

SOUTHERN SCOTLAND FLIGHT-4

ELVIS HAS LEFT THE BUILDING!



Select Eshott Airfield from your Airport menu or simply carry on from the last flight. I Think I'm going to have to re-spray the Streak in the near future it's looking a bit worse for wear, it used to be red! At least my tail skid's okay now

Anyway I have really enjoyed looking at all this brilliant scenery I just have to do some more, I hope you are up for it. It's VFR again, we'll be following lakes and roads, flying over and between The Cheviots, the largest hill range here in Southern Scotland, not quite mountains but very beautiful nonetheless.

The plan is to fly over to Stonehill Airfield which will give this photographic scenery and terrain a chance to show us what it's made of. Have lunch there then Down to Kilkerran over near the West Coast, then if we have enough time left, down to Mount Rule on the Isle of Man. I've phoned Chris at

Stonehill and the weather should be okay, always a problem up here in

Scotland. Set your visibility to 10 miles, carry out all your checks, we will be flying over some very inhospitable terrain today so make sure your aircraft is fully serviceable.

Set your clock to 12 noon, line up on 01 Asphalt or Grass it doesn't

matter. Power up take off and make a climbing turn to Starboard gaining as much altitude as possible before turning out on approx 260° (avoid flying over the golf course), (if you are flying the Streak keep 1/4 flap and full power) , this will head us in the right direction for Keilder Reservoir. Level out at 2500ft. Our first visual reporting point is Fontburn Reservoir. Cruise altitude 2500ft.

Eshott Airfield

Eshott Airfield was built around 1930 as a temporary field but came back to life during the Second World War when it was occupied in 1942 by 52 OTU who came up from Hawarden. The training carried out here was on fighters and the death rate was approx; 2 a month, considered acceptable at the time. Over 20 Liberator Bombers landed here after getting lost returning from a bombing raid over Germany. The RAF vacated the field which was left derelict for a while until taken by Eshott Airfield Group, I believe Kart Racing also takes place on the Eastern edge of one of the runways.

Turned onto 260 at 1700ft, climbing to 2500, I can't see Fontburn yet. 12.05 and I can see Fontburn directly ahead. Set your revs to approx 5000. Stay on this heading but climb to 3000ft. If you have ticked Enable Gyro Drift remember to press D occasionally. The large forest we are flying over after leaving Fontburn behind is Harwood Forest part of the Northumberland National Park and covers over 10,500 hectares, at the Northern end are the Simonside Hills.

If you are on the same heading as me ahead you will see the River Rede shortly followed by the town of Otterburn, it was here in 1388 that James the 2nd Earl of Douglas came down from Scotland on a raiding party into the land held by the Earl of Northumberland and his son Henry Percy (also known as Hotspur whom I mentioned in the last chapter) . James in a skirmish at the gates of Newcastle plundered Hotspurs pennant, a mortifying blow to the Percy's and Hotspur swore to recapture it. It was here just outside the town of Otterburn that the 2 armies met and very unusually the battle took place at dusk and

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carried on into the night in close quarter combat and of course the English archers were useless at night and the Scots began to gain the upper hand but at some time in the fight Douglas was killed but even without their leader still the Scots gained ground and both Hotspur and his brother Ralph were captured and the Scots returned home triumphant this time.

Talking about the army, Otterburn Camp is not too far North of here it provides a vast training ground which includes houses, an airfield all for training purposes, in actual fact we are really in restricted area at this moment!

Looking at 12.16 on the clock and ahead is Keilder Reservoir, follow the lake keeping close to the Northern shore turning right following the lake Northwards. There will be a road on your left follow it until

you reach the head of the lake (the lake looks a little unfinished

here). Keep an eye out for Keilder Castle (representative) a couple of miles North of the reservoir, we are going to do some sight-seeing. When you are overhead the castle turn onto 020-030° aiming for the highest hill out front, this I think is Limestone Knowe standing at just over 1800ft. Climb up to 4000ft. This scenery is just amazing you can see every bush and even boulders in White Keilder Burn (stream) below us.

As you reach the summit of Limestone Knowe if you look to your right you will see a large body of water, this is Catleugh Reservoir, another man made stretch of water.

