

Model plane flown across Atlantic

'An unbelievable achievement'

Dave Brown holds the model airplane near Marrin Beach in County Galway, Ireland, where it arrived after flying 1,888.3 miles from Canada.



Tom Frawley / AP

By Jack Garland
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON, Aug. 12 — It didn't fly high and it didn't fly swiftly, but The Spirit of Butts Farm made it all the way from Canada to Ireland with a few drops of fuel to spare, a group of model airplane enthusiasts say. They are hoping for a distance record for the flight of 38 hours, 23 minutes over 1,888.3 miles by a model plane that weighed just

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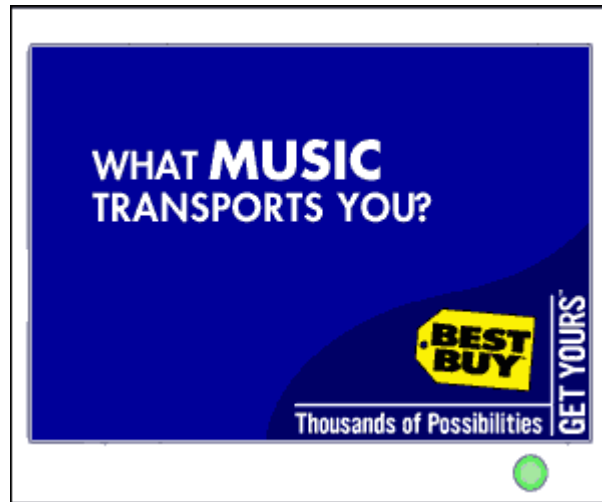
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The nearly 6-foot-long craft was packed with instruments that sent telemetry back to mission control and helped guide the plane. Once in sight of the Irish coast, the plane came back under human control for landing.

FOR DAVE BROWN, who was at the controls for Monday's landing at Marrin Beach in County Galway, it was a great moment.

"A great cheer went up when we saw it, and four minutes later I landed it in the field. It was so thrilling," Brown said in a telephone interview.

The balsa wood-and-mylar plane was designed by retired engineer Maynard Hill, 77, of Silver Spring, Md. He launched it from Cape Spear, Newfoundland, on Saturday night.

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Brown, president of American Academy of Model Aeronautics, said he flew to Ireland to handle the landing. Hill kept in touch by telephone from Newfoundland.

"At one point our instruments began telling us the aircraft was inexplicably dipping up and down 100 feet at a time, and then we lost contact of it," he said.

"We thought it only had fuel for 37 hours and we were saying that if it gets there it would get there by pure will, and by God it did.

"There was even about a shot-glass of



gasoline left in the tank.”

About 50 spectators met the aircraft.

If the flight is certified by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale, it could set world records for distance traveled by a model airplane and duration of flight.

The federation’s assistant secretary-general, Thierry Montigneaux, said from Lausanne, Switzerland, that the modelers had seven days to give notice of their record claims and 120 days to submit a dossier of evidence.

Joe Dible, president of the Model Aeronautics Council of Ireland, said he notified the federation by e-mail. He was at the field where The Spirit of Butts Farm landed.

“It’s very exciting for me, and it was an unbelievable achievement,” Dible said.

Brown said when Maynard first mentioned 10 years ago his plan to fly a model plane across the Atlantic, “I have to admit that at first I thought he was daffy.

“But I’ve since learnt that he is not the kind of guy you tell he can’t do something to,” Brown said.

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