Week 6 gone and level 2 ready and waiting. I was really surprised at how liberal they were making the level 2 conditions. Pretty much back to normal apart from groups over 100 and restaurants and bars etc, having to have you seated. The nightclub operators were grizzling a bit and I thought, “You selfish bastards”

I hope you all enjoyed Mother’s Day uninterrupted for the first time for God knows how long. Traditionally Mother’s Day has been our Dawn Raid. With the levels falling , there may well be other Dawn Raids that will take place this year. Ours was always the first. The Frogley Cup will have a delayed start to possibly Dannevirke’s Raid, usually the Sunday closest to the shortest day, or to Hastings, usually towards the end of July.

Last week I mentioned that by Tuesday next, a large easterly storm would be positioned right overhead and dousing the parched HB landscape. Two days after I wrote that, the long range forecast had it scooting away to the east again. No worries, another depression was forming in the after match of a crossing front, later that week. No such luck. One of our older members messaged me and asked me not to look at or mention that forecast. I’m obviously such a jinx. I didn’t get time to do either as by the next day, that system was gone as well. As I write, the 10 day forecast shows no rain. That’s a forecast I hope will be jinxed the other way around.

At the end of the level 2 announcement, Jacinda slipped in the kicker that perhaps a staged intro into level 2 might be best. Since then she’s mentioned it again several times and I’m betting that’s how she’ll go. Perhaps businesses first, ( The sooner they open the better) and then possibly recreation, eateries and schools a week later. The flying thing comes under recreation for most of you and seems to be open skies. The passenger/flight training is possibly a bit more complicated and we’ve been told that CAA will make a ruling after the move to level 2 has been confirmed and they’ve consulted with MOH and MOT. My own thinking is that if we have to wear PPE while training and wipe down controls and interiors before and after, then waiting a bit longer might be the deal. That might sound selfish but we’ll wait and see what happens. A small club like ours may be easier as we’re all local and not strangers. Talking of CAA, you’ll note that the director, Graeme Harris has resigned . There are mixed reactions to this news. Some liked him and others didn’t. Personally, I think we’ve had worse.

I’m back at work at my usual workplace in Waipukurau. When the lockdown started, my boss, Andrew Watts was participating in the TeAraroa challenge, the bike ride from North Cape to Bluff, as were other club members Robert Wilson and Jamie Gunson. Through a tracking app that followed personal transponders, that each rider carried, I was able to vicariously follow each rider in real time. My heart went out to Andrew as he took a wrong turn near Lake Awapuni in the Waikato and watched him have to backtrack and waste half a day. They had to pull out after 21 days, 2 days before lockdown. They were in Hokitika by then and it was a bit of a scramble to get them home. A real shame as they were going great guns. A credit to all of them on what is a very demanding ride. Where possible the route is offroad. 3000km and a max of 30 days and a min of 10. Apparently the elite riders do it in the 10 days. Mind boggling. ( I sense some potential club dinner speakers there)

Under level 3, we were allowed to ferry club aircraft for maintenance without seeking approval (Clubs, not private owners). Our new Cub, KSS, had a slight leak in the port fuel gauge in the wing root so I took her to Hastings last week and got that fixed. The two Cessnas have also got some unscheduled maintenance due. ETJ has had her carburettor away being overhauled and FGJ is having an under carriage leg bush replaced and some new interior trim fitted. This latter item I believe is very important. I remember when we bought that aircraft. Brand new in 1984. It was immaculate and everyone took great care of it. After 36 years and 5000 odd hours of use, she was becoming a bit tatty inside. Broken plastic and trim falling off or missing. People don’t treat tatty things with care. In tidying up the interior, this won’t bring her back to new condition but hopefully it may generate some pride and care in her use. These new interior trims are not cheap so please respect what your committee is trying to achieve.

With most being in lock down, there has been ample opportunity for lots of online reading. Particularly on the Covid pandemic and politics in general. Conspiracy theories abound and the interesting thing is that there is so much material available and so many authors, one can find a wealth of facts to corroborate one’s own thoughts or angles. It’s actually more difficult to research with an open mind. My own method when someone suggests something to read, is to google the source before reading. This is not foolproof by any means as it depends on whose opinion appears on top of the list of search results. It is however quite useful I find. The interesting one at the moment is whether or not the virus was manufactured or changed in a Chinese laboratory or whether is naturally evolved from a bat to a pangolin and then to humans. The WHO should surely be an organisation that one could go to for the straight answers on all things covid but politics and money seem to play a large part here as well.

Along with this news and views, I’m attaching Dr Dave Baldwin’s newsletter. Some of you, as his pilot medical clients will have already received this but for those of you who haven’t, it’s pretty entertaining and there’s some interesting links. Also I’m attaching a link to the NZ Aviation News, online May edition. The club subscribes to this publication and because they couldn’t physically print this edition, they made the on-line edition available. As members, you are all entitled to read it. There’s lots of good reading in there.

Don’t forget that earlier lockdown news and views and newsletters are available on the Club website, [www.chbaeroclub.co.nz](http://www.chbaeroclub.co.nz)

Providing we move to level 2 next week, I think we should celebrate by getting together at the Club next Sunday evening. We’ll get some snarlers or chicken bits and some bread and fries and have a bit of a snack and a catch up. I doubt we’ll infringe the over 100 thing so we should be fine. Don’t be afraid to bring and wear your PPE if you think appropriate.

Take care and keep washing ya bloody hands.

Regards

Ross Macdonald