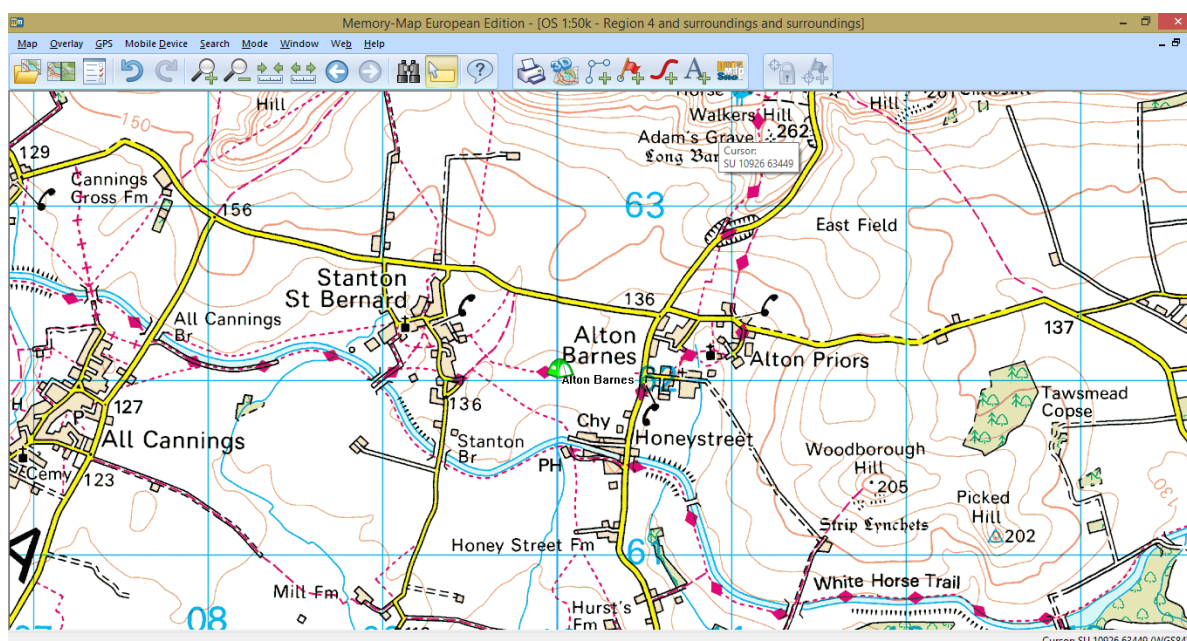


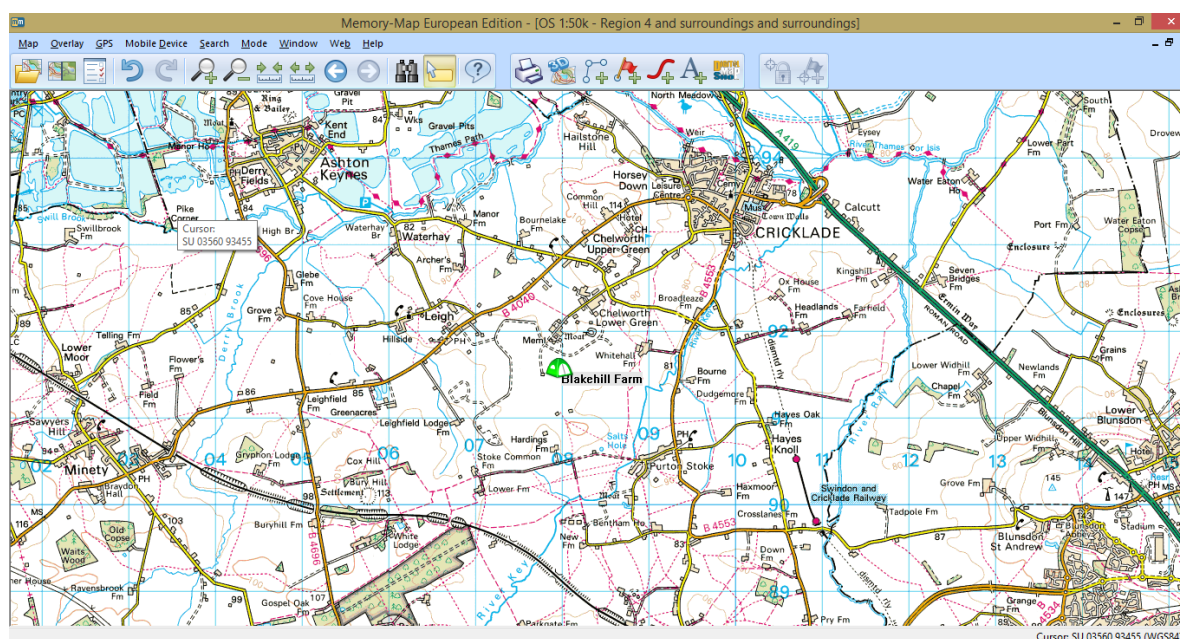
## Wiltshire Airfields – Basis of a VMCC Social Run

Notes “Extracted from Wiltshire Airfields in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War” by David Berryman validated by searches on the Internet

**Alton Barnes** - SU100620 2 miles West of Pewsey. Used from 1936 as a practise landing ground by the CFS at Upavon. Initially just a field with a windsock. It was upgraded to RLG (Relief Landing Ground) when other building and defences were added as well as blister hangars. Later the site came under the control of RAF Clyffe Pypard, the home of No 29 EFTS. It was derequisitioned in 1947 and reverted to farmland. There are the remains of some air raid shelters and other buildings but the hangars are long gone. There are also a couple of monuments to commemorate the wartime use and the aircrew who were killed flying there.



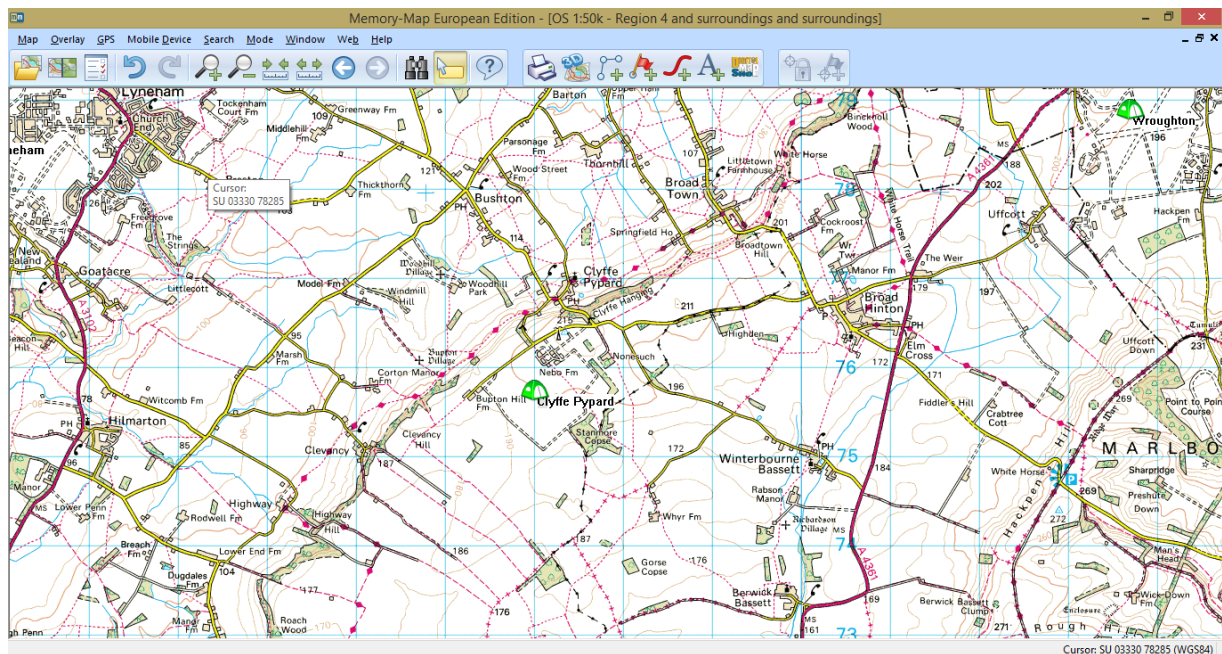
**Blakehill Farm** – SU080915 2 miles SW Cricklade S B4040. Opened 1944. Tarmac runways hangars and other buildings. Overflow from Down Ampney and mostly used for Dakotas and gliders for the invasion of Europe. Remained in use in part until 2000. Runways used as hardcore for M4 in 70's. There is memorial stone to No 437 RCAF.



**Boscombe Down** – SU180398 SE Amesbury. Opened in 1917 and still in use today has had many roles but mainly associated with the Aeroplane & Armament Experimental Establishment activities. See Porton Down Map.

**Castle Combe** – ST855768 West of Chippenham. Opened in 1941 as a practise landing ground for the Flying training units at Hullavington. Later had other Training units based there. Grass strip with paved perimeter track later Somerfield tracking was used to create runways due to water logged ground conditions but this continued to be a problem as did persistent poor visibility. Disposed of in 1948 and now a motor racing circuit. Some of original buildings are still in use.

