

Te Kowhai Airfield For Sale by Tender

WHAT could be a once in a lifetime opportunity now exists to purchase the renowned Te Kowhai Airfield. The property is 34ha or 85 acres (approximately), with the option of a house also available. This is the first time this property has been offered for sale since establishment of the airfield in 1967.

Max Clear was the New Zealand aviation legend behind the airfield development. Dating back to the 1960s in the Waikato town of Te Kowhai, he was a man with land and a dream. The fruition of this dream meant that his farm was destined for very big things. Just recently Te Kowhai Airfield hosted the successful Flair event which was modelled on Airventure at Oshkosh in the US. This event brought thousands of aviation enthusiasts and visitors to Te Kowhai over three days and was a delight for Max, who sadly passed away in his 71st year, just a few weeks later.

Whilst Max's early professional career was in the dairy and construction industry, it was his pursuit of fun with friends that unveiled a real passion for planes. As a teenager he learnt to fly Tiger Moths and Piper Cubs, and in his 20's he built a Turbulent, which he flew not only over but also under the Horotiu Bridge! Following this Max went on and built a Pitts Special Biplane, becoming a very accomplished pilot and winning many trophies and awards at shows including 'cutting a ribbon' seven times. It was this Pitts Special that Max and friend Greg McNicol set the first Cape Reinga to Bluff record in.

By 1983 Max's hobby became his career and Micro Aviation was born. Some 354 planes later (a large proportion of these exported around the world), Micro Aviation grew from being one man's passion to becoming one of the most successful microlight aircraft manufacturing companies in the southern hemisphere.

One of Max's visions for his property was to develop an Airpark, and considerable time has been spent on this proposed development working alongside surveyors and the Waikato District Council. Obviously there are multiple opportunities for prospective purchasers to consider.

After 45 years this distinguished Waikato property is looking for a new owner and interest is expected to be high. The property is being marketed for tender by Ray White in Hamilton. See their advertisement on page 19.

Carbon Cubs arrive at Central Aero Engineering

TWO brand new CubCrafters Carbon Cub SS aircraft recently arrived in a container for Central Aero Engineering to assemble at Hamilton Airport. Imported by Bob Gray from Bombay (near Auckland) and by Peter and Bruce Clulow from Wanaka, the aircraft are a modern (and significantly improved) re-creation of the venerable Piper Super Cub.

Central Aero are a MAF approved transitional facility and were able to handle the project from container arrival through to assembly, CAA requirements (they are first of type here), and test flying. Paul says they are well equipped as a one stop shop in this regard, also completing the new aircraft's AD checks and compliance, as well as compass swing, avionics checks, and transponder calibration.

Arriving essentially as complete aircraft with just the tail components and wings removed, CSS was the first to be assembled followed by BPC. This involved installing the horizontal stabilisers and stays, elevators, flying wires, fitting and plumbing the wings for wiring and fuel, installing the flaps, then basically pushing the aircraft outside for its first run. Paul says that the aircraft are beautifully executed and that the whole process was very straight forward. In Paul's words, the Carbon Cub is a "very, very nice little aeroplane". "Attention to detail is very evident, especially in the quality and amount of machined componentry (nothing is bent or folded). They're like a Cub should have been if technology had permitted it in the day."

Test Flying

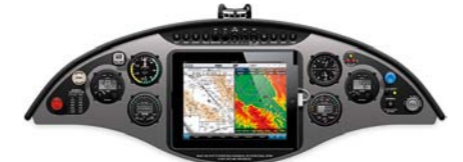
At this point, Bill Henwood from Classic Cubs based at nearby Te Kowhai entered the project, test flying both aircraft. They



Ready for test flying at Central Aero in Hamilton.



180hp ECi engine in the Carbon Cub SS.



Panel options cater for iPad installations.



Plenty of cockpit space and storage behind.

flew perfectly with no defects straight out of the box, the only adjustment being to a stall warning vane on CSS. Bill says they are like typical Cubs, albeit new ones without 50 years of life under their belts. "They fly very nicely and the finish on the fabric and fittings is really good." Bill also noted the lightness of the tail which necessitates careful ground handling and use of the brakes.

Bob mentioned that when Bill signed off his rating on CSS, he declared that he was not allowed to enter the short take-off and landing competitions at Hastings. Bob has posted video footage of their flights on YouTube (search for Carbon Cub CSS).

The purchase and delivery experience

It was quite coincidental that the two aircraft arrived here at the same time. Both parties had been making independent enquiries to the factory and it was they who suggested the aircraft could be shipped together. Bob is a 1000hr PPL who previously had a Zenair maintained by Central Aero and as he had always been very happy with their service ("nothing is ever too much trouble"), he arranged for his aircraft to be sent there. Peter, who has a GA training and airline background, hadn't previously had any involvement with Central Aero, and says he was equally impressed both with CubCrafters who he visited, and with the work done by the Central Aero team on his



CubCrafters and the Carbon Cub SS

CubCrafters is based in the US and began operations in 1980 to provide rebuilding services for the very popular Piper Super Cub. A community of like-minded enthusiasts developed around the company who were developing numerous improvements to the original design

as rebuilds took place. Eventually they were not so much undertaking rebuilds, as building new airplanes. In 1997 they expanded their manufacturing facilities and introduced a proprietary design, the Top Cub. More recently, in response to the LSA market, CubCrafters developed a 100hp Sport Cub and the 180hp Carbon Cub SS which claims the shortest takeoff, fastest climb rate and shortest landing of any aircraft in its class.

The Carbon Cub SS is a modern, high performance airplane that has taken the basic design of the Piper Super Cub and reinvented it using materials such as carbon fibre. The result is an aircraft that

is 250lb lighter and that has 50 percent fewer parts than a similarly equipped Super Cub. Its excellent power to weight ratio provides for a sea level climb rate of 2100 fpm. Power is provided by an ECi CC340 engine, a version of a venerable Lycoming design having dual electronic ignition and

lightweight accessory components. The 250lb engine is rated at 180hp for takeoff and climb, and 80hp for continuous power settings.

It all adds up to outstanding performance and the aircraft will takeoff

lightly loaded in just a few multiples of its own length. It's comfortable too, offering 4" more shoulder width and a panel that is 4" further forward than an original Cub.

And the price? Standard pricing for the Carbon Cub SS listed on the CubCrafters website is US\$164,000. There's bound to be plenty of interest in the two aircraft that have just arrived in NZ and perhaps it won't be too long before another arrives to join them. www.cubcrafters.com



The Carbon Cub SS fitted with tundra tyres.

new aircraft. He already has 30 hours on BPC and says its performance is remarkable ("like a Cub on steroids") offering huge safety margins for operating off short strips in mountains and valleys.

New Central Aero capabilities and recent work

Paul says that Central Aero are now set up for in-house biennial avionics checks and that they have also recently expanded their sheet metal work capability with a Magnabend folder and a genuine English Wheel for rolling compound curves.

In recent months they have completed substantial repairs to a damaged Cessna 172 and a damaged SportCruiser, as well as the normal ongoing maintenance for a growing number of clients, including an increasing number of helicopter operators. They are also currently re-commissioning a Mini 500 helicopter that has been in storage. In Paul's words, "We don't have a too-hard basket".

For more information

To find out more about Central Aero Engineering's capabilities or the Carbon Cub project, contact Paul Waterhouse on 021 743 033, email: paul@centralaero.co.nz or visit www.centralaero.co.nz

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