Hi all again. Hope this finds everyone well and adhering to the lockdown rules. Into the 3rd week now and if the infection stays similar or declines as predicted, we may be back to stage 3 at the end of the 4 weeks. How that will affect private and recreational flying is a bit of an unknown at this stage. ‘There’s been all sorts of grim but not entirely unexpected announcements in the last week. Air NZ pilots and cabin crew laid off plus airways staff and threats of possible control tower closures. Estimates are for domestic flights to be back to 60% of pre Covid numbers by 2 years after this thing is over. Haven’t heard about international but that may be a bit longer. Even after and if a vaccine is developed, people are going to be very nervous about sharing personal space with strangers for a long time.

The supermarket environment is mad. We are lucky here in CHB as we have one in Waipawa and two in Waipuk. Even so, the queues on Thursday because they were going to be closed for one day on Good Friday, were mad. What the hell is wrong with people. One would think that there would be no one at the supermarkets today because the hoarders on Thursday would still be stocked up. No Way ‘Jose. More queues today. I think maybe people go every day as it’s possibly their only legitimate excuse to leave the house. I read in the paper that shoppers are driving down from Hastings and Havelock to CHB to beat the queues in the cities. Bugger off!! Stay in your own area.

The following is from Reuben Hansen about our trip south to pick up the Cub.

*After months of back and forth between committee, sub committee and the owners of ZK-KSS, on Friday 13th March 2020 the day finally came. The day I had been dreaming of for so long – we went and collected CHB Aero Club’s not so new pride and joy. I was lucky enough to fly down Wanaka last year to get a glimpse at the aircraft, however this time was different, we own her this time.*

*Wheels up at 7am with Terina and myself riding shotgun and CFI Roscoe demoted to the rear seat of FGJ. A weird feeling for all involved I would imagine. A quick stop off in Dannevirke to pick up Stuart Brown – a pre-ppl student currently in the circuit bashing stage. Stuart flew FGJ from Dannevirke to Kaikoura under my watchful eye especially as we crossed cook straight. I must commend Stuart for his excellent flying as we managed to fly right on the edges of Wellington’s airspace (both laterally and vertically) without infringement! Well done.*

*Another quick stop in Kaikoura to refuel and stretch the legs. On to Wanaka now with Terina at the helm – Roscoe and Stuart in the back. Somehow, I got delegated the responsibility of navigating. Battling a large amount of overcast cloud on the east coast of the South Island, the weather cleared to a beautiful sunny day as we approached Wanaka. Wanaka was quite busy as the Tiger Rally were tearing holes in the skies as well. Was exciting to hear familiar club member voices on the radio – Bill Lamb in his 185, Jan and Jerry in the Gipsy and Tiger to name a few.*

*The cub was based at the previous owners’ strip on the outskirts of Wanaka. A quick call to the owner to check everything was ok to land there and then Terina pulled off an excellent short field landing (CHB Style) using less than half the strip. I must say I was very impressed, but don’t tell her I said that…*

*It was now time to see the Club’s new baby. Comments included “wow” and “she looks even better than the photos”. After getting the run down of the intricacies of our new cub from the previous owner, it was time to bring her home. Stuart and Terina took the helm of FGJ, with Roscoe and I in the cub. The wx permitted a return trip via the beautiful west coast, and beautiful it was. Through the Wanaka Lakes and eventually winding our way through the mountain ranges toward and through the Haast Pass. Quite a slow trip in the cub but that just added to the fun. A stop in Haast to wait for Terina and Stuart to catch up as they had to make a stop in Wanaka to refuel. As you may imagine we only had to wait a couple of minutes!*

*We then tracked our way up the west coast for several hours until we reached Westport. I have never been up the west coast on my other South Island trips, so this was a real highlight for me and something I hope to do again soon. A bit of formation thrown in for good measure as well! At Westport it was obvious that with the daylight we had left, FGJ would likely make it back to YP and KSS would not. So, Ross took KSS to Omaka and stayed in Blenheim with family for the night, while I flew FGJ back with Terina and Stuart on board.*

*A longer trip home than intended having to go right to the northern tip of the South Island before crossing the straight. Turns out golden bay is a long stretch of water, broken with a small section of land before another big stretch of water the Cook Straight. A lot of water to fly over. As Barry Gollan once told me “The engine doesn’t know we’re over water” and “if you fly close to the boats you don’t have to swim so far”. These comments have stuck with me and I think about them every time I cross the Cook Straight. With fading daylight and Ohakea Approach not facilitating my plans for a direct controlled VFR route from Otaki to YP, we elected to stop in Dannevirke. A good decision as when we landed there was very limited legal daylight left. Thanks to Stuart for driving Terina and I back to YP!*

*The cub now sits in the CHB Aero Club Hangar and I couldn’t be more proud. What a fantastic aircraft we have available to our members. I encourage you all to take advantage of this magnificent wee bird and hone your flying skills. Tailwheel flying is addictive I’ll tell you that much. A rate of $165 per hour solo is very reasonable and I hope to see her utilized to her full potential. I know I’ll be flying her lots!*

*Reuben Hansen*

Thanks Reuben.

The weekend before the lockdown we had a club trip to the north-eastern part of the north Island. I have some information, history and photos of the Ruatoria Aero Club which was to be made available at the Ruatoria airfield opening which was cancelled due to the Covid 19 outbreak. If some one who was on that trip would like to write a report, about the length of Reuben’s one above, and send to me, I’ll publish this time next week with the aforementioned info. Please let me know if you would like to do that pretty soon so that we don’t have 5 reports (like that would happen).

Stay safe and bubble wrapped and wash your hands.

Regards

Ross Macdonald.