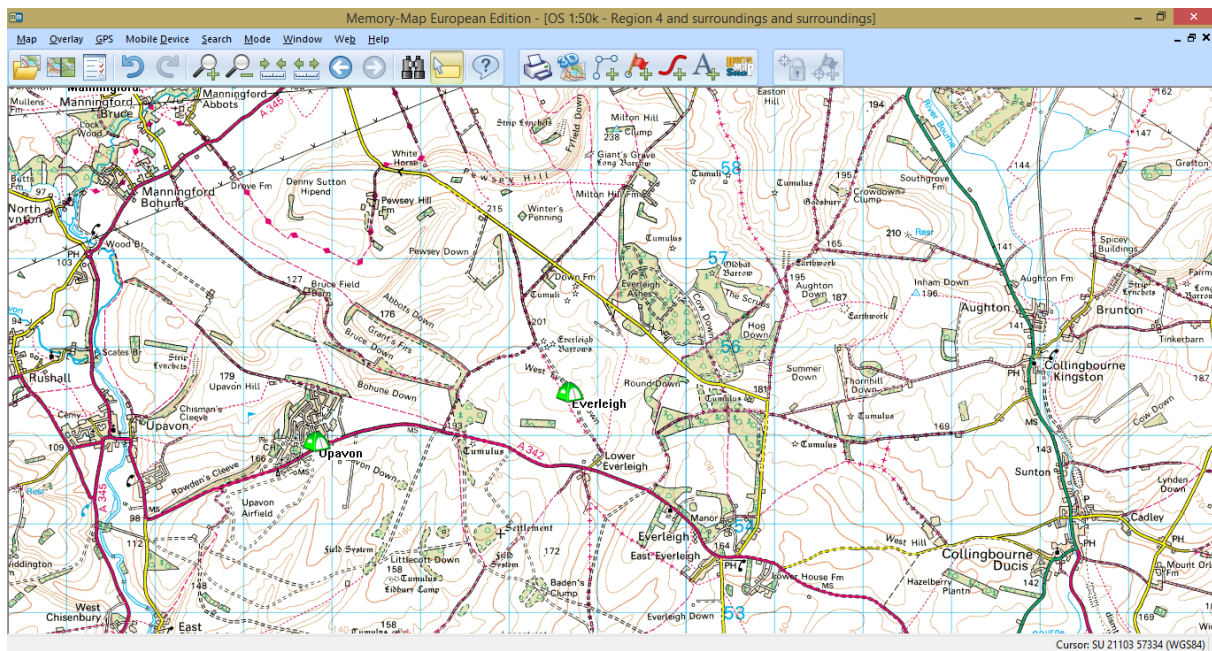
**Clyffe Pypard** – SU070755 3.5 miles S of Wootton Bassett. Opened in 1941 and used by No 29 Elementary FTS. Four grass strips with some paved peri tracks. Hangars and other buildings were erected with huts for accommodation. They also used Manningford and Alton Barnes as RLGs. No 29EFTS was disbanded in 1947 and the airfield closed. Some building and a hangar remain.



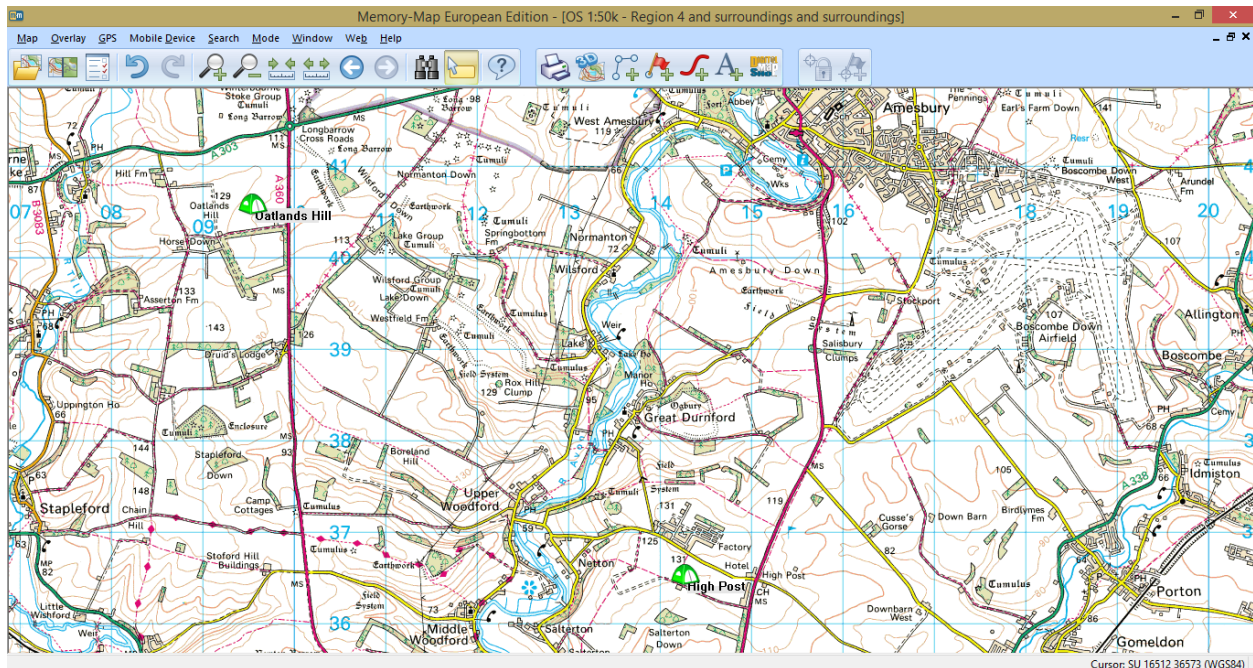
**Colerne** – ST803715 4 miles NE Bath. Started in 1939 and opened in 1941. Three tarmac runways and all the associated buildings and hangars typical of a permanent base of that era. Originally used as an MU and then as a fighter base including jet fighters late in the war. Latterly it became a transport base with Hastings and an MU for Hercules maintenance. Now an Army base

**Everleigh** – SU185556 4 miles E of Upavon. This was another RLG (Relief Landing Ground) set up for the CFS at Upavon in 1940 and was basically just a field with a windsock. As the field was surrounded by trees it was ideal to practise emergency landings. From March 1942 it was also used by No 15 MU as storage site after a NE-SW airstrip and concrete taxiways were added. Further buildings and a Super Robin hangar were added and by 1943 it was used for storing a lot of aircraft from Lyneham, Colerne and Hullavington mainly Stirlings, Spitfires and Mosquitoes. It closed in 1945. Little if anything remains today though one farm building may be the Super Robin hangar.





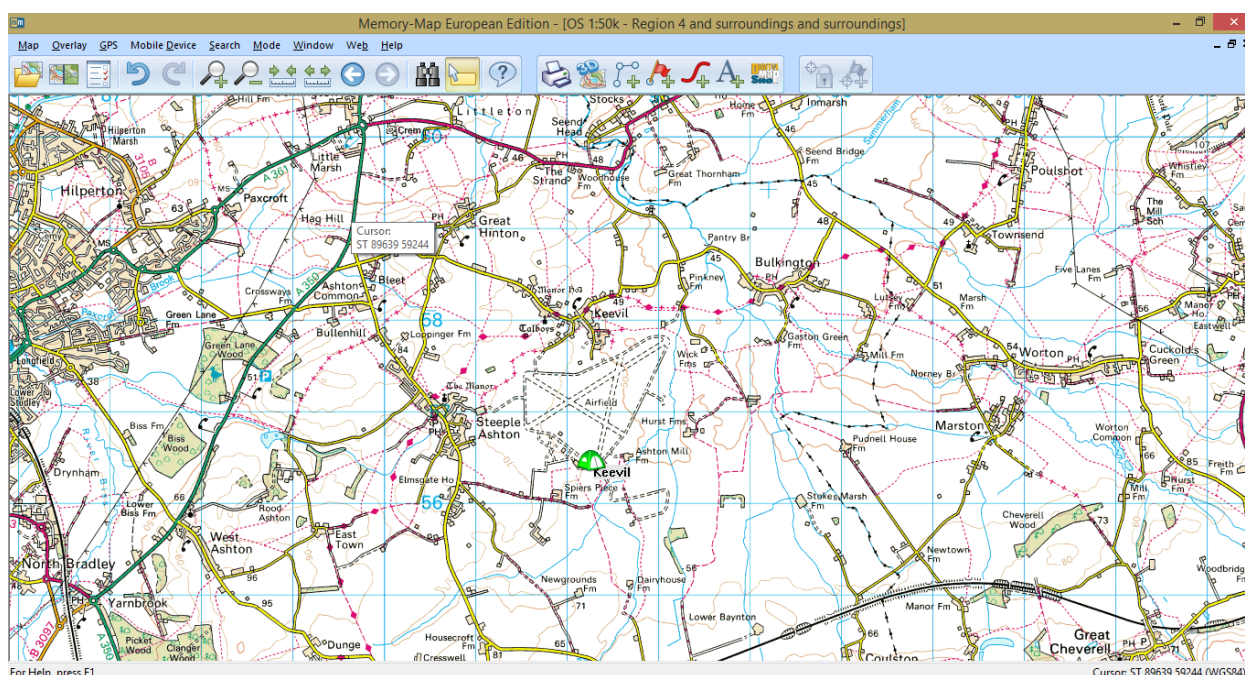
**High Post** – SU145365 3 miles North of Salisbury. Created as a private grass airstrip in the early 1930s, taken over by the RAF 1939. Had a variety of uses mostly connected with training and test flying. It was also one of the distributed locations where Spitfires were assembled and test flown. This included an experimental jet powered version of the Spitfire called the Attacker. RAF activity ceased in 1946 and it closed in 1947 when the flying club moved to Thruxton. The High Post Hotel which was probably the officers mess still remains and some other buildings visible from the road to Upper Woodford.



