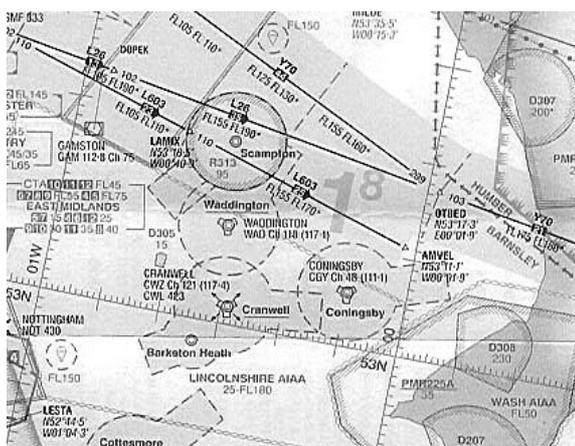


Burton Airways

Few folk would have failed to notice the increase in air traffic which now furrows across the skies above the parish. During the morning rush hour as many as 7 airliners can be seen crossing the skies with contrails streaming out behind them. A single 747 with 320 passengers on board would be carrying the total population of Burton! In past years, the Lincolnshire airspace was the preserve of RAF jets flying from the many bases within the county, but recently the airways have been realigned to cope with the huge increase in civilian air traffic.



Burton now sits beneath 3 major airways that carry traffic to and from the Continent and the Middle East. Many of the aircraft are outbound from Manchester and Leeds, but a large number of long haul jets returning from the USA and Canada, transit the airspace before descending into Amsterdam and Paris airports. KLM for instance operate a direct service to Vancouver which flies the great circle route over the pole passing over Lincolnshire en-route. The centerline of Lima 603 is about 1 mile south of the village and conducts traffic eastwards on a track of 110M at a minimum height of 17000ft. Lima 26 to the North (102M) has a base of 19000ft while Yankee70 is mainly used for incoming continental traffic descending into Manchester. Although L603 and L26 are unidirectional, westbound traffic may be cleared through the airways if there is no eastbound traffic. The aircraft are under the control of the ATC centre at Swanwick near Southampton which receives and transmits information through a complex communications and radar system extending across the UK.

Many of the aircraft are climbing as they transit to their operational flight level of around 30000ft where the jet engine is most efficient. Each aircraft is fitted with a transponder and the height, speed, heading and position of the aircraft is displayed on a radar screen at the controller's consol. The controller will approve the climb only if there is no conflicting traffic in the area.

Flight rules governing the cruising levels of aircraft ensure that height separation is maintained between aircraft traveling in an easterly or westerly direction. Above 25000ft aircraft flying to the east fly at odd thousands of feet (FL 270, 290, 310 etc) and to the West at even levels (FL280, 300, 320 etc) below 25000ft aircraft fly at quadrantal level which gives a 500ft separation.

From the ground it is very difficult to judge the height of the aircraft but as a guide, condensation trails which are sometimes formed in the wake of jet aircraft will only occur at high altitude where the pressure is low and the temperature is below -40 C. Temporary trails may form between 20,000 and 25,000 ft but permanent trails are more likely in the stratosphere above 25,000ft where the air temperature remains constant around -52C.