I hope this finds everyone well, locked down if you are not deemed essential and most importantly with well washed hands.

This is not really going to be a newsletter as such but more of a “Touch base” and say that we are all in this together and hopefully the pain and inconvenience will be worth it in the end.

It seems that it’s taken a while for it to sink in with a lot of people that things will not be the same for a very long time. If you think that it’s 4 weeks of lockdown and then go back to how we were before, you’re dreaming. I’m very aware that what I’m about to write is my opinion and my interpretation of the situation. If you have a different view then please pass it back to me and I’ll include it in the next email.

Until a vaccine is developed, and if we believe the experts, that could be 12 months or more, then the quickest way through this is to allow the population to catch the virus, recover from it or succumb, in such a stretched out timeline that the health system is not overwhelmed.

The alternative is to wait in stage 4 lockdown until the case numbers reduce to a stage where those regions which have no pockets of community transmission, can perhaps shift to stage 3. The pockets of community transmission areas will have to remain locked down until those pockets are eliminated. In essence, this will remove the virus from the country. That said, the borders will have to be closed to prevent further cases arriving or a stricter quarantine code for arrivals introduced. There are still thousands of NZers overseas who want to come home.

Longer term I don’t know. A vaccine or immunity of those who have contracted the virus are surely the only way for it to be brought under control. Life will not be the same for a long time. Community gatherings including education, religion, sporting events to name a few will be changed completely. Travel, particularly international will be severely limited, many airlines will either go bust or down size significantly. Pilots? I shudder to think. Why will we train pilots to fill jobs that won’t be there for a long time. There may be more of these types of “Slippery” viruses to come . Maybe the chickens are at last home to roost. So called modern cultures with stoneage eating practices are to be vilified. What good that will do I don’t know apart from getting it off our chests. Don’t know what a slippery virus is? Read this:

***"Feeling confused as to why Coronavirus is a bigger deal than Seasonal flu? Here it is in a nutshell. I hope this helps. Feel free to share this to others who don’t understand...***

***It has to do with RNA sequencing.... I.e. genetics.***

***Seasonal flu is an “all human virus”. The DNA/RNA chains that make up the virus are recognized by the human immune system. This means that your body has some immunity to it before it comes around each year... you get immunity two ways...through exposure to a virus, or by getting a flu shot.***

***Novel viruses, come from animals.... the WHO tracks novel viruses in animals, (sometimes for years watching for mutations). Usually these viruses only transfer from animal to animal (pigs in the case of H1N1) (birds in the case of the Spanish flu). But once, one of these animal viruses mutates, and starts to transfer from animals to humans... then it’s a problem, Why? Because we have no natural or acquired immunity.. the RNA sequencing of the genes inside the virus isn’t human, and the human immune system doesn’t recognize it so, we can’t fight it off.***

***Now.... sometimes, the mutation only allows transfer from animal to human, for years it’s only transmission is from an infected animal to a human before it finally mutates so that it can now transfer human to human... once that happens..we have a new contagion phase. And depending on the fashion of this new mutation, thats what decides how contagious, or how deadly it’s gonna be..***

***H1N1 was deadly....but it did not mutate in a way that was as deadly as the Spanish flu. It’s RNA was slower to mutate and it attacked its host differently, too.***

***Fast forward.***

***Now, here comes this Coronavirus... it existed in animals only, for nobody knows how long...but one day, at an animal market, in Wuhan China, in December 2019, it mutated and made the jump from animal to people. At first, only animals could give it to a person... But here is the scary part.... in just TWO WEEKS it mutated again and gained the ability to jump from human to human. Scientists call this quick ability, “slippery”***

***This Coronavirus, not being in any form a “human” virus (whereas we would all have some natural or acquired immunity). Took off like a rocket. And this was because, Humans have no known immunity...doctors have no known medicines for it.***

***And it just so happens that this particular mutated animal virus, changed itself in such a way the way that it causes great damage to human lungs..***