The Reservoir was constructed between 1899 and 1905 and is part of a network for supplying the North-East with water.

Turn right and let's have a fly around it. Turn around at the far end then follow the A6088 road back North-Westwards. The mesh terrain gives an excellent example as it really looks as if the dam is holding back the water. Roads are not easy things to follow and we turn off shortly so I have placed some road traffic and an arrow on the ground to help you. Turn left when you reach the junction. This terrain mesh really is fantastic, don't forget to set your mesh terrain to 100% and 5mtrs.

At the junction where we have just turned was the scene of one of the last major battles between the English and the Scots and funnily enough it was between 2 people who were there to keep the peace!

It was called the Reidswyre Fray or The Battle of Carter Bar. The English outnumbered the Scots and annoyed them by their arrogant behaviour and a fight soon started and the English got their arse whipped again.

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Follow the traffic all the way to the town of Hawick, once you reach the junction turn onto 270/280• (check drift), we are heading for St.Mary's Loch. Climb to 4000ft.

Hawick is the largest town around these parts, it was completely destroyed by the English in the 16th Century the only remnant begin a wall of The Black Tower which is now incorporated into the Tower Hotel's walls. I believe the Knitwear company 'Pringle' have a factory here. The town is well known for producing fine tweed and Knitwear.

We are flying in the right direction, if you have a map you will see Hellmoor Loch directly ahead, with Alemoor Loch just off to our left. Stay on this heading.

Just approaching St.Mary's Loch now, it was well hidden by these

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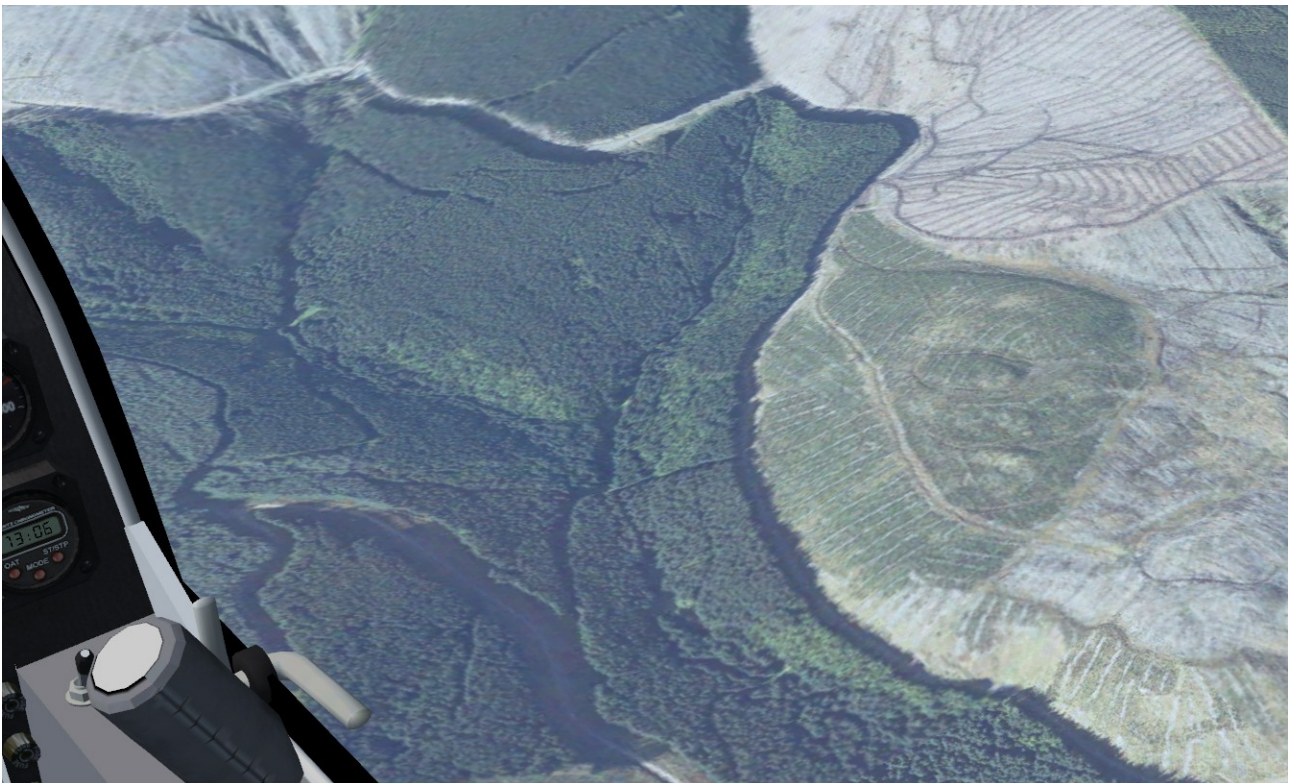
hills, when overhead turn onto 270°. These hills really are something else aren't they? Maintain 4000ft. We are heading for the

