

## Wildfowling at 5

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A memory from when I was five comes to mind, this was in February 2001 (or thereabouts). It was my first time witnessing a flight of pink-footed geese.

Even now, 24 years later, I recall the wait in a hole in the marsh of the Scottish Solway with my dad and cousin as the murky-grey dawn steadily advanced to a greater light.

I recall asking why the guns weren't taken out of the slips, and was told it's because the geese wouldn't come yet.

The most prominent feature I recall is the bulk of Criffel, ever-present over the central Solway, which to the young child looked to be a volcano, and I recently found that Criffel was in fact once a volcano!

For the entirety of the morning, I remember peaking over the merse lip in front seeing skein after skein of pinkfeet flying across the face of Criffel, and indeed everywhere over the merse. I also recall saying "why aren't you shooting!", with the quick reply of they're too high, which those specks in the sky clearly were, thinking back!

No shots were fired that morning, but I was infected and mesmerised by the whole thing which set me on the everlasting trail of the wildfowl; most notably the pink-footed goose.