***That’s why Coronavirus is different from seasonal flu, or H1N1 or any other type of influenza.... this one is slippery AF. And it’s a lung eater...And, it’s already mutated AGAIN, so that we now have two strains to deal with, strain s, and strain L....which makes it twice as hard to develop a vaccine.***

***We really have no tools in our shed, with this. History has shown that fast and immediate closings of public places has helped in the past pandemics. Philadelphia and Baltimore were reluctant to close events in 1918 and they were the hardest hit in the US during the Spanish Flu.***

***Factoid: Henry VIII stayed in his room and allowed no one near him, till the Black Plague passed...(honestly...I understand him so much better now). Just like us, he had no tools in his shed, except social isolation...***

***And let me end by saying....right now it’s hitting older folks harder... but this genome is so slippery...if it mutates again (and it will). Who is to say, what it will do next.***

***Be smart folks... acting like you’re unafraid is so not sexy right now.***

Take out of that what you like. The facemask thing is still a bit divided. I’ve been corresponding with Marc Bridgeman who is flying choppers in Macau. They’re about 3 or 4 weeks ahead of us in this thing. It’s law that you have to wear a mask if outside there. Here, the authorities are still saying that it will help prevent the spread if someone has the virus but gives a false sense of security to those trying to prevent getting it. The key I guess is that many people won’t know they have it so if everyone wears masks, then spread is limited. I apologise that this has become a bit of a stream of consciousness.

On to other matters.

My previous email mentioned that we had lost a friend and club member in Shane Jones. Many of you would not have met Shane. He came to us in September 2018. He worked for the same construction Co as my son Jason, as a crane/truck/anything that moved, driver. He had had an interesting life. I think his first job was in the building of the Tokaanu power scheme near Turangi in I’m guessing, the 60s. I can remember going there with my family to look at the earthworks as a small child. Shane was asked could be drive a bulldozer, he couldn’t but thought he’d like to learn so he told them he could. He got the job. From there it becomes a bit blurry but he ended up as a shooter in the deer recovery boom and worked for many well known pilots including Joe Collins. Shane was first on the scene of Joe’s final accident. Shane had some flying lessons at Taupo in possibly the 70s in a 172 and maybe went solo but that was as far as he went. He had spent his life operating machinery of various kinds including one of the Wanganui River’s classic river boats “Waireka” Some may have noticed the name on Shane’s number plate. Over the years Shane accumulated 4 daughters by 4 different mothers and I’ve spoken to one of these and one grand daughter. They all loved him dearly. He, like a lot of people who have had a connection to aviation and possibly a taste, who then find themselves in later life with a little spare cash and a little more time, decide he would do something about it before it was too late. He didn’t find it easy and starting from scratch in our Rans CHB , a tricky little ab-initio trainer, was a challenge. He was a very determined character and it was never going to beat him. He was very hard on himself and I lost count of the number of times at the end of a circuit lesson that he asked me was he wasting his and my time. I’ve never told anyone that, I have been close and tempted at times but Shane was never one of those. As he began to get close to solo time I asked him about getting a medical. ”I should tell you that I’m an alcoholic” he told me, I thought, “ok, this may be a hurdle, “but I’ve been dry for 20 years” he continued. This was the measure of the man. He had no pretences about what had gone before, only the now and the future he had planned. After solo he progressed quickly and was an active participant on club trips. Particularly day trips, beach trips or just a local flight with someone. Once he was able to head off on his own he would often go tripping around the patch with Ross (Big) Hatfull on his wing in his Savage Cub KPP. During this time he would be away for several weekends at a time and eventually confided that he had bought a weight shift amphibian microlight called a Cygnet and was in training at Tauranga with an American instructor whom he had bought the aircraft from including a trailer to carry it and an F100 pickup with Camper on the back. His dream was that once qualified he would travel the country’s coast, stopping wherever he pleased and fly his Cygnet. He soloed in it at Waipuk in march 2019. He was rapt. His dream was beginning. As his Cygnet instructor was only in NZ during our summer, Shane spent 2019 getting up to speed and passed his advanced local certificate with passenger rating towards the end of the year. A 2 week holiday to the Chatams to visit a mate saw him return with the offer of a job there running the onshore part of a fishing business. He would go over for a 2 month trial and if all ok, would ship the Cygnet over for possibly a 2 year stint. Alas the pandemic saw a fall in the crayfish exports and while waiting out the start of the lockdown there, the lottery of an aneurism took his life. And that in a tiny nutshell was the 70 year life of a wonderful person.