M74, the main road to Glasgow. If you are feeling a little bit of de-javu yes we have been here before on our trip up to Midlem but flying the other way.

Just flown over Megget Reservoir and am approaching Talla Reservoir. There is a VOR located just here it's TLA 113.80. Fruid Reservoir has just appeared out of the left front quarter window, it's great how these lakes are hidden by the hills and appear almost out of nowhere. Dpon't worry too much if you feel a bit lost, keep fying Westwards and you are bound to hit the M74.

The ground is very lumpy around here and again shows off the excellent terrain mesh.

Can you see the remains of an Iron-Age Fort, see if you can spot it while you are flying.



There are quite a few Iron-Age Forts in Scotland I don't really know why but I would like to bet it's because it's less populated up here with a lot less development and destruction or progress as they call it going on.

Just flown over the A701 and Camps Reservoir is off to my right. Not long before we hit the M74, Okay only a few seconds have passed and I can see the motorway, turn and head towards it when you see it. Not long to go on this leg now.

We follow the M74 until we come to Abbington, descend to around 2000ft, we should see a mast on top of the hill, we turn off very near there. I can see the mast on top of the hill off to our left, I have placed some road traffic for you to follow. If you look to your right when you are overhead the caravan park just before you turn you will see another Iron-age fort on top of the hill. At the junction turn following the B7078 we turn again very shortly directly opposite the small quarry, you will see the road traffic, you can also follow the river if you wish. As you turn if you look on the top of the hill to your right you'll get a fantastic view of yet another hill fort, you can even see the gap they used to enter and the remains of the central building, it's scary to think that people lived and fought there nearly 3000 years ago and the scenery would still be recognisable to them today. This Photographic Scenery really is the best isn't it?

Keep following the road traffic or river as they weave their way down the valley and we will soon see the airfield (see photo below)



Watch out for the sheep and chickens when landing!

That was a fairly easy landing, we'll grab a bit of lunch with Chris and his wife then we'll carry on our tour only we are having another deviation this time instead of flying straight to Kilkerran we are going to have another barbie on Ailsa Crag, I have been told it is a very hairy landing spot so if you feel you're not up to it miss out this section and carry on to Kilkerran.

When ready put your clock onto 2.30pm (14.30hrs) then taxi over towards the Eastern end of the strip, but be careful not to frighten the sheep. Power up take off and carry out a climbing turn to the right we are going to overfly the field and follow the road Southwards. If you are flying the Streak I recommend full flap for take off and climb. Keep on full power until you turn Southwards (approx 210°), dump flaps, power down and maintain 2000ft for the moment. Again I have placed some road traffic but you can also follow the river as well.

In what seems only minutes weaving along the valley ahead I can see the excellently reproduced spoil heaps from the old colliery at Crawick, the colliery closed down in the early part of the 20th Century.

The larger town on our left is Sanquhar (which in Gaelic means 'Old Seat'). You may also see the remains of Sanquhar Castle. The building of the castle was started by the Crichton family in the early 1400's and continued for the next 200 years. Mary Queen of Scots came here after her defeat at the Battle of Langside. The end of the Crichton family came in 1617 when King James VI stayed at the castle on his way to Glasgow the Crichtons welcomed him with a huge display which promptly bankrupted them. It is said that Lord Crichton escorted the King to bed with a lighted torch made from £30,000 (probably about £5 million in today's value) in bond notes that the King owed Lord Crichton. During the war of Scottish Independence the English army took over the castle. The Lord of the Castle at the time was Douglas of Drumlanrig and learning of this and came up with a 'cunning plan' where one man sneaked into the castle and threw open the gates allowing Lord Douglas and his men to seize it back. The English began a counter-attack but were thwarted by William Wallace made famous by Mel Gibson in the film Braveheart. Can you believe they had the first ever Post Office here in Sanquhar!

