

A Tour of Ireland FSX

Flight-1 `Shuttleworth Snap'

Years ago in the FS98 era I designed scenery including all the bitmaps for the whole of Ireland however as the years passed and we're now at the time of writing on FS 10 we are having a flourish of Irish scenery releases so I am going to have another go at creating a few more out of the way grass strips. The scenery packages we have available are Justflight which unfortunately only covers Northern-Ireland. Then we have the Megascenery package which is all photographic scenery covering the whole of Ireland, which is excellent value for money. Then we have the Orbx scenery and again is excellent value, although the majority of it isn't real photographic scenery, it comes in two packages- North and South, Orbx also includes a host of objects and AGN which the other packages lack in and once you have enjoyed scenery with AGN applied it does make a huge difference. In the past I have mainly used Playsims VFR scenery for the UK but with the advent of Just Flight's Revolution X which adds AGN to the VFR scenery it really does as it's say's on the box revolutionises the scenery package. You pay your money you take your pick.

So over the winter months I am going to write about and design many of the grass strips in Ireland. Although I will create unique scenery for some of the airfields I am also using many of my stock object libraries so to enjoy the scenery to the full you will need a copy of Neil's Farm Strips. I don't have an awful lot of free time and although I contact many of these airfields asking for photographs not many actually reply so most of the buildings are artistic licence.

I am going to create two or three airfields at a time and create a few flights with which to link them together.

But first we have to get to our first airfield over in Ireland which I have designed and this is Ballyatwood a small grass strip over in Ards on the peninsula near Strangford Loch, just south of the airfield at Newtonards.

We will start our Safari at Mount Rule (for users of Neil's Farm Strips I have updated the Mount Rule scenery ((min ver-3))overwrite if asked) which is roughly in the middle of the Isle of Man (you will need Playsim's Volume 3 VFR Scenery to do enjoy this but don't worry if you haven't you can use the default terrain)Set your clock to 10.00am local time, Season to Summer, August. Load the Flight Plan (Fight-Flight Planner-Load and select Mount Rule to Ballyatwater allow it to move you to the departure airfield if you don't have Neil's Farm Strips). If you have a copy of Neil's Farm Strips you will have a host of scenery if not you will just have the default terrain. I am not going to use my trusty Streak Shadow this time I am going to fly a few from the Aerosoft stable starting with the Dimona, not everybody's choice of aircraft but I just love it. I must admit I have only just got it to run right, I've actually had it for about two years but gave up after the engine kept stopping after about twenty minutes into a flight and I just couldn't work out what was wrong, whatever it was I think was being saved after the flight so every time it loaded it loaded with the same fault but now for some unknown reason it's running fine, I never failed to land back at an airfield after engine failure owing to the great gliding characteristics of the aircraft.

Choose your aircraft carry out all your checks make sure you have your life raft and enough fuel as we'll be over the water for a while.

There are four runways here at Mount Rule we'll use 10 as it's the nearest plus it's downhill, so line up take off and follow the flight plan heading 305° cruise altitude 5000ft, Distance is just over 40 Nm; which will take us approximately 30 minutes depending on what aircraft you have chosen to fly.



The Hoffman Dimona motor glider started life in the early 80's and is built in Austria and has a wing span of over 50ft which as I said earlier gives it an excellent glide ratio. There are numerous variations (Aerosoft offer quite a few) including Hydrogen and Electric Power. As is the norm with Aerosoft aircraft I love the way the instrument needles shake about just like the real thing. Although it's slow it's great to fly and it's just what you need for this type of flying, low and slow.

I use a simple Saitek controller for flying it has two throttles one of which I set for the wing spoilers which help the glider descend.

As we turn onto our heading you may be able to make out the mountain of Snafell in the distance, standing at just over 2000ft, not very high but still very impressive. For the inactive ones who don't want to climb 2000ft in summer time there is an electric railway to take you to the top where it is said on a clear days you can see 6 countries, Isle of Man, Ireland, Wales, England, Scotland and Heaven.

The island is also home to the World Famous TT Races,. Started in the early 1900's it has survived all this time, many famous riders have ridden this course including Geoff Duke, Giacomo Agostini, Mike Hailwood and not forgetting the film actor from the 1930's George Formby in his great film 'No Limit' as a chimney sweep from Wigan his lifetime ambition was to win the TT races, he failed to secure a factory ride so designed his own bike 'The Shuttleworth Snap' on which after many hilarious escapades went on to win the TT Races. If you haven't seen the film you've just got to watch it, you can see excerpts from it on U-Tube.

Carry on following the flight plan and as we cross the coast heading Westwards you should be able to make out the town of Peel off to your left. You should also be able to make out Peel Castle (representation only). Built originally from wood by the Vikings who settled here around the early 9th Century, it has been added to, reconstructed from stone which included the remains of a Celtic Monastery. In 2005 a replica of Odon's Longship sailed from Norway to Peel to commemorate the Manx Millennium the 1000th annual sitting of the Manx Parliament. In the early 1960's the world's smallest production car was produced here and was known as the Peel Microcar.

Below Jeremy Clarkson in one of the Peel Microcars.



The Real Peel Castle

If your aircraft has ADF you can tune the NDB in on 200.1 which will make it easier to find the runway, range is quite low at 6nm; as I have said before unlike concrete runways which stand out from miles away these grass strips are not easy to spot.



The strip at Ballyatwood is located on the Ards peninsula and is a fairly simple N/S affair approx; 270mtrs long and 130ft ASL. Which if it's adjustable is 1010 on your altimeter. A standard overhead

join with a left hand circuit. See you down there.

