October and now it really does feel like spring. Strong winds, occasional rain events and definitely warmer temperatures. So much so that I’ve brought out my shorts which I apologise for in advance. To the uninitiated, it may appear from a distance that someone is arc welding over by the clubhouse but it’s only the glare from my over-wintered legs.

As I write now, we have had a serious rain event with over 100 mm and both rivers bank to bank. Haven’t seen that all winter. A grand old Hawke’s Bay spring. And now as I complete this edition, a cold snap with new snow on the ranges. There goes my early spuds and tomatoes unless I cover them.

As mentioned above, the last month has been windy and as such the hours were down. Stuart Brown still remains in the watch this space for impending first solo however his cross wind experience has grown in the interim. I still regard cross wind technique as a downfall of most low time pilots. When there’s a cross wind, make use of it. Ask me for some dual and don’t shy away from it and wait for better weather. Don’t think that practice makes perfect. Practice makes permanent. Only perfect practice makes perfect. If you are practising the wrong thing, then that’s a waste of time.

I’d like to talk about flight following. We as a club don’t require our pilots to file flight plans or SARWATCH however it’s important for you to know how to file and manage one if needed. We have a “Spidertracks” which we require pilots to use on all cross-countries, which becomes the flight following. I encourage private owners to have some form of flight following. Be it SARWATCH, spidertracks or using some family member or colleague as a monitor. With almost everyone nowadays having a cell phone, it’s so easy. The important thing is for the follower to know the intended route and ETA and most importantly, what to do in the event that the call or txt msg doesn’t come through at the arranged time. A recent tragedy saw two people killed in an accident in the northern Tararuas. I’m not going to get into the whys and hows here because the investigation is on-going, however I will make the point that this aircraft departed the last airfield approx. 30 minutes before the crash however the alarm wasn’t raised until 5 hours later which was well after dark. The weather was not nice and searchers were put at risk searching that night and early next morning in mountainous terrain. I have told many people that I am very available to be a flight following monitor if required. Some use me. I recently followed Bruce and Jenny McGregor on a trip to the SI in their new 172. I used the “Flight Radar 24” App which tracks the new ADSB transponders. This was only partially successful as they dropped off the map on several occasions and when they stopped at an airfield on the way for a leg stretch or fuel, my tracing ceased and I had no idea where they were until they became airborne again and the transponder started working again. Perhaps the more advanced and “pay more” version of the app allows an historic view of the track but the version I use does not.

I recently had the rare privilege of having time to go for a local fly in Rans CHB for my own enjoyment. I’d had a Saturday morning of dual and the afternoon was mine. One of the morning flights was also in the Rans and as we taxied out, my student commented that the steering seemed vague. I had a go and sure enough, it seemed the tail wheel steering wasn’t working. We stopped and checked and found that the tee shaped rod that the steering chains are connected to was worn. We disassembled it and turned over the worn part which presented an unworn side and the problem was fixed. Later when I went off on my own, it was a day so calm that a hands off feet off flight should have been enjoyed however a right yaw left wing down situation developed when I attempted that. Bugger that I said out loud and headed back to Waipuk. A tweak of the rudder tab and some adjustment of the wing incidence saw me 20minutes later, flying along hands and feet of on a lovely flying day.

If you observe anything unusual or if you think things are not right or usual, then please tell someone your concerns. Mostly it will be something minor but it may be more serious.

Our flying friends, Neroli and Bill Henwood, from Te Kowhai, are planning an overnight stay at Raglan on Sat Nov 30th. What a good excuse for a trip away. Raglan has a camping ground 100 yards walk from the airfield and town is a short walk away. We had a trip there in Oct last year and had a nice time. List on the board at the Clubhouse.

Sun 8th of Dec is a breakfast fly in to Koputuroa airstrip at Levin. Hosted by the Fielding micro Club and Peter Kernohan. 0830 arrival time. List on the board.

The Club’s xmas party has been notified elsewhere but reminder that it is on Sunday 15th December. This is very much a family event so bring along your children and/or grand children. Santa will be paying a visit with presents for all children and a bouncy castle will be there as well. In years gone by we used to have kids races, egg and spoon and sack, and there were even adult races which involved running 100 yards and skulling a beer as well. Now there’s an idea for some enterprising person.

