

DEVON STRUT NEWS

The Newsletter of the Devon Strut of the Popular Flying Association. April 2003.

CO-ORDINATOR'S COMMENTS. By *Christopher Howell*.

Nostalgia seems to echo around a fair bit these days " 'twas never like this years ago." I guess we all get sentimental from time to time. Well its hit me big time! Norman Wellard was kind enough to give me Devon Strut Newsletters stretching back to 1990 and I have been reading them with great interest! It really is quite fascinating to see what has come and gone over the years, to read about some of the characters that formed the Strut years ago. 1991 Dave Silsbury as Strut Co-Ordinator, 1993 John Mansell as Fly In Organiser, 1990 the youthful Mike Mold as Co-Ordinator, then 1992 our National Council voice and body. New member Ernie Hoblyn! 1991 Richard Webber Treasurer. There is a whole host of information and stories and many old members still at it!

What makes me smile the most is that us new clodhoppers often think we are going to change the world and reading back through some very interesting Strut history most of it has already been done several times over and better!

Now approaches the time to commence our new Flying season, that's not to say some intrepid members have not already been at it! John Kempton is back from two weeks in Florida having passed all the tests. He now waits for the CAA to issue his new licence, but so has been the marathon for John it now is still hanging in the balance due to our dear old local AME who fouled up big time!

Keith Wingate battled his way back from Belgium this weekend, Keith went to Belgium to collect a Topsy Nipper for Alistair Way. The channel crossing was over an hour in 50kt head winds and that was over the short bit! 5hrs later Keith dropped into Popham and retired, safe but in pain from a nether region and exhausted.

Our membership continues to grow and new member Betty Lanary based at Old Sarum ensures our tentacles reach far and wide. Its great to meet new members full of enthusiasm and good to know some of the original members remain very active because without them there would be little sentiment and spirit to our merry band of aviators.

Happy Flying, Chris Howell Co-Ordinator

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Last Meeting

Leonard Mason from the Mission Aviation Fellowship gave a very enlightening talk about the work of the fellowship. They run 150 aircraft, ranging from a Beaver on floats to Cessna Caravans and Pilatus. Alistair Ripper spoke about his 10 years as a pilot with them, describing some of his

experiences as what can only be called a bush pilot. The Strut will be supporting this charity at the Eggesford fly-ins this year.

Diary Dates

Aeronca Fly-in at Bodmin, Saturday 3rd May.

Don't forget! Dunkeswell Fly-in, Monday May 5th.

Members' News & Miscellaneous Notes

New Members

A warm welcome to the following new members who joined in April :-

1. Joe Brundrit from the Wirral on Merseyside, part owner of a Tomahawk & moving to Brixham shortly.
2. Adrian Campbell from Plymouth.
3. Richard Gibson from Halberton, part owner of the Hoblyn/Milton Super Emeraude at Watchford.
4. Keith Nichols from Exmouth, with shares in the Dermot Richardson's J5 Cub & Turbulent at Exeter.
5. Richard Walker from Plymstock who owns a share in Aeronca 7AC G-BRER.

Revised NATS Website

After the widespread consternation over the loss of on-line Notams from the NATS website and the associated risks to safety, the UK AIS website at <http://www.ais.org.uk> now contains geographically sorted Notams.

There are two area briefs and two aerodrome briefs (one for each FIR). Each brief is generated "on demand" and so is 100% up to date.

The FIR briefs are in two sections, the first contains NOTAM with a radius of influence up to 30 nm geographically sorted from North to South. The second contains NOTAM with a wider radius of influence.

The Aerodrome briefs appear in alphabetic order of aerodrome names. If you have any problems accessing <http://www.ais.org.uk> you will also be able to get these briefs at

<http://www.nats.co.uk/operational/pibs/index.shtml> Briefs from this site will only be updated twice a day and are intended only as a backup.

The following piece was taken from a Hummel Bird website by Mike Mold, just because it is our kind of flying – writ large! The picture is of a Hummel Bird, but not Bruce King's.

San Antonio, Texas to Sun 'n' Fun by Bruce King in Hummel Bird N88BK



My 1835 and I are getting to be really close, especially after those miles of swamp after Talahassee. Well here we are in Florida. The experiences of travelling here have instantly become the best part of the whole building experience. All during the time building N88BK I thought that the best part was going to be having an airplane of my own, to fly anytime the weather and time allowed. But that idea was just my inexperience fooling me. Had to plan the flight (from San Antonio) north of the Houston and New Orleans Class B airspace (no transponder) which took me over a series of really off the beaten path airports by little town no where near an interstate. Here were these people

minding their own business and out of the blue, literally, a little silver bird drops in unexpectedly. How do they treat strangers? I am ashamed to say much better than I would have. At the first stop in Livingston, they could not find the key to start the pump. Glad the plan was to land with an hour reserve. During departure saw the gas cap depart. Had just set it back in when the pump did not start and now it was lost in the weeds somewhere. Felt like a complete idiot, made "I learned about flying note", do a proper pre-flight before every departure. 2 hours into my dream trip and its already over! A man in a red shirt came walking over from the other side of the airport and ask me what was up. After a short explanation he spent the next half hour with me looking for the cap. When all hope was lost he said "Is it a thermos style cap?" Told him yes. He told me he could fix me up in a few minute. Taxied my capless plane about a 1/4 mile on a dirt road over to his house. He then made by hand on a sander a perfectly round tapered wood plug that fits so snug it is really hard to get out when you want. Ask what I could give him, he said nothing, just let me sign it. So I now have a wood gas cap signed, Jack Nelson - Livingston, Texas. It will be a family heirloom, you bet. Called my wife to have a new cap air shipped to Tampa, and went on to Cleveland, Texas and bought 8 gallons of gas for \$25, YIKES!!!! Had enough daylight left to fly half the next leg. Found the De-Ridder, Louisiana airport to be 100 miles away, so landed there just before sunset. So here we are, its getting dark, no one is in site, the terminal is locked, and I feeling very alone in