**The following from CC Ron Day**

*The news about Shane came out of left field. When I was able, I posted this on his (only recently established) Face book page:*

*“We have lost a friend in Shane Jones. Unknowingly, his last years were filled with*

*passion, endeavour, success and dreams. We lived with him his highs and lows. We*

*saw him go from a stranger, to one who had found his home. We saw him uncertain,*

*self-doubting and eventually achieving. He set himself a goal and he got there. He*

*was a pilot.*

*And along the way he gained our respect and a good many friends. Some of his*

*dreams remained unfulfilled, as are for us the adventures we can no longer share.*

*The ultimate epitaph for any of us should be that we will be missed.*

*We will miss you Shane.”*

*I make no apology for repeating it here as it was written in the moment and conveys how I felt. Now I’m still in disbelief and this will not change until his absence at the Aero Club is real. As a Club we have unfortunately lost some active members over the last few years and it never gets easier.*

*That it occurred while we were grappling with lockdown only added to our feelings of helplessness.*

*As Oliver Hardy (of Laurel and Hardy fame) often said,*

*“Well, here’s another nice mess you’ve gotten me into.”*

*I don’t want to go on about the Virus, but it is a mess, and we are in it. The fickle finger of fate has reached down and pressed “Pause”. We all wait expectantly for it to press “Play” again. In the mean-time there is ample opportunity for reflection and contemplation. I think it’s fair to say we will from here on value our freedom a little more, and recognise now just how easily it can be whisked away from us.*

*Quite apart from trying to be a better person - and there is plenty of scope for improvement - I’m also going to become a better pilot. All the landings I’ve done on my (immaculate) virtual circuits have been greasers, and I aim to keep up that percentage in reality. At least I’m remaining current. I only wish I could Log it.*

*One of my first ambitions is to fly Cub KSS. I didn’t make the time before and I’m regretting it. Everyone who has seen her agrees she’s a real beauty (and I’m not just talking about the tail art). A special thank you (putting my envy aside) to the team that went and got her. It turned out to be an epic trip.*

*As all Club activities are on hold, I’ll take the opportunity to briefly mention a project that has appeared in the front of Lindsay’s hangar and is therefore visible for all to see. It’s the substantial components of an uncompleted Stolp Starduster Too. I recently acquired it from the family of the builder who unfortunately passed away before he could finish it. It is a GA, and no, I haven’t gone over to the Dark Side - I’m hoping to fly it solo, at least if I’m able. While some of the welding has to be redone, the amount of work (evident with the skins off) in an aircraft of this type is staggering. What I have in effect purchased is about ten year’s worth of evenings and weekends.*

*The Starduster Too is not an aerobatic aircraft (though it can handle plus or minus 6G) but is something of a practical fun bi-plane, if such a thing exists. Older members may recall there was once a Starduster resident at YP, but that was a single seater. It will be nice to have a two-seater bi-plane operating out of the ‘field again.*

*It is a sad fact that aircraft of this nature are seldom worth the sum of their components, but that doesn’t figure highly in my rationale for taking it on.*

*Perhaps now, due to recent circumstances, there are even more reasons for us to pursue our dreams. Let’s make the next Club Sunday a busy one.*

*Ron*

Thanks Ron,

Some photos of Shane below:







Take the spoon out of the sink

And wash ya bloody hands!

Ross Macdonald