Turn left when you reach the T-Junction following the road Westwards, the waste heaps should be on your right. You should see Sandy Knowe Wind Farm as you turn right,(The second one), when you do turn and head towards it and when overhead turn onto 270° and climb up to 4000ft. As we are approaching the Prestwick Control Zone it might be a good idea to let them know we are here and ask for clearance.

As you pass over the wind farm if you look to your right you will see the town of New Cumnock this was once a large coal mining fraternity. In 1950 it saw the largest mining disaster in Scotland when 129 men were trapped underground at the Knockshinnoch Mine. After heavy rains a massive subsidence caused part of the ground to collapse. A major operation took place and they brought 129 men to the surface, 13 men died.

Stay on this heading, you should see quite a few Quarry workings on our way. I think I can see Loch Spalander Reservoir of to my left.

Just approaching the village of Patna with the village of Waterside a little further South. Waterside is the location for the Scottish Industrial Railway Centre where they have pleasure rides in steam trains on the short section of track.

I can see the coast ahead, hopefully you will have the same. Turnberry Airfield is directly ahead, with a representation of Culzean (pronounced Culayn) Castle off to my right on the coast. Just keep Turnberry off to our left so we can take a look at it, I don't think it's operational any more. Well the strip doesn't look very healthy it's been taken over by a golf course.

We are now heading for Ailsa Crag unless you've bottled out (I don't blame you if you have) and it's approx;10 miles and due to visibility being down to 10 miles I can't yet see it but turn onto 260°, I am flying at just over 70 knots which means I should be there in just over 8 minutes, if I haven't spotted it in 4 minutes I'm coming back to Kilgerran. So start your stopwatch overhead Turnberry.

Wow 40 seconds and I have spotted it, all we have to do now is land on it. I suggest we have a fly-by first to take a look and weigh the situation up!

While we are flying over to Ailsa I will tell you a little bit about Turnberry. I always thought it was aa Emergency Landing Ground for Prestwick but no it was here long before Prestwick all the way back to WWI , 1917 in fact. It was formed as a school for Aerial Gunnery. The man in charge of the airfield was no less a person Than Lionel W.B.Rees V.C. Now I am going to go down a side street and tell you a bit about the man. He was the son of an army officer and came from Caernarfon in North Wales. He learned to fly at his own expense in 1912. He was seconded into the Royal Flying Corp at the outbreak of the war in 1914. He was awarded the Military Cross in 1915 gazetted as follows:-

For conspicuous gallantry and skill on several occasions, notably the following: — On 21st

September, 1915, when flying a machine with one machine gun, accompanied by Flt-Sargeant Hargreaves, he sighted a large German biplane with two machine guns

2,000 feet below him. He spiralled down and dived at the enemy, who, having the faster machine, manoeuvred to get him broadside on and then opened heavy fire. Despite this, Captain Rees pressed his attack and apparently succeeded in hitting the enemy's engine, for the machine made a quick turn, glided some distance and finally fell just inside the German lines near Herbecourt.

He was awarded the V.C. for the following:-

In the first hours of the [Somme Offensive](#), Rees was on patrol, taking off in [Airco DH.2](#) No. 6015 at 0555 hours. His attempt to join a formation of "British" machines brought an attack from one of the Germans. He shot up the attacker, hitting its fuselage between the two aircrew. As it dove away, Rees attacked a [Roland](#). Long range fire from three other Germans did not discourage Rees from closing on it; it emitted a hazy cloud of smoke from its engine from the 30 rounds Rees pumped into it, and it fled. Rees then singlehandedly went after five more Germans. A bullet in the thigh paralyzed his leg, forcing him to temporarily break off his assault. As the shock of the wound wore off, he was able to pursue the German formation leader, which was leaving after dropping its bomb. He fired his Lewis Machine Gun empty. In frustration, he drew his pistol but dropped it into his DH.2's nacelle. Meanwhile, the German two-seater pulled away above him. The German formation was shattered and scattered. Rees gave up the futile chase and returned to base. Once landed he calmly asked for steps so he could deplane. Once seated on the aerodrome grass, he had a tender fetched to take him to hospital. The valor of his actions earned him the Victoria Cross. Its citation reads:-

