Croeso i Gymru - Welcome to Wales, a small country with a varied and dramatic landscape.

Wales, bordered by England to its east and the Atlantic Ocean and Irish Sea to its west, is a country that is part of the United Kingdom and the island of Great Britain. With over 1,200 km of coastline, it is still largely mountainous, with the highest peaks in the north and central areas, including Snowdon the highest summit with over 1.000 meters. The Capital of Wales is a de facto designation usually applied to Cardiff since 1955. Although it shares a close political and social history with the rest of Great Britain, the country has retained a distinct cultural identity and is officially bilingual. Over 580,000 Welsh language speakers live in Wales, where it is spoken by a majority of the population in the north and west. The climate in Wales is usually quite moderate and very similar to the rest of the UK, but it can also be slightly unpredictable - which we hopefully will not experience during our flight adventure. But as most of the rain tends to fall in the autumn and early winter months we are confident that we have a smooth flight with a spectacular view.

As mentioned in my previous flight adventure FTX EU England, downloading the 2.3 GB might take some time but the self-explaining installation itself if quite easy – please note an online validation is mandatory during the setup process. The add-on comes with a 24 page pdf-user guide for FTX Wales and a 22 page pdf-user guide for EGFF. Both are worth reading as they are containing apart from the compatibility notes, the coverage map and installation guidelines various settings hints and explains them. Additionally users find a section on the 3D Lighting System as well as the Day and Night Modes which gives the product a performance boost by disabling these tools and in the EGFF manual the airport charts. The FTX Central Control Panel will be installed along with the scenery or if you have Orbx products already, add FTX Wales to it.

FTX Wales has over 20.780 square kilometers of FTX scenery along with 10 meter custom mesh for superb definition. In addition the product features custom Welsh objects and vegetation such as castles, ruins, farmland and plains along with major and minor airports upgraded. The Cardiff (EGFF) airport in payware quality is included free of charge in the package.

I have not changed any of the configuration around which can be done either in the FTX Control Panel or the Day and Night tweaker. And of course Orbx offers in this package not only four seasons but five as ‘hard winter’ is included in the region as well. Furthermore the Aero tool allows you to install optional airport textures to any airfield globally.

I will tell a different flight story this time, it will be mixed with my personal comments in 'dark grey' about the FTX Wales scenery. Please note that we are doing a Wales flight adventure and therefore only touching the EGFF airport to a certain extend although it can be considered as full bonus add-on and deserves more attention.
We are arriving at Cardiff (EGFF) from Frankfurt with the A320 from Aer Lingus, which is the international airport serving Cardiff and the rest of South, Mid and West Wales. EGFF is located about 19 kilometers southwest of Cardiff city centre, in the Vale of Glamorgan. Before we call it a day we have dinner at the De Courceys Manor restaurant and enjoy the Welsh Black beef and Welsh Mountain lamb which is world renowned as well as the award winning cheeses that we have afterwards.

Personally I liked the arrival into EGFF during dawn - nevertheless taxiing at the airport I realized that the frame rate went down to 10-15 FPS but have to admit that I did put all sliders in the setting section to the far right. As mentioned I have not used the FTX Day Night Switcher to increase the FPS but I would recommend playing around with this little tool if you need a higher frame rate. The airport itself is nicely lit during night time with all relevant lamps and lights properly in place.

As soon as the sun rises we head back to the airport. We hear that Thomson Airways is the largest carrier to use the airport in terms of passenger numbers, whilst Flybe has the largest number of
movements in EGFF. After sneaking around the passenger terminal we find the British Airways Maintenance Center where the company is providing heavy airframe and engineering maintenance for the British Airways fleet and third party carriers. In front of the airport we see a huge number of cars and busses which we expected as over 1 million passengers pass through the airport each year.

There is a lot to explore around EGFF especially as you have the GA section on the opposite for the airline terminal. Via the EGFF Control Panel either from the main FTX Central interface or the desktop icon scenery features such as PeopleFlow or 3D grass can be modified or simply disabled if you don’t require them.

It is time to walking over to the General Aviation Apron to prepare the Twin Otter for today’s flight. We found out that the airport was home for many years to a number of flying clubs and small general aviation operators. Still we feel that the GA apron is quite busy today with lots of trucks driving around and people boarding their planes. As we reach the BA Twin Otter we find the flight plan on the pilot’s seat and see that we have a short round Wales trip today.

It is worth sneaking behind the buildings, especially behind the fire station as you find - with the latest FTX patch - a children’s playground or better a skateboard ramp park. I don’t know the original set up of this area but a slide and some small objects would have looked even better and more appropriate for kids.
As we are leaving EGFF from runway 30 and climb to 2,500 feet we planned that our heading for the next 66 nm will be 296 degrees which means that we are also flying over Swansea. The DHC-6 is gently travelling right of the Welsh coast and we hear from our passenger that Wales is obviously the first country in the world to have a formal trail the whole way around its coast - called Wales Coast Path. And this is what we noted in particular; a rough cost with a lot of bays. Approaching the Swansea Bay we spot the Liberty Stadium in front of us - sports stadium and conferencing venue in the Landore area. To our left hand side we can now also see the Swansea Airport (EGFH) who mainly handles light helicopters and small private aircraft.

