The silly season is well and truly upon us. I hope you all survive it and keep safe as we move into a new and hopefully less strange, year.

We reflect on a year where we have become accustomed to using terms less familiar 12 months ago, " Lockdown, covid, social distancing, panic buying, post Trump" to name but a few. I've often mused where the term, " Batshit mad" came from but I guess I know now.

We discussed many months ago whether the measures that our government took were over the top or draconian and the answers we came up were many and varied. As we now look around us and out into the wider world, Our lives have pretty much gone back to normal while the virus still rages around the world. I'm very aware of many businesses which are suffering through a lack of foreign workers being allowed in but having come this far, surely we can't relax now. The vaccines may well help as we progress through 2021.

The club has been pretty busy. The students are flying regularly in the 152, the Cub has been relatively busy and the 172 is benefitting from the fact that one of the local privately owned machines is temporarily out of the air due to maintenance. The Rans is also ticking along and the Sunday just gone, Derek Simmons and Spencer Macdonald flew her to Turangi to try out the new Café within walking distance of the airfield. That weekend was particularly busy on both days and we topped it off with a relaxing flight to the beach with 3 club planes and 2 private owners from Hastings, on Sunday evening.

Harry Nash enters the “Watch this space” this month for impending first solo.

Although Reuben has been officially away from us for 2 years, we still claim him as our own and this month we offer our congratulations to him for achieving his B Category instructor’s rating. At 19, he is the youngest B Cat in the country and the Hasting Club immediately promoted him to “Acting CFI” Once again, the youngest in the country. Well done Reuben.

Straight after New Year, the Cub will have her engine removed and sent away to be overhauled. She may be out of the air for 2 months but the savings on overhauling her own engine compared to a factory engine far outweigh the inconvenience.

The BFRs I do for people outside the Club continue to increase. Perhaps I’m cheap or maybe I’m a soft touch. Either way I really enjoy meeting many different people, some strangers, some I’ve briefly met before and some well known to me. I do try to tailor the BFR to the individual as much as I’m allowed under the rules and hopefully the candidate goes away having learned something useful. As previously mentioned, I intend to adopt a “Pre BFR theory sheet” so that a little preparation can be done before the day for the candidate.

Sunday last I had a first of type flight in the Hasting syndicated Vans RV7. What a wonderful aircraft. Fast, responsive comfortable and with a roll rate greater than anything I've ever flown with the possible exception of a Pitts. Thank you so much to Chris Hart for allowing me a dabble in your beautiful machine. The "Vans grin" is still there.

Callum Sutherland has recently completed his last exam and is now preparing for cross countries in the new year. James Cairns is also in this situation although James has recently started a ground crew job with Josh Calder so his spare time may be at a premium for the next few months.

The recent club xmas party was one of the best. In excess of 25 children and around 70 people for dinner. A bouncy castle kept the kids occupied until Santa arrived when he dished out presents to all the kids and then dropped around 50kg of lollies in a wonderful 200 metre spread along the side of the runway. Well done CC Ross (Little) Kent for the organising and the lolly drop. The wonderful meal was catered by Diane and Peter Harris with the dessert and sweets being brought along by members. I managed to scoop a handful of lollies which went into my desk drawer for special occasions. I was looking after 2 of my grandkids the other day and gave them one each and selected the softest looking one for myself. 5 minutes later I was fishing through the gooey mess for a filling and half a tooth. When will I ever learn?

We had a very successful working bee the weekend before the xmas party. We tidied up around the clubhouse, did some fence, trough and sheepyard repairs. Weedeating and mowing and took away a ute load of rubbish. Thank you to those who helped.

You’ll notice that the gardens at the Club have been removed. They were overgrown and untidy. We will grass down in the short term and possibly replant some small shrubs in the winter.

Don’t forget the New Years Day fly-in to Feilding Aerodrome . It’s a lunchtime affair so don’t need to be up too early.

**From CC Ross (little) Kent**

*Merry Christmas all*

*Short and sweet this month we have two club trips on the board one in Jan one in Feb if you are interested pop your name down.*

*Great turn out at Christmas party hope all enjoyed. Big thanks to all the helpers , and a huge thanks to Peter and Diane for their amazing tucker.*

*Nothing else to report hope everyone has a great Christmas and a happy New Year.*

**Duty Pilot List**

*3 Jan Clem Powell*

*10 Jan Derek Simmons*

*17 Jan Terina Wardley*

*24 Jan Frank Minton*

*31 Jan John White*

**The following from Club President, James Greer**

*Well what a year. Who would have that a year ago that we would be facing a headwind of covid 19 and drought . I’m sure I’m not the only one that is looking forward to seeing the backside of 2020.*

*It has been a challenging year for us here at the club with the dry affecting the clubs farming operation and reduced flying hours over lockdown in march. The committee were not sure how the whole covid 19 conundrum was going to affect club members desire to fly and we were pleasantly surprised that we have seen an upsurge in flying hours post lockdown. This remains a moving target and we never know just what lays around the corner.*

*I thank all club members for their continued support towards your club. We have such a great setup here and it shows with the continued addition of new members wanting to join and students wanting to learn to fly.*

*The committee always strives to improve the way the club is run so if there is any recommendations or ideas we are always open to them.*

*Club captain Ross Kent has a few trips planned in the wings and hopefully we can get some good weather windows for these to go ahead. Please let him know if there is anywhere else we should be adding to the list of potential trips.*

*I hope everyone gets the chance to put their feet up over Christmas and new year and enjoy company of friends and family, it’s important we all take a break to reflect on what has been a challenging year and look forward to 2021. I’m currently loading up FJE to head to Gisborne for Christmas , seems like I’ve got everything and the kitchen sink on board , might be time to pull out the weight and balance charts.*

*Have a good Christmas everyone and remember Be Kind!*

**As per usual, I include here my favourite xmas poem.**

'Twas the night before Christmas, and out on the ramp,

Not an airplane was stirring, not even a Champ.