**Hullavington** – ST900810 5 miles N of Chippenham. This was a standard RAF design with tarmac runways and permanent buildings completed in 1937 initially as a Flying Training Station and later as an Aircraft Support Unit to hold reserves of aircraft to back up flying stations. Later it became a base

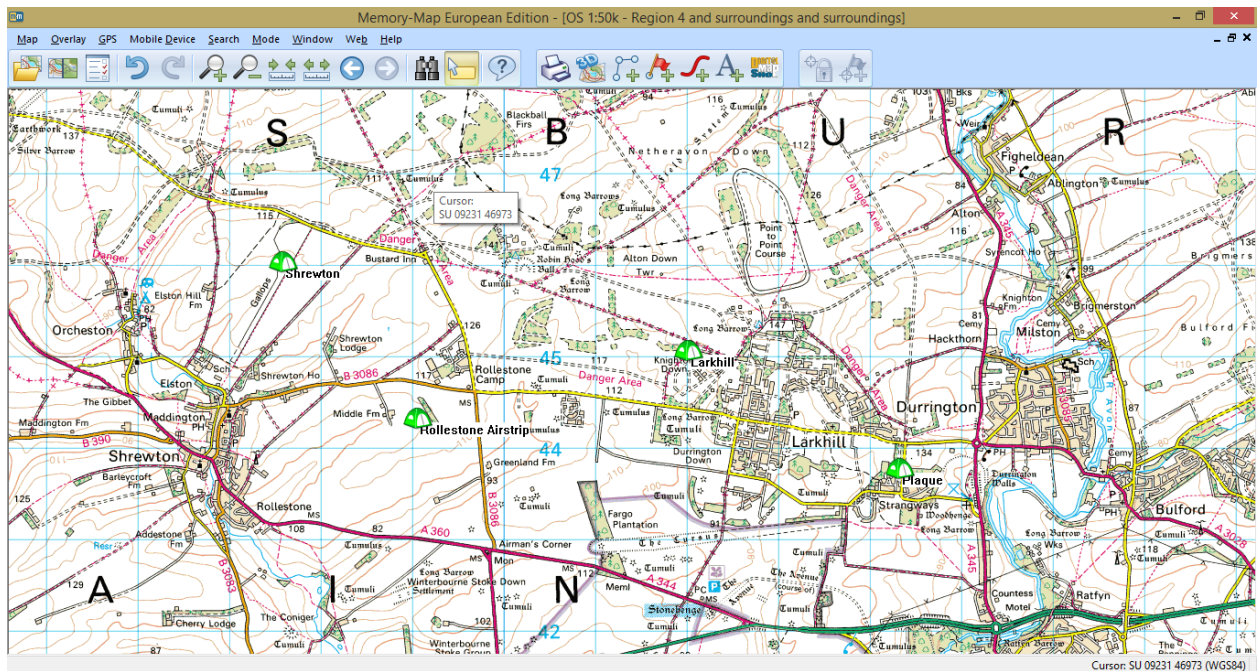
for the Empire Central Flying School to give advanced training to pilots whose basic training had been done overseas – later to become the Empire Flying School. The ASU renamed 10MU had over 100 aircraft in store by the end of the war and was not disbanded until 1959. Later Hullavington was used by the RAF Balloon Unit and was a Parachute Training school as well as being the main parachute packing unit for the RAF. Active flying ceased in 1965 and it closed as an RAF station in 1991. It became an Army base in 1993 and is still virtually intact as built in 1937.

**Keevil** – CST922571 4 miles E of Trowbridge. Planned in 1940 as a fighter pilot training station it opened in 1942 with 3 tarmac runways and was due to become a bomber OTU. In fact it became a base for the build up of forces for an airborne invasion of Europe and also a storage depot. Accommodation was provided for 2500 personnel and the first occupants were units of the US 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force flying Dakotas. Spitfires built in factories dotted around Trowbridge were also test flown from Keevil. It became USAAF base 471 in 1943 and Mustangs also operated from there. In 1944 it reverted to the RAF who used it as base to fly Stirlings towing Horsa gliders for the invasion of Europe. It was put into C&M in 1947 and some of the outlying buildings were disposed of. From 1955-1964 it was a standby USAF base. Many of the building and the runways still remain and it is used for training for Transport and Army co-operation flying to this day.



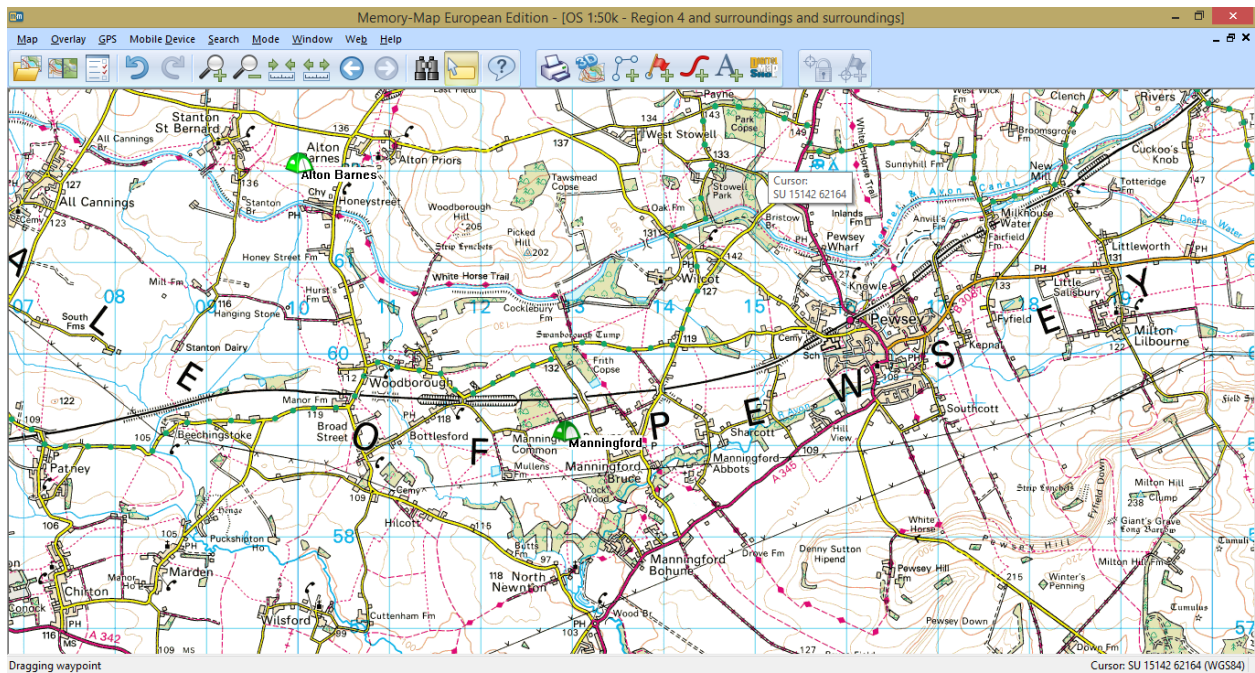
**Larkhill** – ST120450 3 miles NW of Amesbury. This is perhaps the earliest site of military aviation being the location of the Royal Engineers Balloon Section around 1885. It was used for aircraft trials and was a training school from around 1912 to 1914 when the school moved to Brooklands. The site at Knighton Down N of Larkhill was used subsequently for training and became RAF Larkhill in 1936. It was used for Army co-operation flying during WWII and was later handed back to the Army. There is no airfield as such but a strip is marked out for use during exercises including Hercules from Lyneham (now at Brize Norton). Some of the original buildings remain in Wood Road Larkhill now used as stores and there is a plaque nearby commemorating the site of the first military airfield in the UK.



