

Ferry flight postponed

Our PBY-6A was in the final stages of preparation for its Ferry Flight. Test flights were successful and the Catalina was ready to depart on Nov 18th 2007. The day before our ferry crew were to depart Seia, the right hand engine started gushing lots of blue smoke on a take off roll.

The take-off was aborted and the aircraft taxied back to assess the damage. The assessment revealed that a connecting rod broke, causing internal damage to the engine. This is disappointing and a major set-back as the engine will have to be overhauled, and this means a lot of work and delay, not to mention additional costs.

This event followed a successful and encouraging further engineering inspection (the English engineer doing the inspection commented on what a good aircraft it was), some test-flying and pilot endorsements.

Since the winter weather in Europe is not conducive to doing the work or to flying, our ferry crew will return to Australia. We are now looking at next year before the repairs can be completed and a ferry flight contemplated.

Whilst this development is very disappointing for all those who have put so much into the project, it has probably been a blessing in disguise in that:

- it happened on the ground and not in the air.
- it happened in Seia and not some remote country (though Seia is no metropolis or aviation hub).

But above all, we can be thankful no-one was injured and the aircraft was not damaged.

Notwithstanding all of this, support for the "Rathmines Catalina" continues to grow in strength and set-backs such as this only serve to test our resolve. Resolve that will no doubt be tested time and time again long after final touchdown in Australia. The conquering of the many challenges ahead will give weight to the sense of achievement attained once the dream is finally realised.