The sheep are still on the field and have some black face cousins to join them. The new ones are very athletic and the old ones are almost arrogant. Care is still required with them.

We have had some issues recently where position reports in the vicinity of the airfield have not been accurate. In one case, the position was given as “overhead Waipukurau”when in fact the aircraft was overhead Waipawa. This resulted in a near miss for one of our pilots. Please be specific in your directions and height. Overhead is OVERHEAD, not a mile either side. I realise that distance can be difficult to judge but if the height and direction are accurate then if the distance is a couple of miles out it shouldn’t cause too much trouble. One I use and teach is that the Hatuma Lime works is 5 miles from the airfield. It’s an obvious feature and by transposing that radius around to your position, distance can be more easily judged. Remember that there are more than 4 points on a compass rose. Give your position in relation to the airfield, not some local feature like Pukeora, which non-locals may not know. Get the terminology correct and less is more when using the radio. Leave out feet, nautical miles and my old favourite, “letting down on the non-traffic side” AC91-9, the radio telephony manual specifically states to not say that as it is part of the standard OH re-join procedure and others should know that that is what you are going to do. As some of my students know, I get frustrated by unnecessary radio talk and turn down the volume on the radio while trying to patter a lesson. The bloody 5 minute position reports by transiting traffic to the west drives me insane. These people are being taught this by someone who was probably taught it by someone or maybe they heard someone do it and thought that it was a good idea.

Wow that started out a 5 line inform and ended up a rant!

The 152, ETJ, went up to Hastings for scheduled maintenance recently. Some non-ferrous metal was found in the oil filter which resulted in all 4 cylinders being removed. One cylinder was found to be unserviceable and so a 2nd hand one was fitted along with new rings and honed bores on the other 3. For the next few hours we will be running her at higher power settings and also using a different oil if it needs topping up. This oil is in containers in the back of the aircraft. It’s done in excess of 5 hours now at virtually full throttle and no circuits so the early running-in is pretty much done. Limit time on the ground, get it in the air and fly it like you stole it. At full throttle and S&L, it revs to the red line so some care is needed to ensure that the red line is not exceeded.

The following from CC Ron Day:

*Any outdoor pursuits are naturally affected by weather, and we have been unlucky lately. Our planned sortie to the Whanganui Dawn Raid was thwarted by fog, despite a brave attempt by some to find a way through. Although a tomato sauce covered hot sausage in bread is extremely tempting, safety is always the prime consideration.*

*The same could be said for our trip to Rangataiki with the HB&ECAC. Strong westerlies would have made it unpleasant, if not dangerous. However, this has been rescheduled for Sunday November 3rd. Compulsory safety briefing at Hastings (Bridge Pa) is 1000, down stairs at the aero club. Departure 1015 and home about 1330. Names on the board please.*

*Let us hope for better luck this time as, typically, the weather has been more settled during the week when those of us still on the treadmill can’t get away. Never mind, it is the season.*

*Disruptions to our weekend flying does impact our hard-pressed CFI who often has to cram two days into one to satisfy the increasing demands for his time. Trying to appease everyone is an unenviable juggling act that he somehow manages. We are extremely indebted.*

*As a novice flyer that has come to this pursuit later in life, I have the added challenge of re-energising dormant brain cells to meet the demands required to stay safe. In my brief career I have discovered distraction to be a real threat. This can come in the form of daydreaming when the pleasure of the experience overcomes me, or dealing with an unexpected situation that can arise quickly.*

*A few weeks ago I did some circuits in CHB to stay current and felt a bit rusty. It may have been the challenging crosswind or the fact that I usually fly the Jodel and therefore mostly solo – where it is easy to adopt bad habits. I decided it was time for some revision with The Chief. This I have managed to do and have as usual learnt something to hone my skills, and perhaps save my life.*

*Once I have qualified and am no longer legally required to do this between my biennials, I think I will still seek revision as I feel the need. We continue to lose experienced pilots. I urge you to consider this no matter how long you have been flying.*

*Still on a personal level, I was lucky to strike the weather right for a trip to Hood for Wairarapa’s 90th, though it took me some time to thaw out when I got there. Conversation was naturally more about the people rather than the aircraft, which put me at a disadvantage, but the important thing for me was that “FLI” was there.*

*The social side of any club is an important element and our Last Sunday of the Month dinners are always entertaining. The “pot luck” arrangement seems to be working and avoids burdening individual members. That said, if anyone feels like playing Master Chef there would be no objections I’m sure!*