On 1 July 1916 at Double Crassieus, France, Major Rees, whilst on flying duties, sighted what he thought was a bombing party of our machines returning home, but were in fact enemy aircraft. Major Rees was attacked by one of them, but after a short encounter it disappeared, damaged. The others then attacked him at long range, but he dispersed them, seriously damaging two of the machines. He chased two others but was wounded in the thigh, temporarily losing control of his aircraft. He righted it and closed with the enemy, using up all his ammunition, firing at very close range. He then returned home, landing his aircraft safely.

He was aged 31.

In 1919 he was honoured with an O.B.E.

In 1933 he single-handedly sailed a ketch across the Atlantic from Wales to Nassau in the Bahamas, for the achievement he was awarded the prestigious Blue Water Medal by the Cruising Club of America. He stayed on in the Bahamas but returned to England When WWII broke and returned as a Wing Commander and was posted to the Middle East where he carried out some of the earliest archeological photography. He was invalided out in 1942 and returned to his beloved Bahamas where he married in 1947 at the ripe old age of 62 and went on to have 3 children. He died of leukaemia in 1955.

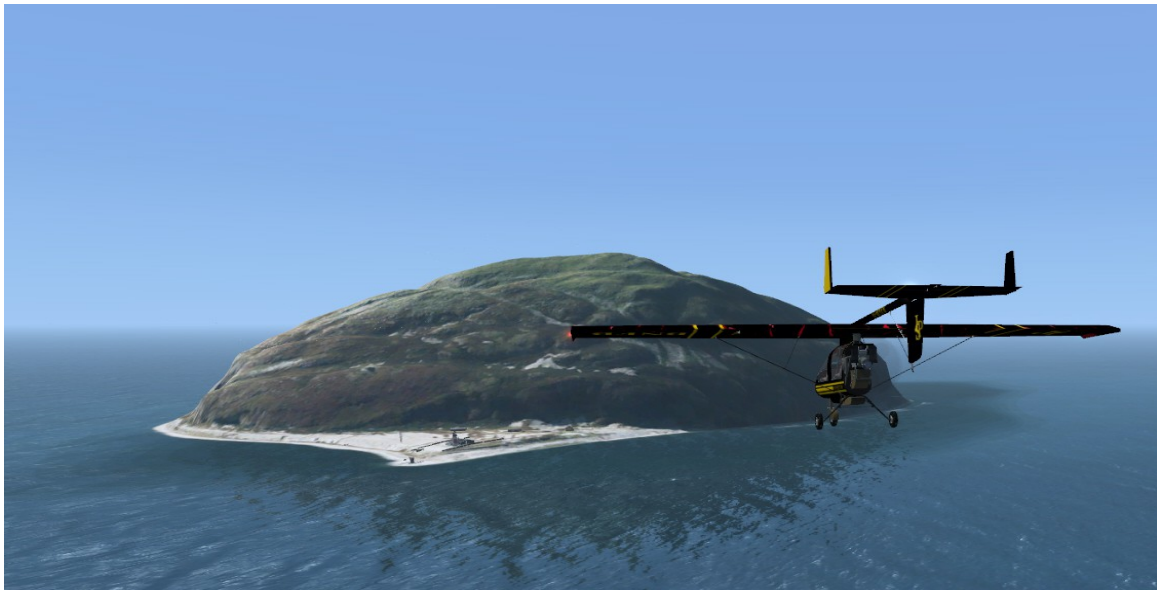


Sorry about the diversion but I just had to tell you about that man, back to Turnberry. As you could see when you flew over the airfield was laid out in regular RAF Pattenrn. The airfield was used mainly for training starting with twin-engined Beauforts. In May 1943 Mosquitoes trained here for 'Highball Trials'. Highball was the name given to the spherical bomb which was designed to skip across the water, it was designed by Barnes Wallis who was also responsible for the other bouncing bomb which destroyed the dams in the Rhur in 1942. They flew up Loch Striven in Scotland using the French Dreadnought the Courbet as their target. Courbet incidentally was taken away and used as a breakwater for the D-Day landings in 1944, it was replaced by HMS Malaya a veteran from WWI.

