VFR crossings of GD CTA-6 below 4500ft Bristol QNH.
- 4.3 Bristol ATC shall, subject to normal ATC constraints, authorise VFR crossings of Bristol Controlled Airspace by radio equipped gliders whenever possible, commensurate with the principle of a flexible and fair use of airspace.

5. Radio Equipped Gliders (Bath Gap B)

- 5.1 Only radio equipped gliders, whose pilots are appropriately briefed, can contact Bristol radar on Freq 125.650 to request activation of the **Bath Gap B**. Pilots can expect activation within 5 minutes of their request. However, the more notice that can be given by pilots before they reach the CTA boundary will prevent inconvenient delay in the activation.
- 5.2 The Radar Controllers shall ensure that their FPS display clearly shows that the Bath Gap B is active for the duration of the transiting glider traffic.
- 5.3 Pilots must receive specific permission from Bristol Radar for each activation which is given for the time necessary to transit the Bath Gap B. Pilots must keep a listening watch during their transit and must report when leaving Controlled Airspace. This report would deactivate the airspace unless a subsequent pilot has made a similar request and is still within the airspace.
- 5.4 Nothing in this letter of agreement shall preclude individual glider pilots from requesting a Class D airspace crossing as per normal practice on a tactical basis through any part of the Bristol CTA/CTR.

6. Activation By Bristol ATC

Bristol ATC may activate the Bath Gap at any time if the number of R/t calls from cross-country gliders is deemed by the Radar controller or Watch Manager to be detrimental to the efficient operation of the unit.

7. Separation and Traffic Information

7.1 Once the Bath Gap or Bath Gap B is active, Bristol Radar shall ensure that:

- a) IFR traffic remains at least 500ft above the glider block.
- b) IFR traffic remains outside the lateral limits of the agreed glider block.
- c) IFR traffic operating within 3nm of the block is passed traffic information on the gliding activity. (This may be by AIP entry and ATIS message).
- d) IFR traffic operating less than 1000ft above the block is passed traffic information on the gliding activity. (This may be by AIP entry and ATIS message).
- e) VFR traffic transiting the glider block is passed traffic information on the gliding activity.

7.2 The BGA shall ensure that all glider pilots operating within the Bath Gap and Bath Gap B are aware that other VFR flights will continue to transit the airspace following activation.

8. De-activation

8.1 Bristol Radar shall assume that the **Bath Gap** is active for the specified opening time window. This may be with more than one organisation and therefore may be an extended time. At the end of this period the ATIS message and the answer phone message shall be discontinued.

8.2 Any gliders that are still in the **Bath Gap** at the end of the specified opening time shall leave Controlled Airspace. Alternatively, radio equipped gliders can request to continue the transit in the normal way with Bristol Radar.

- 8.3 The **Bath Gap B** is deactivated on the RT report of the pilot leaving controlled airspace. If for any reason the glider pilot cannot contact Bristol Radar to report leaving controlled airspace (IE: radio failure), Bristol radar shall consider that Bath Gap B is deactivated 1 hour after the last request for activation.

9. Minimum Equipment Requirements

For the Bath Gap to be activated, Bristol Radar must be capable of providing a radar service using either primary & secondary radar, or secondary radar only.

PART THREE

Airspace Maps

Bath Gap



BATH GAP B