The aircraft were fastened to tie downs with care,

In hopes that come morning, they all would be there.

The fuel trucks were nestled, all snug in their spots,

With gusts from two-forty at 39 knots.

I slumped at the fuel desk, now finally caught up,

And settled down comfortably, resting my butt.

When the radio lit up with noise and with chatter,

I turned up the scanner to see what was the matter.

A voice clearly heard over static and snow,

Called for clearance to land at the airport below.

He barked his transmission so lively and quick,

I'd have sworn that the call sign he used was "St. Nick."

I ran to the panel to turn up the lights,

The better to welcome this magical flight.

He called his position, no room for denial,

"St. Nicholas One, turnin' left onto final."

And what to my wondering eyes should appear,

But a Rutan-built sleigh, with eight Rotax reindeer!

With vectors to final, down the glideslope he came,

As he passed all the fixes, he called them by name:

"Now Ringo! Now Tolga! Now Trini and Bacun!

On Comet! On Cupid!" What pills was he takin'?

While controllers were sittin', and scratchin' their head,

They phoned to my office, and I heard it with dread,

The message they left was both urgent and dour:

"When Santa pulls in, have him please call the tower."

He landed like silk, with the sled runners sparking,

Then I heard "Left at Charlie," and "Taxi to parking."

He slowed to a taxi, turned off of three-oh

And stopped on the ramp with a "Ho, ho-ho-ho..."

He stepped out of the sleigh, but before he could talk,

I ran out to meet him with my best set of chocks.

His red helmet and goggles were covered with frost

And his beard was all blackened from reindeer exhaust.

His breath smelled like peppermint, gone slightly stale,

And he puffed on a pipe, but he didn't inhale.

His cheeks were all rosy and jiggled like jelly,

His boots were as black as a cropduster's belly.

He was chubby and plump, in his suit of bright red,

And he asked me to "fill it, with hundred low-lead."

He came dashing in from the snow-covered pump,

I knew he was anxious for drainin' the sump.

I spoke not a word, but went straight to my work,

And I filled up the sleigh, but I spilled like a jerk.

He came out of the restroom, and sighed in relief,

Then he picked up a phone for a Flight Service brief.

And I thought as he silently scribed in his log,

These reindeer could land in an eight-mile fog.

He completed his pre-flight, from the front to the rear,

Then he put on his headset, and I heard him yell, "Clear!"

And laying a finger on his push-to-talk,

He called up the tower for clearance and squawk.

"Take taxiway Charlie, the southbound direction,

Turn right three-two-zero at pilot's discretion"

He sped down the runway, the best of the best,

"Your traffic's a Grumman, inbound from the west."

Then I heard him proclaim, as he climbed thru the night,

"Merry Christmas to all! I have traffic in sight."

**And maybe a new version I've just found.**

'Twas the night before Christmas all over the place,

When we were confronted by an old flying ace.

There was icing reported and turbulent air,

He said "File me a flight plan, I gotta get there."

Outside sat his aircraft all ready to run,

And the old man walked out to that P-51.

"bad weather's no problem," he silently mumbled,

The prop came to life. . . that big Allison rumbled.

He eased in the throttle, the roar shook the ground,

He taxied on out and he turned it around.

He went through the run-up and seemed satisfied,

Then he said to himself, "I'm in for a ride."

So he lined it up straight as he poured on the coal,

The tailwheel came up as he started to roll.

Up off the runway, he sucked up the gear,

And that mighty V-12 was all you could hear.

He screamed overhead with a deafening crack,

The blue flames were flying from each shiny stack.

He pulled up the nose and started to climb,

No ice on that airframe, it didn't have time.

On top of the weather with the levers all set,

He looked up above him and saw a Lear jet.

With jet fuel and turbines there just ain't no class,

Gimmee pistons, and props and lots of avgas!

Now he was approaching where he wanted to go,

But weather had covered the runway with snow.

How will he land it? We just have to guess,

Because the only way in was a full I-L-S.

Then over the marker, he started his run,

The ceiling was zero, visibility. . . none.

Still going three hundred and he felt the need,

For an overhead break to diminish his speed.

Over the numbers he zoomed, along like a flash,

Pulled into his break, we just knew he would crash.

Oh, why do they do it on these kindof nights??

Then over the threshold, we saw landing lights.

"I'm on a short final with three in the green,

And I see enough runway to land this machine."

Then he tied down that Mustang, and they all hear him say..

"Next year, I'm stickin' with my reindeer and sleigh."

That’s all for this month and for the year.

I wish all members and their families an enjoyable and safe holiday season and look forward to seeing you all at the club next year.

“Take the Spoon out of The Sink”

Regards

Ross Macdonald