*It was upsetting to hear that Shirley Simmons suffered a medical emergency after our last Sunday dinner, though I must stress this was not related to her meal. Thankfully Shirley is on the mend and we wish her a quick recovery.*

*We are blessed with fantastic clubrooms and are lucky we’ve had members with imagination and drive to build what we now almost take for granted. However, we should not rest on our laurels, so the committee is looking at ways to improve our outside seating arrangements. If anyone has some ideas they’d like to contribute, please don’t hesitate to make them known.*

*Clem Powell has loaned us a bookcase for our growing library while I drag the chain in building one. Thank you Clem.*

*A side of the club that has taken a back seat over the last few years is Club Competitions. John White is keen to get them going again over this summer and will be looking for an assistant. Thanks for initiating this John. Watch this space.*

*Lastly, we are always looking for a club trip away, and the “Te Kowhai Country Market Day & Summer Fly-In” on 29th Feb 2020 could be just the ticket. Mark it on your calendar and put your name on the board.*

*Ron*

Here’s some interesting stats.

World’s oldest fighter pilot; Phil Frawley

Country, Australia

Age at retirement, 66

Fighter pilots trained, 499

Favourite fighter, MIG-21

MIG -21s produced, 11,496

Oldest active pilot in the world; Earnest Eli Smith.

Age at time of record (2016) 98

Job at retirement, beer truck driver

Age FAA grounded him, 99

Reason, Health issues

Quote, “Flying doesn’t take special skills”

Oldest active pilot ever recorded; Cole Kugel

Age at record (2007) 105

Born 1902 (1year before the Wright bros historic flight)

Year licensed 1945

First plane owned Piper Super Cruiser

Distance to ferry plane home, 1250 miles

Technology used, compass, road maps

Lifetime in-flight emergencies, 0

Quote, “I had a good life”

Useful Aviation Terms

AIRSPEED – Speed of an airplane. (Deduct 25% when listening to a retired fighter pilot.)

BANK – The folks who hold the lien on most pilots’ cars.

CARBURETOR ICING – A phenomenon reported to the FAA by pilots immediately after they run out of gas.

CONE OF CONFUSION – An area about the size of New Jersey located near the final approach fix at an airport.

DEAD RECKONING – You reckon correctly, or you are.

DESTINATION – Geographical location 30 minutes beyond the pilot’s bladder saturation point.

ENGINE FAILURE – A condition that occurs when all fuel tanks mysteriously become filled with low-octane air.

FIREWALL – Section of the aircraft specifically designed to funnel heat and smoke into the cockpit.

FLIGHT FOLLOWING – Formation flying.

GLIDE DISTANCE – Half the distance from an airplane to the nearest emergency landing field.

HOBBS – An instrument which creates an emergency situation should it fail during dual instruction.

HYDROPLANE – An airplane designed to land long on a short and wet runway.

LEAN MIXTURE – Nonalcoholic beer.

MINI MAG LITE – Device designed to support the AA battery industry.

NANOSECOND – Time delay between the Low Fuel Warning light and the onset of carburetor icing.

PARASITIC DRAG – A pilot who bums a ride and complains about the service.

RICH MIXTURE – What you order at another pilot’s promotion party.

ROGER – Used when you’re not sure what else to say.

SECTIONAL CHART – Any chart that ends 25 nm short of your destination.

SERVICE CEILING – Altitude at which cabin crew can serve drinks.

SPOILERS – CAA Inspectors.

STALL – Technique used to explain to the bank why your car payment is late.

STEEP BANKS – Banks that charge pilots more than 10% interest

TURN & BANK INDICATOR – An instrument largely ignored by pilots.

USEFUL LOAD – Volumetric capacity of the aircraft, disregarding weight.

YANKEE – Any pilot who has to ask New Orleans tower to “Say again”.

Duty pilots

Oct 27th Frank Minton

Nov 3rd Clem Powel

Nov 10th Mat Durham

Nov 17th Ross Hatfull

Nov 24th Richard King

Dec 1st Bruce Knight

Dec 8th Derek Simmons

Dec 15th Tim Aitken

That’s all from me for this month. See you at the HB Show.

Take The Spoon Out Of The Sink.

Ross Macdonald