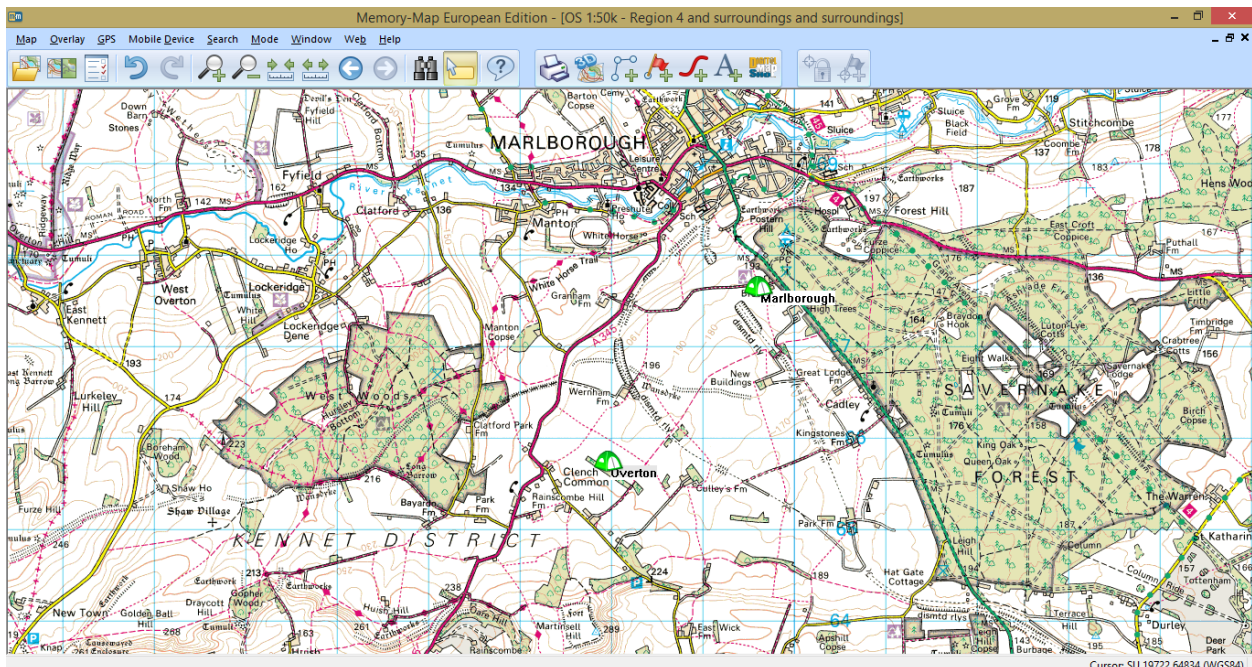


**Lyneham** – SU005785 8 miles SW of Swindon. Surveyed as a possible airfield site in the early 1930s, it was finally opened in 1940 as an ASU as No 33MU with tarmac runways and associated accommodation buildings. The airfield became so congested with stockpiled aircraft that an overflow site was created at Townsend N of Yatesbury and later Everleigh. Lyneham remained operational, mainly as transport base until 2012 when the Hercules squadrons were moved to Brize Norton. It is now a joint Service base.

**Manningford** – SU130590 – 2 miles SW Pewsey. Another site used for landing and takeoff practise by aircraft from the CFS at Upavon later used by Clyffe Pypard and then Yatesbury aircraft. It was basically just a meadow on Manningford Bohune common with a windsock. It was closed in 1947 and nothing is thought to remain showing its wartime use.

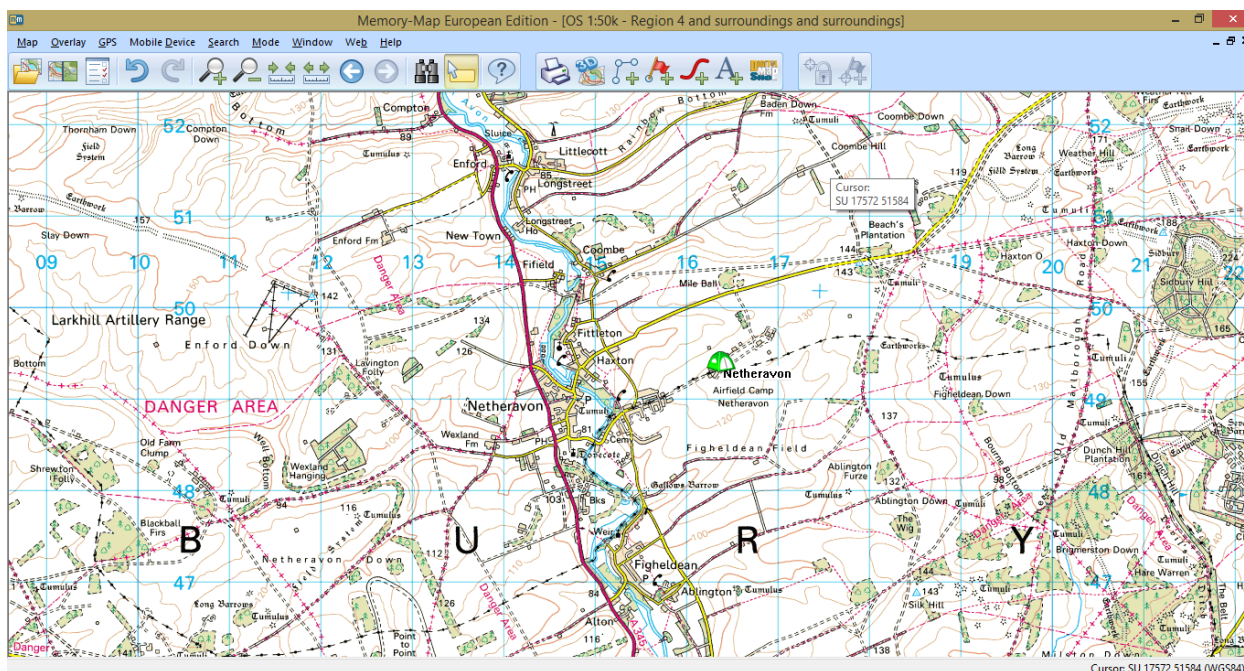


**Marlborough** – SU193678 1 mile S Marlborough. Opened in 1935 as a private airfield by the Earl of Cardigan. The CFS at Upavon used it for forced landing practise in the week and full time when war was declared. It was closed as an RLG in 1942 and replaced by Overton Heath. It never reopened after the war and a hangar is visible from the A346 may be the only remaining evidence.

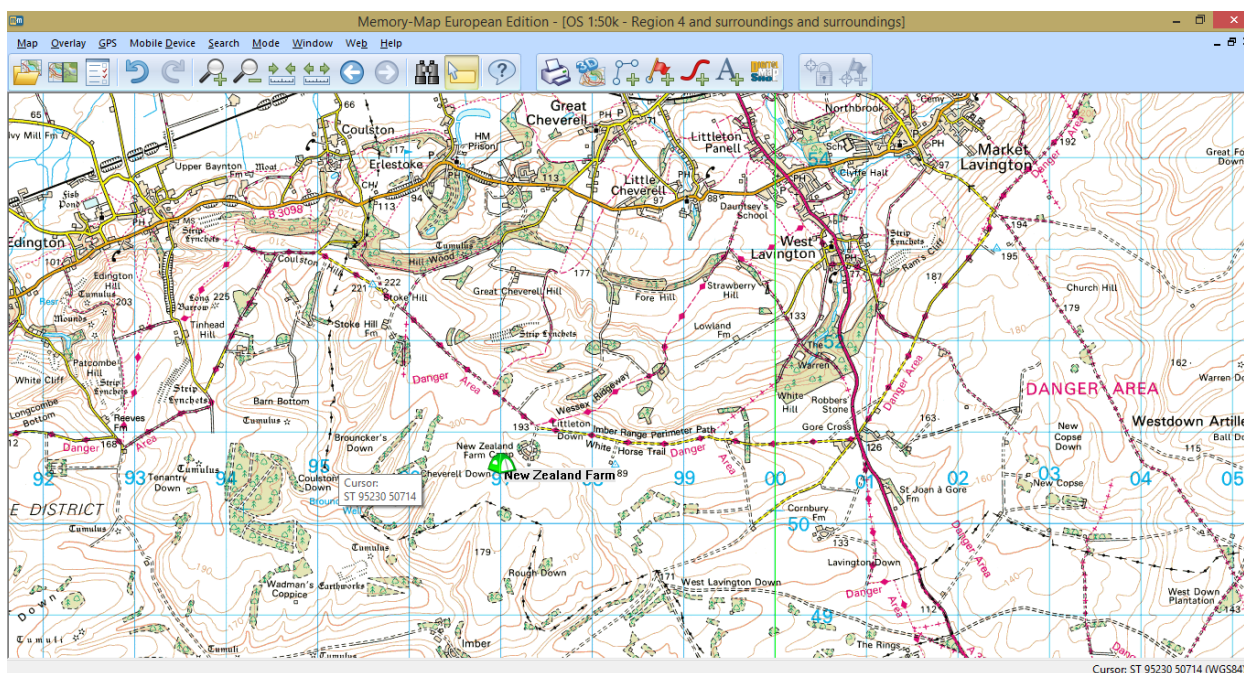




**Netheravon** – SU165493 4 miles N Amesbury. This airfield was set up in 1913 as the base for the RFC. It had two marked out airstrips with hangars and other buildings. Squadrons were formed here before despatch to France during WWI. It then became an RAF Flying Training Station and retained that role until 1941 when it became a base for airborne operations including gliders and was actively involved with the Invasion of Europe in 1944. This use ceased in 1950 and the station became the HQ of the RAF police. It was handed back to the army in 1963 and is still an active base with military flying.