Using the FTX Wales manual before or during the flight you can be sure not to miss any POIs which you find on the KMZ Coverage & Features Map. The Swansea airport has also received some upgrades - in particular I noticed the PeopleFlow. Flying over EGFH I checked the frame rate and was surprised to see 40 FPS and more with my settings.
Continuing our journey to the Haverfordwest Aerodrome (EGFE) - also known as Withybush Aerodrome - we are amazed by the countryside that passes by. Coming close to the Carmarthen Bay area we notice the onshore wind park close to the coast. UK has a huge amount of wind resource, so it’s no surprise that especially Wales is looking into renewable energy. We plan a little detour as we heard of the famous Thorn Island Fort situated on a rocky islet. The Fort was one of three forts which formed the outer line of defences built to protect the Royal Dockyard in Pembroke Dock from seaward attack. Flying to the right we are approaching EGFE which is located on the northern outskirts of Haverfordwest town, close to the village of Withybush. We quickly unload our good and only minutes later we taxi back to the active runway.

Orbx recommended to fly down low and slow in order to see the Welsh buildings and trees. We followed that advise and were amazed how accurate the farmland, plains and of course the coastline in this area are. Furthermore we find a lot of roads, motorways, railroad tracks and rivers that who are embedded nicely into the scenery. The EGFE airport has been upgraded with static objects like airplanes and the PeopleFlow technology.
Back in the air the Twin Otter is heading north to the next destination Llanbedr Airfield (EGOD). Instead of flying the planned course of 031 degrees which would take us over the Irish Sea we continue travelling over the country to get a better view of all the nice little villages and places of interest. After take off we detour towards the coast to find St David's Cathedral which reaches back fourteen centuries and survived the plunder of the Norsmen in the Dark Ages. We now fly along the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and continue our journey along the coast until we reach the Gwynedd area where we have a nice view at the Harlech Castle, medieval fortification, before we make a 180 degree turn and arrive south into the Llanbedr Airfield. EGOD is a former military facility located in the Snowdonia National Park, but nowadays the site has been used for agricultural purposes. During the final we spot the golf course which we continuously see during our flight adventure.

The POIs have been nicely modeled and it is truly a pleasure flying along the lush coastline. In EGOD we spotted some old military hangars as well as new facilities. Some people were present on the apron as well which indicated PeopleFlow on this upgraded airfield. The scenery impresses with its agricultural areas and little villages on the one hand and quarries, chimneys and urban areas on the other.
Continuing our route we fly north and are now moving into the country and away from the coast to reach Chester Hawarden Airport (EGNR) which is located close to the border with England. The countryside is now getting more and more hilly the further we move into the heartland. About half way through our journey we approach the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, a navigable aqueduct that carries the Llangollen Canal over the valley of the River Dee. Just minutes later we fly over the Wrexham Racecourse Ground, which is recognized as the world's oldest international football stadium that still hosts international matches. Arriving at the EGNR airport we park the Twin Otter next to the building with the Union Flag.

Above the Menai Strait which separates the island of Anglesey from the mainland of Wales we find some more POIs. We could cover this area in today’s flight adventure but VFR pilots won’t be disappointed taking an excursion here. We noticed a lot of hand placed objects such as smoking chimneys, castles, power poles and wind engines all over the scenery. A nice detail is the Union Jack which is flies in the wind as well as some fences around the airport area.
As dusk is falling we head to the Shobdon Aerodrome (EGBS) which is our second last stop for today. While flying over the principal area Powys we see a lot of villages and small towns in this mountainous countryside. Although it is getting darker we see the different elevations in this sparsely populated region. During our approach of the Shobdon Aerodrome close to the Welsh hills, the Twin Otter slowly descents to runway 27 with flaps set to 30 degrees. The airfield is managed by the Herefordshire Aero Club since 1993 who provides light aircraft flight training together with aircraft storage and maintenance services.

My frame rate was usually always over 30 FPS and now switching to dusk I still get the same FPS even though I have not used the Day&Night Tweaker. One of the pictures above shows that also farm houses in rural areas are lite up during night time. Furthermore the EGBS airport is nicely illuminated and received some more upgrades than other airports with static objects such as gliders.
As it was getting late we had to continue with the last leg the next morning only - which gave us the opportunity to do some low flying in the Cardiff area and look for points of interest before landing in EGFF. Besides Barry with its docks and Yacht Club we of course also found the Millennium Stadium as well as the Cardiff Castle. Furthermore up north the Transporter Bridge and Newport City Bridge.

The Cardiff area looks a bit rural to me but still there are so many interesting things to explore that this doesn't really matter. Plenty of small airstrips are present in this region and invite simmers for touch-and-go legs in the South Wales.

Summary:

No doubt that FTX Wales is a perfect add-on to FTX England, but what amazes me is the fact that there is a difference in countryside and vegetation compared to England. VFR pilots now have even more opportunities to fly in Europe and Wales is the perfect start. The Cardiff airport - which we haven't covered in detail - is also a ideal destination for virtual airliner pilots. I can absolutely recommend the new add-on and will for sure come back for more Welsh flying. It is also recommended to try other seasons as spring and even winter makes the region look beautiful as well.

The add-on FTX EU Wales can be purchased via the FlightSimStore for currently AUD 40,95. A patch is available at the FTX Support website which does not only bug fixes but also adds new features such as a skateboard ramp park with children playing behind the fire station on the GA side of the EGFF airport or day-time approach lights with new lighting effects.

The **DHC-6 Twin Otter** can be purchased via Aerosoft; the British Airways repaint is included in the software. The **Airbus X Extended** can also be downloaded from the Aerosoft Shop for currently EUR 39,99.

The flight adventure can be found on [www.twinotter.de](http://www.twinotter.de) from May 3rd onwards featuring pop-up pictures. For news please visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Twinotter.Homecockpit](http://www.facebook.com/Twinotter.Homecockpit)

Always Happy Landings

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