

FROM BANKSTOWN TO AUCKLAND BY JABARU J230D

I bought a Jabiru J230D which was a great idea at the time but on reflection I wondered how to get it home, as it was located at Bankstown YSBK and I wanted to have it at home of course, home being Ardmore NZAR, New Zealand. The usual costings of dis-assembly and containerization were obtained and added together but the cost wasn't that flash so it was suggested that I fly it across the Tasman, the suggestee of course wasn't offering to come along for the ride though. However I talked about the viability of doing just that with friend Mike Foster, a 26,000 hour DC10 pilot and 'A' Cat instructor as Mike had already flown a Tecnam from Auckland to Australia a year or so prior. After working the numbers Mike said he was quite happy to make the flight and would I accompany him on the journey, not needing to be asked twice I readily agreed.

Sunday 17th August we headed for Australia and were met at Sydney Intl by Graeme Pope from whom I had purchased VH-FTE and we all headed for Bankstown. The balance of the day was spent in flying the Jab and preparing the flight plan etc for an early launch the next day at 0730 hours.

Monday 18th August was overcast and windy so while Mike got the weather and lodged the flight plan Graeme and I attended to fueling and stowing the equipment in the cavernous rear luggage compartment with the liferaft being by the door on top I was to be in charge of deploying the raft in the unlikely (unthinkable?) situation it was required! Mike re-appeared and said that there was a spec on Lord Howe YLHI with winds of 40kts at 90 degrees to the runway, cb's along all the 432 nm sector distance, and did I really want to go? Well as I felt he really wanted to go of course I said yeah lets go and have a look.... After saying cheerio to Graeme VH-FTE departed Bankstown YSBK runway 11 right, contacted departure control and hit the turbulence, in that order however once clear of the NSW coast the turbulence stopped and we picked up the tailwinds that were to be on each sector for the rest of the trip. After three hours of mostly straightline flight we sighted YLHI and called the radio operator there to advise we were about 15 minutes out and he confirmed the wind was still gusting 40kts but suggested the best approach to avoid the worst of the turbulence which Mike flew and landed the little Jab smoothly. Flight time was 3hr 15min with average g/s 137kts and fuel used 63 lts giving a fuel burn of 20.43 liters per hour.

After checking the wx and refiling we departed YLHI for Norfolk Island YSNF 482nm miles away and an estimated flight time of 3hrs 40 min and we landed there right on the money! During this sector we flew mostly at 5500' with a 30kt tailwind but the sat phone didn't work too well so we spoke with the airline folks who happily relayed our position reports to Brisbane Centre for us. On this sector we used 71lts of gas with the burn per hour still at 20lts. After tying our little mcrolight wonder plane down for the night it was time for a de-brief or two and watch the torrential rain that arrived an hour after us.

The next morning we were up at 5.30am heading for the airport when the heavens opened up and it wasn't looking too flash for us but we went on with the planning for the first sector to Kerikeri NZKK anyway and filled the tanks up to the 135lt capacity at AUD4.15 per litre (ouch) and 250 mls of oil, not bad after nearly seven hours flying I thought. At 0900 Mike decreed that the wx was ok for us to depart with good conditions expected after thirty minutes and so it proved to be. After searching for the best altitude we finally settled on 8500' where the tailwind was 40kts for the next two hours and increased to 50kts about 150nm out from Kerikeri. Our planned time of 3hrs 45min was looking good and we were only 5mins longer chock-to-chock time. NZ Customs and Quarantine requirements were attended to at Kerikeri and then it was away to Ardmore, the new home for VH-FTE. On landing it was established that we had used 103 lts from Norfolk Island to Ardmore over a distance of 599 nm, not bad!

Total flight time from Bankstown to Ardmore to cover the 1513nm flown was 11 hours 35 minutes with total fuel burn 237 lts, average of 20.43 lts per hour and an average g/s for the trip of 136.7 nm per hour.

My J230D behaved impeccably throughout the whole trip never missing a beat or causing muscular contraction of the crew anatomies at any stage and the EFIS, EMS and moving map GPS all performed

excellently.

Since arriving VH-FTE has been transferred to the NZ aircraft register as ZK-PSH on the micro light listing and once the good wx arrives we're off !

Cheers
Bruce Sinton