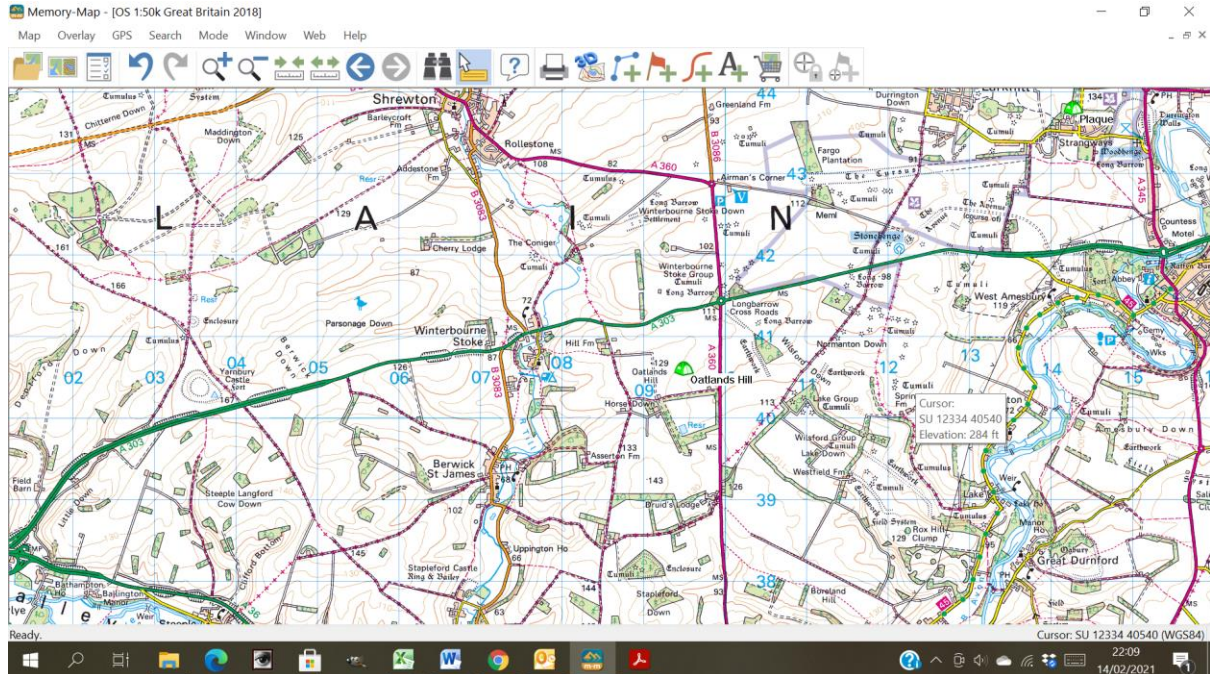


**New Zealand Farm** – ST970505 on the Imber ranges SW of West Lavington. This was another RLG for Upavon but set up for night flying training in 1940. There was messing and accommodation for the ground crews who spent a week at a time on-site laying out the flare paths etc. This ceased in 1943 when the Imber ranges were expanded and made the site a danger zone. Later used by Boscombe Down for weapons testing the strip is still operational for aircraft using the Imber ranges.

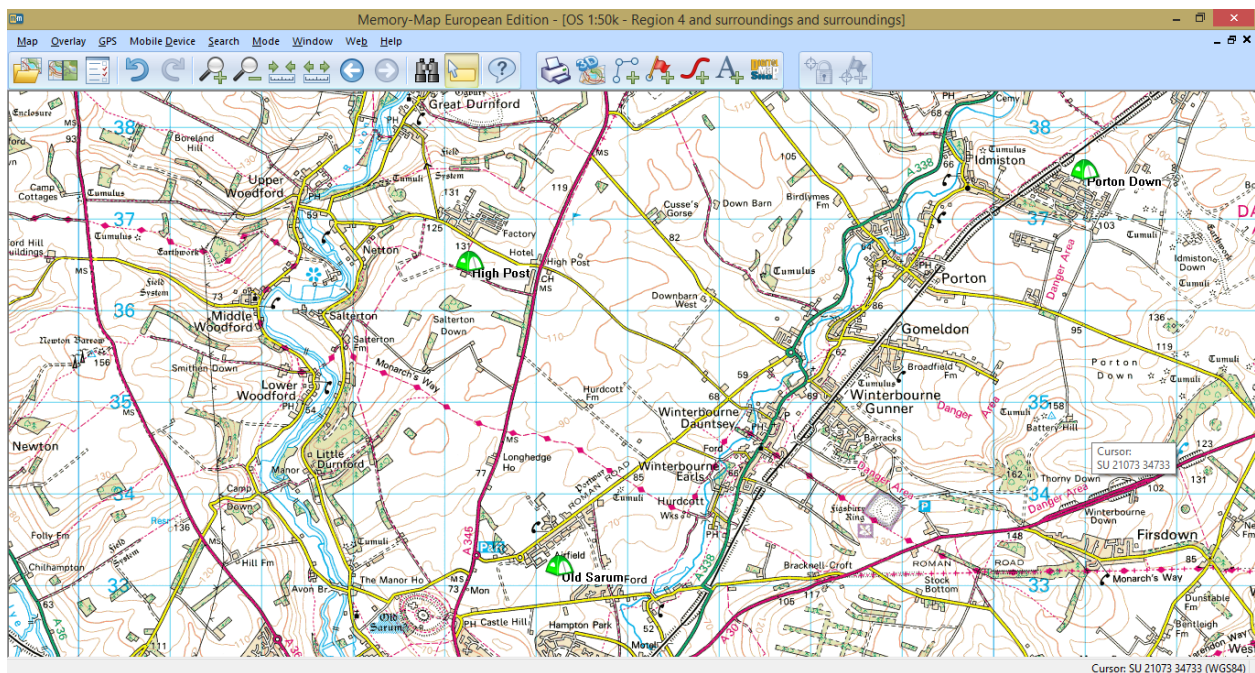




**Oatlands Hill** – SU095405 3.5 miles W Amesbury. Opened in 1941 as a satellite to Old Sarum for training Army Co-operation units in off base operations. There were a few buildings and a number of blister hangars. It was finally closed down in 1945. There are a couple of the original buildings still visible one now used as a private house. The last of the blister hangars disappeared only a couple of years ago.



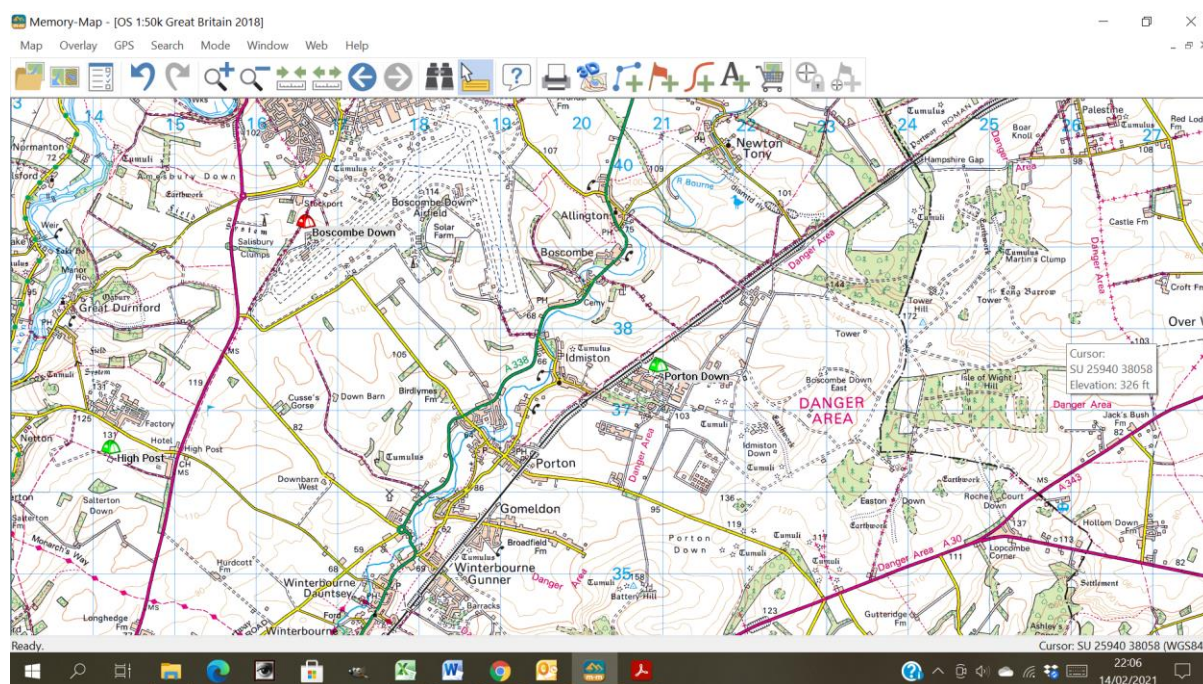
**Old Sarum** - SU153335 2 miles N Salisbury. Another very early airfield built in 1917 and originally known as Ford Farm. Used for Bomber aircrew training in WWI and retained as an RAF training airfield mostly for army cooperation flying. Used operationally through WWII and was handed over to the army in 1971. Closed as a military base in 1979 but still in use for private flying.



