Happy New year to you all.

I hope 2018 will be a healthy, prosperous, safe and enjoyable year for everyone.

The New Year’s Day fly in to Koputaroa at Levin was pretty well attended by 29 aircraft and about 50 people. Three aircraft attended from CHB Aero Club. As we will be hosting the 2019 event, I hope to have many more people available to help out.

My summer reading has been a book on the Wright brothers. A very enjoyable and enlightening read. Like many of you, I knew that they carried out the first controlled flight by a heavier than air machine in Dec 1903 at Kitty Hawk but actually very little else.

At the time when they were carrying out flight experiments, all funded by themselves by way of their bicycle manufacturing business, others were also designing and attempting to fly in the USA. One in particular, funded by public money to the tune of $50,000 plus another $20,000 from private investors including one Alexander Graham Bell. was a remarkable “Heath Robinson” affair, known as the “Great Aerodrome” Designed by one Samuel Langley.

This was such a monstrosity that it would never be capable of controlled flight and proved such in that it lurched off the floating barge it sat atop of and immediately stalled and sank to the bottom of the Potomac River near Washington DC. The pilot, Charles Manly was rescued unharmed.

The Wrights had been experimenting for a number of years with glider versions of the Wright Flyer. They never considered fitting an engine because they wanted to learn how to fly first. They chose the sand dunes of Kitty Hawk on the outer banks of North Carolina because of the steady winds observed and predicted by the US weather bureau. They first arrived there in Sep 1900 and over two and a half years they carried out 1000 (one thousand) gliding flights which amounted to approx. 4 hours flying. Then and only then after considering that they now knew how to control this craft, did they go to the next step of adding an engine. Unfortunately no such engine existed so they had to design and build one of those too.

The next part is history which we are familiar with. What happened next is perhaps not so well known.

The US Govt were not interested. No one in authority even believed that they had done what they had. They weren’t even prepared to go and have a look for themselves.

The Wrights shifted their flying base back to their hometown of Dayton Ohio and flew many more flights around a large field. Witnessed by locals and others who heard and came from afar. Still no govt officials. The Wrights were at the stage where they wanted to sell their invention but no one in the US was interested. They looked further afield. The Poms were interested and so were the French. The French, as the keenest, won the Wright’s trust and with promises of relatively large amounts of money if demonstrations on French soil were satisfactory, they shipped a Wright Flyer to France and Wilbur followed it.

Finding a suitable base and field at Le Mans, Wilbur flew many flights in front of thousands of people over a 6 month period in 1908. ( yes, 5 years had passed since the first flight) The press, who had doubted him and his machine and had called him a liar and a charlatan in the time between his arrival in France and the first flights, were completely won over. After a minor accident when the flyer caught a wingtip and cartwheeled in the dust with Wilbur extricating himself from the wreckage and walking away, papers produced an item which stated that “ Mr Wright is as superb in his accidents as he is in his flights”

I’ll add some more next month.

Our students have been reasonably busy flying over the last month although some have been away on holiday.

James Butler is very close to a flight test.

Rueben has been busy with exams and now has 3 completed with possibly a 4th by the time you read this.

Josh Preddy has started attending theory lectures at Hastings.

Terina has been doing some concentrated flying and is enjoying the feeling of being current. Cross countries are very close for her.

The proposed overnighter to the Boyd has been put on hold. The date we had in mind ended up not suiting quite a few key people. Watch this space for a new date.

The planned BBQ beach trip is still proposed for Sunday Feb 4th. Planned departure time is 1500 arriving back around 1800. Bring togs, towel, bucket and spade etc. The warmer ocean temps we have been hearing about should have arrived by then. Please put names on the board at the clubhouse or ring Peter Harris. It’s important we have numbers so we can organise food and seats.

An item in the news recently caught my attention. Totally unrelated to aviation, it is however interesting and topical. The Scott Watson case which involved the disappearance of Ben Smart and Olivia Hope from the Marlborough Sounds in 1998.

Apparently the pro Watson camp have some new evidence to proclaim his innocence.