The intended target for the bomb was the Tirpitz but this was capsized by Lancasters of 617 Squadron with another bomb designed by Barnes Wallis, The Tallboy.

I think we've gone down another back alley we'll be mid-atlantic by the time we finish this!

In common with most airfields at the time Turnberry got its fair share of strays the most being 22 Lancasters returning from a raid over Germany in 1944. The airfield closed in 1946. It re-opened in the 1960's for light aircraft use especially during the golf tournaments.



Okay Ailsa beckons, I am feeling nervous, this aircraft can land on a sixpence but I'm still scared!



I have just been advised if I am going to Land from the 24 direction I will have to keep the foghorn on my left, landing between that and the cliff wall with a space of about 4ft! On no account must I try and land above the foghorn or I will run out of space. We have to stop before we reach a large red and white marker otherwise we get thrown back in the air to try again. If we land from the 06 end keep the wing tip 3 feet away from the cliff face!! Oh and watch out for the seabirds? What have I let myself in for?

When your stopwatch is reading 4 minutes power down and descend to 1000ft speed around 50 knots. Landing speed will have to be 40knots. Okay here goes, if you don't hear from me again, it's been nice knowing you.



What a pilot, first time, tricky but I didn't even get my feet wet! Okay you can finish for today if you like, me I'm just going to pop over to Kilkerran and spend the night there. I've done enough for today.

Check you haven't damaged your aircraft then slew as far back on 06 far as you can. Full flap, brakes on, full power, wait until you reach 6000 revs then let her go, rotate at 40. Turn onto 060° approx; heading back towards Turnberry. Climb up to 3000ft. Don't forget to dump your flaps.

I think we will take a quick look at Culzean Castle before we land and I will tell you a little of its long history.

Culzean Castle

Apparently there has been a structure of sorts since the early 1400's which was known as Coif Castle or 'House of Cove'. The castle was begun by Sir Thomas Kennedy (probably a distant ancestor to the American Kennedy's) who was given the land by his brother Gilbert Cassilis a man you would not like to upset. In 1565 he had a run in over some land with a man called Alan Stewart, captured him and imprisoned him in his residence-Dunure Castle. He then proceeded to roast him like an ox over the fire until he signed the said piece of land over to him. By the 17th Century when times began to get a little more civilised pleasure gardens were constructed. A sudden influx of money in the 18th Century saw the castle transformed into the one we see today. In 1945 the Kennedy Family gave the castle and grounds to the National Trust for Scotland, primarily to avoid the Thousands in inheritance tax. One stipulation was that the top floor was given to Dwight D Eisenhower as a thank-you from the Scottish People for all his hard work during the war.

Eisenhower at Culzean Castle in 1959



Culzean Castle was also used as the castle of Lord Summersisle in the film 'WickerMan' starring Christopher Lee and Edward Woodward. Seems a long way to come from Cornwall where the film was based!

Stay on this heading and as we approach land I can see the castle off to my right, turn and circle it when you see it and aim back towards Turnhouse, we're going to Land at Killkerran.

The large hill behind the castle is Mochram Hill.

After over 600 years there seems to be very little evidence of coastal erosion around the castle.

There is one other thing, a few miles North of here is Prestwick Airport allegedly the only place in the British Isles where Elvis Presley visited. Although recent reports in the news tell a different story. Tommy Steele actually spent a day with him apparently showing him the sights of London. Tommy Swore never to tell anyone and was saddened that it was now public knowledge.

As I fly over Turnhouse it looks like the 21/03 runways look in good enough condition to land on, don't know whether it is in use though.

Kilkerran is just off to our left as we pass over Turnhouse so power down and turn onto approx;100° and prepare for landing. NDB is 200.7. If you don't have an ADF check your GPS.

Hope you got down safely, this will be my last flight for a while as I really have to update my Northern-England Scenery as I have found a couple of new airstrips to add while updating the rest. Below is a screen shot of Crook Heights Farm in Withnell, Lancashire.