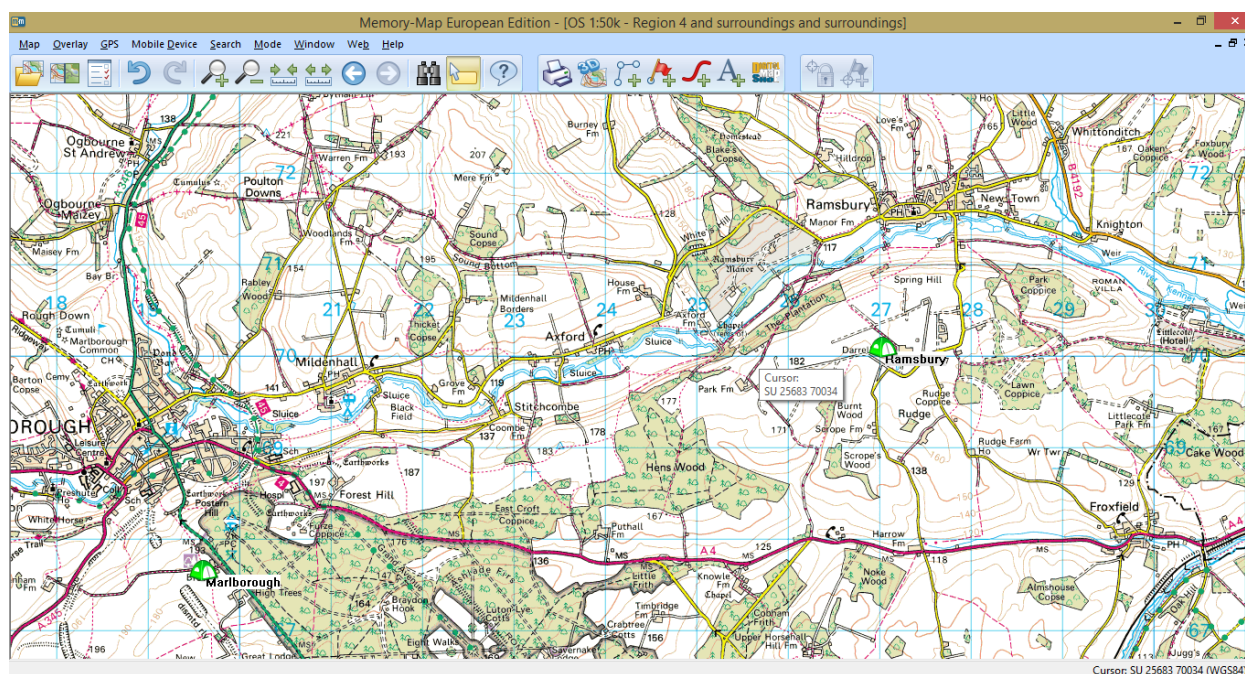


**Overton Heath** – SU180657 – 2 miles S Marlborough alongside A345. Another satellite field used by Upavon. Opened in 1941 but needed extensive work to resolve drainage problems. It closed in 1945 but retained until 1948. One blister hangar still visible but not much else. See Marlborough Map above

**Porton Down** – SU210375 5 miles NE Salisbury There has been a military establishment at Porton Down since 1916 and most of this time its role has been shrouded in secrecy due to its work on chemical & biological weapons defence and sad to say delivery. An airstrip was laid down in 1926 to allow investigation into using aircraft as a means of delivery. Later most of the flying was done using aircraft based at Boscombe Down and this is probably still true today as the establishment is still operational though there is no longer an airfield.

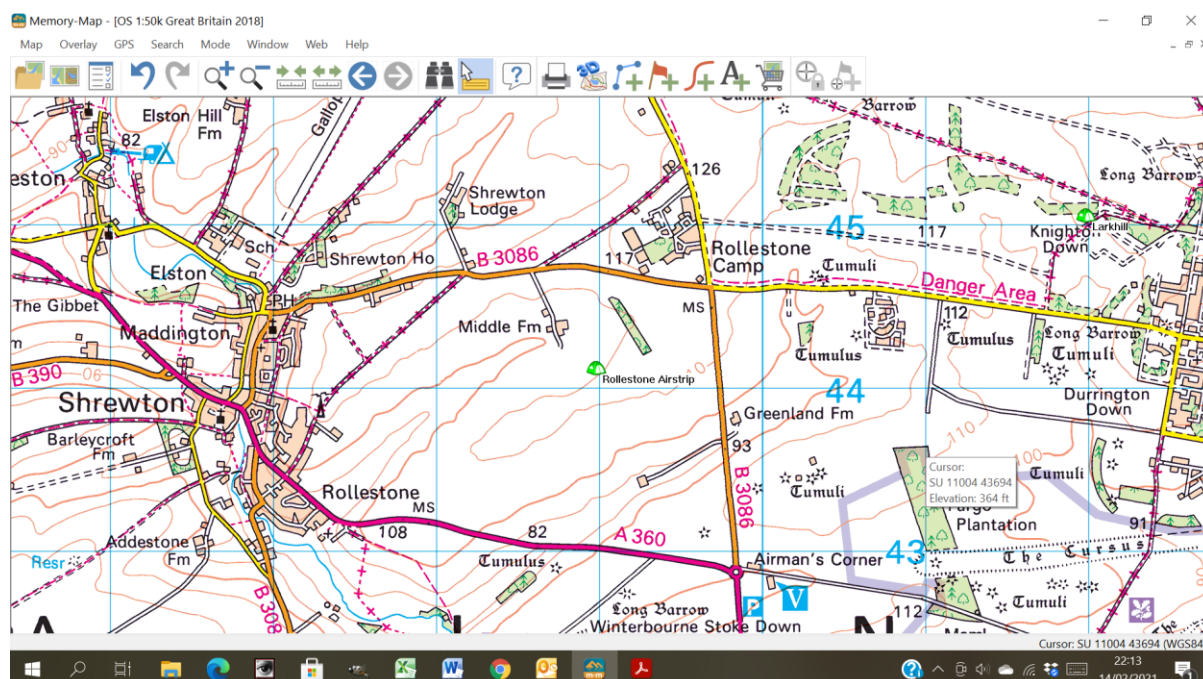


**Ramsbury** – SU 270703 4 miles E Marlborough. Originally intended as Bomber Command airfield, RAF Ramsbury was completed in August 1942 with 2 concrete runways, hangars and accommodation for 2500 personnel. First used by USAAF transport wing until October 1942 when they departed to North Africa. Used for some time as a Flying Training base until another USAAF unit arrived in February 1944 with Dakotas. They were to form part of the Airborne offensive for



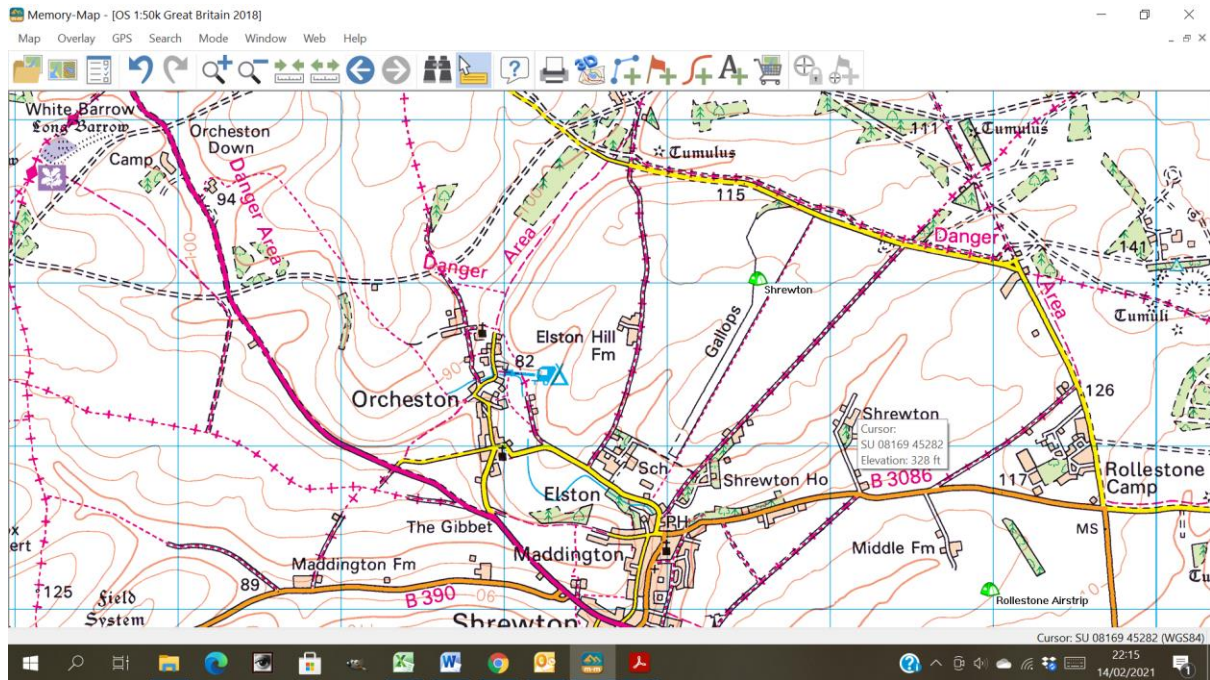
Operation Overlord dropping paras and towing gliders. Subsequently it they were employed in re-supplying the troops in Europe. In 1945 the USAAF units moved to France and Ramsbury became an RAF Transport Command base but mainly as a satellite to RAF Welford. The base went into Care & Maintenance in 1947 and was a refugee camp and hostel for the Women's Land Army until 1950. After which it seems to have been handed back to agricultural use. Most of the runways have been dug up. One was retained to replace a road diverted during its building and some parts remain as farm roads. The hangars and most of the major buildings have long gone but some smaller buildings remain in use on farms and are visible from the road.