I’ve never had doubts over his guilt. My son in law was a police officer in Blenheim and gave me some insights.

I came across an article on Stuff , the link to which follows. Have a read.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/crime/100332218/the-case-against-scott-watson>

Coming events:

Feb 4th Beach BBQ trip

Feb 16-18 RAANZ annual fly in at Stratford

Feb 17-24 Central Districts Gliding champs at Waipuk

Mar 9-11 Sport Avex fly in to Waipuk

Duty pilots;

Jan 28th Tony Jefferd

Feb 4th Derek Mohi

Feb 11th Peter Harris

Feb 18th Wendy Milne

Feb 25th Frank Minton

Marc 4th Clem Powell

Mar 11th Matt Durham

Mar 18th James Butler

Mar 25th Richard King

Usual stuff. If you can’t make your date, swap with someone on the list.

Haven’t had any night sky stuff for a while but here’s something you shouldn’t miss

There was a full moon at the start of January. There is another at the end of January. Two full moons in a month? That only occurs once in a Blue Moon. That’s right. The second full moon is a Blue Moon. Plus, it’s also a super moon as it’s very close to the earth so it’s a Super blue moon.

During a supermoon, the moon appears about 14 per cent larger than a normal full moon and around 30 per cent brighter.

In reality, this isn't actually a drastic difference.

However, when a supermoon is close to the horizon, it appears even bigger.

Our eyes visually compare the size of earthly things, such as buildings and trees, to the size of the moon, resulting in a strikingly beautiful view

Plus. The third celestial phenomena to occur is a total lunar eclipse, also known as a blood moon.

This happens when a full moon, Earth and the Sun line up.

This alignment term is delightfully called a "syzygy" which comes from the Greek word for "being paired together."

The moon does not have its own light, but instead is illuminated due to its surface reflecting the Sun's rays.

During a total lunar eclipse, Earth blocks any direct sunlight from reaching the moon.

The Sun is behind Earth, so it causes Earth's shadow to reflect on the moon instead of the Sun's rays.

The term "blood moon" relates to light and atmosphere.

Our sky is blue because when the Sun's light hits our atmosphere, it scatters more blue light across the sky than the other colours.

Red light is often seen during sunset, because we view it through the thicker parts of Earth's atmosphere.

When the moon goes into Earth's shadow, the sunlight is passing though Earth's atmosphere and refracting onto the Moon, creating a blood-red colour across the lunar surface.

Unlike solar eclipses, lunar eclipses are completely fine to view with the naked eye.

The last time all this happened was in 1866.

So make sure you check out the Super, Blue, Blood moon on the evening of Jan 31st.

Ever hear of a guy named Steve Rothstein?

*Steve Rothstein bought a golden ticket from American Airlines in 1987 — granting him a lifetime of unlimited travel.*

*He clocked more than 10 million miles and 10,000 flights. He used his power to fly hopeless strangers home, a friend to the Louvre, and a priest to Rome to meet the pope.*

*He hopped planes to other cities just for a baseball game or a sandwich.*

*Everybody, even American’s CEO, knew his name.*

*“[I] became a hero at the airline,” Rothstein, 61, a Manhattan investment banker, told The Post. “I could just show up and get a seat.”*

*But in 2008, the airline accused him of fraud and snatched his bottomless boarding pass.*

*American is reviewing its AAirpass program to find ways to terminate some of the 66 high-flying contracts that are costing the company millions of dollars a year.*

*Rothstein, then living in Chicago, bought his AAirpass for $250,000, plus a companion ticket for $150,000 more.*

*“I could go someplace and I wouldn’t even have to think about it,” he said. “Just make the reservation and go.”*

*He traveled 18 times in July 2004 alone, jetting to Nova Scotia, Maine, London, Los Angeles and Denver.*

*Once a business meeting in Miami was postponed for a day, so he took a junket to Caracas.*

*He booked flights under fake names such as “Bag Rothstein” if he didn’t know who his companion would be — a practice that the airline later used to accuse him of fraud.*