a town that was not even a planned stop, with a wood plug for a gas cap. There was a piece of paper on the terminal door with the numbers of some motels. Called one, and ask if they could call a cab. No need, we will send Jerry right over, just look for the green Dodge Ram Pickup and open the gate for him. Next thing was about 10 mile from the airport at the Roadway Inn room 131. Jerry said he made breakfast it was free. Next morning Jerry Davis (the owner of the hotel) took me back to the airport and thanked me for staying with them. The weather looked awful to the west and clear to the east. Took off and made it about 30 miles before running into some low clouds, right were Allen Parish airport, the next point on my GPS, was. Landed and waited about a half hour for it to burn off more then headed

east again. About 25 mile farther the clouds were still too thick, so I turned back and landed at Allen Parish again. This time just as I shut down a huge long limo with a tuxedoed driver pulled up. "Nice reception", I said. The tux'ed driver said he was picking up some high rollers to the nearby casino with the 5 hotels and 14 restaurants. The airport owner Tommy Dubroc, after letting him sit in the plane invited me to stay the night at his house if needed, and to sure plan to spend the night on the way back. The weather got better about an hour later so after filing my flight plan, took off for a two hour run. Climbed above the clouds to 5500ft for smooth air and watched the Mississippi River go by in awe. Landed at Griffen Memorial, Alabama, pulled up to the pumps, filled up. Ask if there was a place to get lunch nearby, and they said "Just take that red El Camino over there, go out this way, turn right and you will see the Burger King on the left." Stunned again by human kindness, got in the 248K old truck with the iffy brakes and went for lunch. During the next 2 hour run, the cloud tops got too high and I had to descend into the bumpy air down below. Started to feel real far away from home and could not get comfortable. Began to think about landing, taking off the wings and renting a U-Haul to go home. Then a wide gap in the clouds appeared and to the South I saw Mobile Bay, a spectacular site! Landed at Tri-County airport, got the same great treatment, and encouragement to press on. They gave me a bottled water and held the plane while I propped it. Was still a bit discouraged about spending another 2 hours

tied down to N88BK. Just after takeoff looking at the map I realised for the first time that I was in Florida! That gave me a real shot in the arm and the rest of the way past Tallahassee and down to Cross City went like a dream. Landed just before a beautiful sunset. While taxiing in got a call on unicom, "Airplane taxiing in, what are your intentions?" Said, "I need to overnight here, ran out of daylight to make Lakeland". He said "Tie down next to the blue Cessna". Just as the ropes were secure a brown Crown Victoria pulled up and the driver said, "Called the Carriage Inn about 1/4 mile down the road and they have a room for you". "Thanks, can you give me a ride?". He said "No, just take the car, we will be open tomorrow about 7:30, but it will be foggy, so just sleep in". "By the way the restaurant is great". So in my second free car of the day I drove to the motel gave me the pilot rate of \$41. The great dinner, meat, salad, and

baked potato cost \$5, and a huge breakfast was \$3. Had to wait to near 11:00 before the fog broke and flew to Hernando County airport North of Tampa to meet my Relatives for lunch. Looking at the weather decided to fly on to Lakeland so as not to get stuck by weather so close to the final destination. Landed at Lakeland and was directed to call EAA ground control. They started asking questions on that frequency as I taxied past about where we came from, what the plan was like and so forth. Directed to the homebuilt parking, they waved me to a spot at middle front right next to the entrance from the convention grounds. They helped me get the \$10 with \$10 deposit tie downs screwed in and ask me all the now standard questions. Seems building this bird and flying it 1100 mile to their Convention rates something in their books. Just think of this, this trip has already been more than worth it, and Sun-N-Fun does not even start until next Tuesday.

Thanks, Bruce King

HUMMEL BIRD SPECIFICATIONS

Span	18'
Length	13'4"
Engine	1835 VW
Empty Weight	270 LBS
Useful Load	250 LBS
Seats	1

HUMMEL BIRD PERFORMANCE

Take Off Distance	400 FT.
Stall	45 MPH
Cruise	105 MPH
Rate Of Climb	800 FPM

Postscript.

Thursday afternoon's sudden departure from Lakeland actually began Wednesday morning with a visit to the FAA center and a talk about the weather. They had a real neat video screen to show forecasts. And what a forecast for Sunday morning. We had clouds, rain, hail, tornados, earthquakes, locusts, etc. all along the intended route,

predicted to last through the entire next week. Suddenly the plan of starting the fly-in on Tuesday and ending the middle of the next week made more sense. If you can take two weeks off, it will give you about 4 travel days for each direction. Well guess we should plan to leave Friday morning to be sure to be back to work by Tuesday. It would take some pressure off me to know there would be no real hurry. Besides it would be nice to spend some of the weekend with my family. Little did I know! The trip back took almost 4 days because of weather delays, but the experience and friendly people along the way made every minute worth it. Now that N88BK is safe back in the hanger I can say that other than a tiny bit of oil wetness on the top of the right valve cover, the bird performed perfectly. That was a great blessing, because the weather and the pilot were much less than perfect. The experiences at Sun-N-Fun and the trip back dwarfed what happened getting there. I could write a novel the size of War and Peace just about my two days stuck by weather in Wiggings, Mississippi. Got a lot to catch up on, so it might take a little time to get it all down but I need to because it will help make sure I never forget what a kick this all was.