**Rollestone** – SU090440 1.5 miles E Shrewton. Rollestone camp was the site of the No 1 balloon school set up in 1916 and included a grass airstrip. The school was moved to Cardington in 1939 and Rollestone became the RAF Anti-Gas school. The airstrip was then used by aircraft from Netheravon and Porton Down to refuel and re-arm when giving students experience of an airborne gas attack. The army took over Rollestone in 1946 and the landing ground was closed. Many of the original buildings are still standing including a large balloon hangar built in 1932. There is another later airstrip nearby used during exercises on the Larkhill Ranges

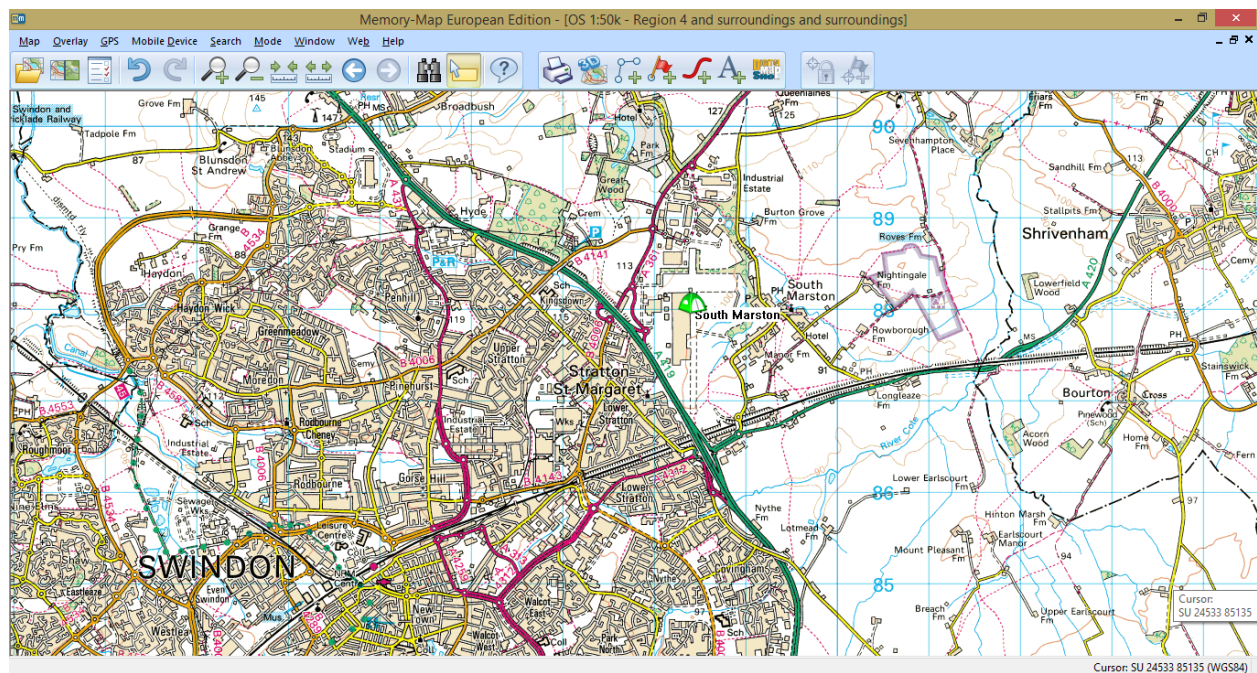


**Shrewton** – SU076460 1 mile N Shrewton. This was a roughly triangular grass strip field set up in 1940 for use by students based at Netheravon for both day and night training. Upgraded to RLG with blister hangars and other building in 1943 and used until November 1944. Retained as an emergency landing site for aircraft from Boscombe Down when exercising over the army ranges. A defensive pillbox is the only visible evidence today.

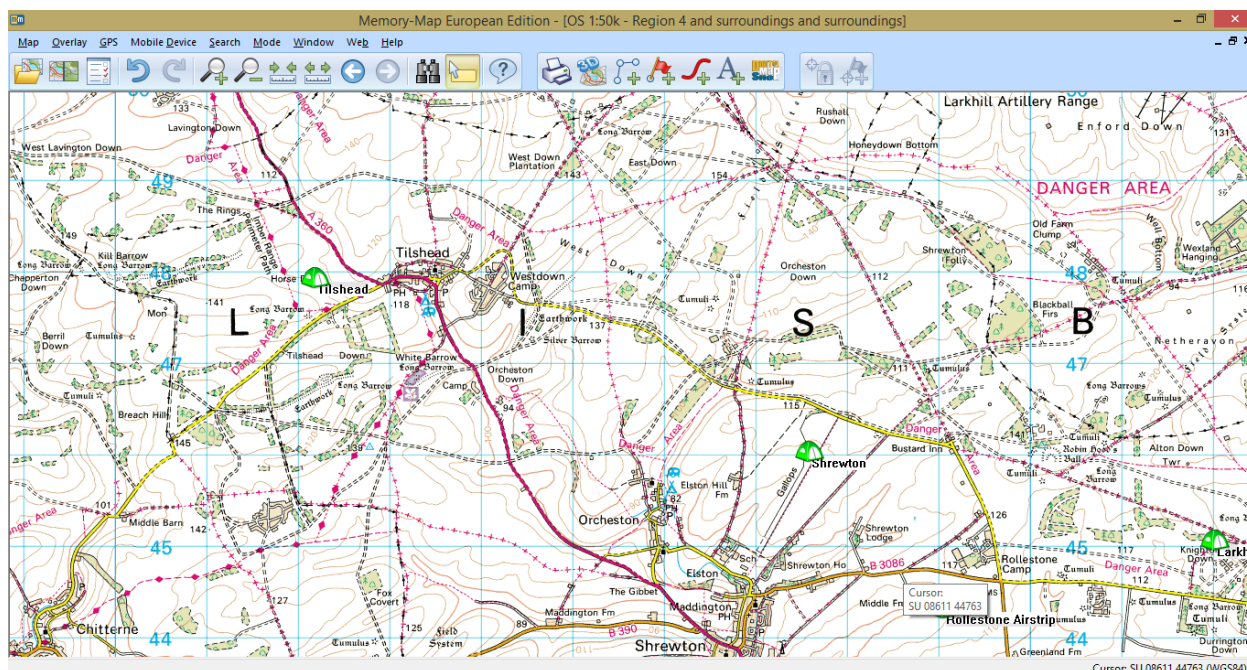




**South Marston** – SU185882 1 miles NE Swindon. Built 1940 to serve the aircraft factory based on the site. Various Miles aircraft variants including the master trainer were built here along with Short Stirlings. In 1942 Supermarine took over the site to produce Spitfires. The factory and airfield were sold to Vickers in 1945 and aircraft were built here until 1961. Vickers retained the site for manufacturing spares for various aircraft until the 1980s when it was bought by Honda who redeveloped it as a car plant still there today.



**Tilshead** – SU021478 -1 mile W Tilshead. Originally set up in 1925 and used by Army Co-operation Squadrons during exercise on Salisbury Plain. Units would be based there for up to a month. No 225 Squadron RAF operated Lysanders on coastal patrol duties from July 1940 to May 1941 using tented accommodation. At this time it was known as Tilshead lodge camp. Continued to be used by units on detachment until 1942 when it was absorbed by the Army as the Salisbury ranges were extended. Nothing now visible of this airfield.

