

Hanley to Ettington

I thought it would be a good idea if we flew into Ettington and get an idea of what it looks like from the air. So if you are up for it start FSX select Hanley from your airport menu. Set your clock to 10.00am weather to suit yourself. This flight is only about 50 miles so will take us less than half an hour.

Select which aircraft you wish to fly (I would choose one with an ADF), as for me I'm sticking with the Streak, I've tried the rest but this beats them all. Carry out your checks then line up on 05. Power up climb up to 1000ft then turn and head back towards the airfield, when overhead the field turn onto 105°, cruise altitude 2500ft.

If you look quickly to your right you may just catch sight of the Malvern Hills away in the distance. Just ahead I can see what looks remarkably like a grass strip. I'll have to investigate that.

At my speed of 100mph I should reach our first waypoint Droitwich in around 6 minutes.

I know how difficult it is to maintain an accurate heading without the luxury of autopilot, you'll know you're on the correct heading if you pass over a small brown lake (not easy to make out though), while ahead is the River Severn and a couple of small villages. You should also be able to recognise the town of Droitwich by a large lake called 'Great Pool' just to the West of the town.

I have installed Just Flight's RevolutionX which I strongly recommend as it makes finding these grass strips as difficult as in real life and really populates the landscape.

As we pass over the River Severn just to the South of our position lies the City of Worcester.

Okay six minutes into the flight and I am just touching the Southern edge of Droitwich. When you are overhead the town turn onto a heading of 110° (start your stopwatch if you have one) . Our destination field is approx; 40 miles away. Which by my calculation at my speed of 100mph should take me approx; 24/25 minutes. The motorway we cross over is the M5 and off to my right is the large city of Worcester.

In the Roman era Droitwich was known as Salinae, whether this was to do with the rock salt they excavated I don't but it sounds very like the word saline. Anyhow the river around here has a very high salt content and the town is known really as Droitwich Spa because way back in Victorian times people began to flock here to bathe in the strong saltwater which supposedly had great health giving properties but unfortunately after a very high flood in 2007 the baths had to close, I don't know whether they have re-opened yet.)

Ahead and just on our left shortly is the Roman town of Alcester, we have flown just south of the Alcester grass strip (interesting landing here as you have to pass under the electric wires at the end of the strip) , also off to our right are Long Marston and Bidford airfields.

Long Marston originated life as a WWII airfield opening in 1941 as a Ferry Training Unit and over the years handled aircraft from Whitley bombers to Hurricane fighters. Many women used

to carry out this dangerous job flying all types of aircraft from Spitfires to Halifax bombers, the famous aviator Amy Johnson was one of these brave girls before being lost over the Channel in 1941. The airfield is a busier place today being home to a microlight school and being heavily used for television and film production one of which was the fire at the Crossroads Motel years ago. Take a look on their website and you'll see what's going on there.

There are very few landmarks to guide us along our flight that's why I'm using navigation instead of following the roads. If you have ADF tune in 200.9 that's the NDB located on the strip at Ettington. At 12minutes passed Droitwich mine has become active showing the field off to my left. Turning to head towards it (if your aircraft of choice doesn't have the luxury of an ADF switch on map view in the World menu, or alternatively if you have GPS you can see it on there as well).

I can see the airfield of Wellesbourne Mountford in the distance our field is just south of this.

Wellesbourne Mountford airfield is another WWII airfield begun in the summer of 1940. The original owners of the area were the Littler family who were given a matter of hours to remove their herds of cows. The Airstrip was ready in 1941 and was used to train pilots throughout the war. The airfield was attacked by enemy aircraft about 4 times during the conflict but sustained little damage. The airfield today is still very active in the Flying community and is also home to a Vulcan Bomber which flew in in 1984 and liked it so much it decided to stay. Funnily enough the Littler family bought the land back from the Government in 1964.

Although the ADF is invaluable it doesn't tell me how far away the field is but the GPS comes in handy for that even though all the Autogen scenery makes it very difficult to spot the field but I can make it out hope to see you down there, keep an eye out for a large building. My admiration goes out to the real pilots finding these fields, it's difficult on the sim let alone in real life,

If any of my existing customers would like to update their Farm Strip's to the full 15Gb let me have your details and I will send you an update. A donation would be appreciated for the disk and postage. Thanks. Neil