*Because of the AAirpass, his daughter went to boarding school in Switzerland. He took his son to dozens of nationwide sporting events including the Yankees-Mets Subway Series.*

*Some days he flew to Providence, RI, home of his alma mater, Brown University, just for a baloney-and-Swiss-cheese melt from a place called Geoff’s.*

*“A very fun Saturday would be to wake up early and fly to Detroit, rent a car and go to Ontario, have lunch and spend $50 or $100 buying Canadian things,” Rothstein said.*

*He’d be home in time for dinner with his wife and friends.*

*“But I wouldn’t say, ‘Oh, I went to Canada today.’ That would sound obnoxious.”*

*Still, the charmed traveler paid his fortune forward.*

*He gave away all of his 14 million air miles. If a stranded traveler was crying — such as one woman desperately trying to return to Bronxville, NY, because her children didn’t have a baby sitter — he’d offer her his companion seat.*

*“I felt those random acts of kindness were exactly the sorts of things that we’re meant to do as people,” he said.*

*It was on another goodwill trip that Rothstein was ultimately dethroned, and he had no idea it was coming.*

*On Dec. 13, 2008, he checked in at Chicago O’Hare International Airport with a friend, a policeman hoping to return to his native Bosnia.*

*An American Airlines employee gave him a letter saying his pass had been terminated due to fraudulent activity.*

*He went home in shock and didn’t get out of bed for days.*

*“I feel betrayed,” Rothstein said, adding that he helped sell AAirpasses to firms and spoke at the carrier’s events. “They took away my hobby and my life. They essentially destroyed my persona.”*

*Rothstein filed a lawsuit and a federal judge in Illinois ruled against him for booking under phony names. The case is now being appealed.*

*“Our country is almost captive to big companies who have incredible power to do whatever they want to do,” said Rothstein, who moved to New York in 2009. “It’s hard to fight them.”*

*But that’s just what he’s doing to get his beloved AAirpass back.*

*“They signed a contract,” he said, “and a contract’s a contract.”*

*Frequent flier Steve Rothstein’s travels under American Airlines’ AAirpass program since 1987, which allowed him first-class flights for life:*

*\* 10,000: Number of flights*

*\* 10 million: Miles traveled*

*\* 40 million: Frequent-flier miles earned*

*\* 500: Trips to England*

*\* 70: Trips to Australia*

*\* 120: Tokyo flights*

*\* $21 million: Cost of the flights to American Airlines*

*\* $250,000: What Rothstein paid for his AAirpass in 1987*

*\* $3 million: Cost of an AAirpass in 2004, the last year it was offered*

*\* 0: Number that sold that year*

To close, and I must emphasise that these are my own personal thoughts,

It was with sadness that I learned on Boxing Day that the Tiger, BEF, had been sold.

The end of a great era of the CHB Aeroclub.

Whilst the ownership of the Tiger had always been controversial, I felt that she played an important part of the Club.

For my own part, I was going through a hiatus from participation in the Club activities for several reasons.

I had two BFRs on the same page in my logbook.

I was maintaining my licence but only just. The purchase of the Tiger was the

“something different” that I needed to get me back to the Club.

It was a challenge and an enjoyment. I think it took me about 50 hrs before I had the confidence to go on a half hr flight and not worry the whole time that I had to land this bloody thing when I get back. Many years later when I rated a certain Adam Butcher onto BEF, I mentioned my 50 hr thing. He came to me some months later and said, “Well I’ve done my 50 hrs, I know exactly what you meant and I’m ready to move on” He did and is now living the dream in the Sth Islnd , flying commercially.

Who knows, if I hadn’t come in that day to do my next BFR in this new challenge with Don Macdonald , I may still be playing golf on a Sunday.

As a club with 2 Cessnas and a microlight, we are very like many other struggling clubs in this country. Sure we own our land and airfield and are in a strong financial position but we need to continue the “Difference” that Central Hawke’s Bay Aero Club has had a reputation for, for many years.

“Take The Spoon Out Of The Sink”

Ross Macdonald