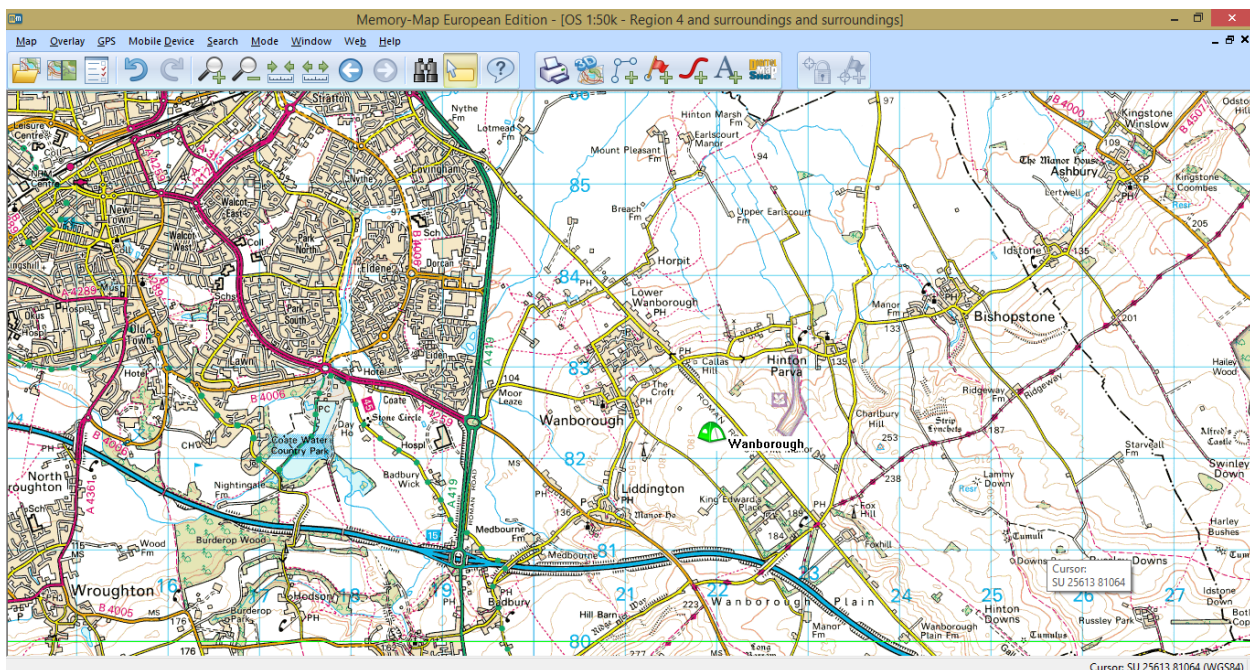


**Townsend** – SU070725 – ½ mile N Yatesbury village. Originally set up as an RLG (relief landing ground) for the students from Yatesbury, it was also intended as dispersal site for aircraft from the nearby MUs but waterlogging was a problem. It was upgraded and did see some use by Stirlings from Lyneham when a second runway was made. Its use as a dispersal site was discontinued in 1942. Students from Yatesbury again used it until 1947 when it fell into disuse. There are still some wartime buildings visible on this site. See Yatesbury Map.

**Upavon** – SU 153543 1.5 miles N Upavon village. This is another of the longest established airfields in Wiltshire and indeed in the UK. Developed in 1912 as the location of the RFC Central Flying School. The site is split by the A342 with the domestic and administrative buildings to the North and the grass airfield with its hangars to the South. It has enjoyed many roles during its long existence mostly as an RAF Flying Training Station then as a Group HQ but in 1993 it became an Army base and is still operational today. The original HQ building of the CFS known as the Trenchard building still exists and can be seen from the main road to the North just past the modern HQ building. When I was stationed there in 1977 it was used as the Cpls Club. There is (or perhaps more accurately was) a bust of Lord Trenchard in the reception area of the Officers Mess

**Wanborough** – SU220820 – 4 miles SE Swindon. Set up as a relief landing ground alongside the Ermin Way in mid 1943 mainly for use by students from No 3 FTS at South Cerney later by Shellingford and then by the School of Flying Control at Watchfield. The latter unit had the site upgraded to provide accommodation and blister hangars. For a period in 1943/4 it was also used for glider pilot training by No 3GTS from Stoke Orchard. The site was closed in May 1946 and there are few obvious signs of its existence, Some buildings now used by a riding school may be from this period.

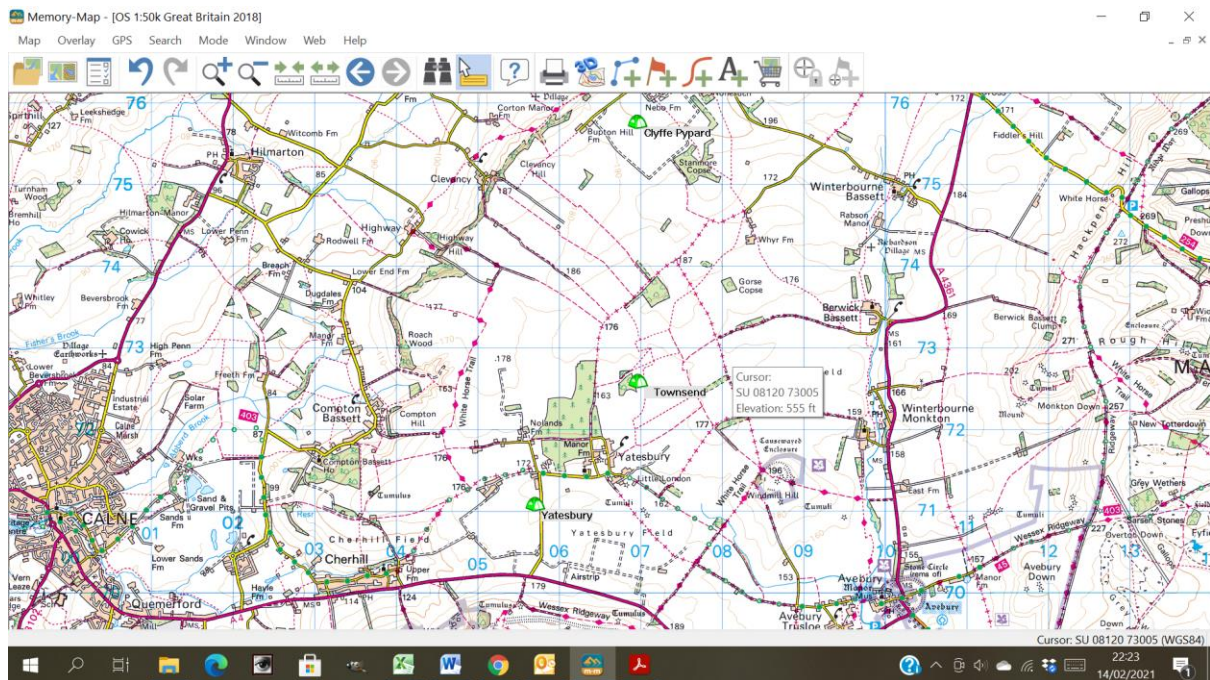




**Wroughton** – SU138788 – 3 miles S Swindon. Intended originally as the base for the Electrical & Wireless school and as an aircraft and equipment store it was opened in April 1940 along with a Hospital on the same site. The site had one concrete runway and a full complement of permanent buildings and hangars. The school was never opened instead No 15 MU was set up there to receive aircraft from manufacturers and fit them out for operational use. Two more concrete runways were added later to cope with wind conditions on the site. No 15 MU was finally disbanded in 1972 and the site became a Royal Naval Aircraft Yard a role which carried until the 1990s. The Science Museum took over part of the site in 1978 became the custodians when the RNAY closed. RAF Wroughton also housed a military hospital which has now also closed.

**Yatesbury** – SU607705 4 miles E Calne. This base was created in 1916 and was actually two airfields. Site 1 was to the west of the road leading into Yatesbury village and Site 2 was to the East; It is unclear if these were grass or hard airstrips. Each site had operational building and hangars but Site 1 was the parent camp. Yatesbury was used for Flying training until 1919 then closed. In 1935 the Bristol Aircraft Company set up the Reserve Flying School at Yatesbury on the western part of the site as part of a government scheme to encourage civilian flying. Buildings and airstrip were refurbished. This was very successful and a school to train observers and navigators was set up in 1938. The Electrical & Wireless school was also set up there in 1938 with an RDF (Radar) school in 1940 by which time all training was under RAF control. Flying training ceased around 1947 but technical training continued there until 1964 when it was transferred to RAF Locking. No 27 Group HQ was also based on part of the site and known as RAF Cherhill from 1954 to 1958 and one history records that the RAF Regiment was based at Yatesbury from 1951-1956. The station closed in 1969, many of the old hutted building were demolished and the land was sold. Some hangars and other buildings still remain.





**Zeals** – ST780327 1 mile N of village. Built originally as a fighter base mainly for long range bomber escorts, Zeals opened in May 1942. It subsequently had a variety of occupants until late 1944 when it became HMS Hummingbird which was disbanded in 1946. Zeals was built as a grass strip but the land and drainage were a constant problem which was never really solved. Bits of the peri track and the old operations building (now a private house) still remain.

