



Aviation Historical Society of Australia Air Mail Centenary Commemoration Group Newsletter 2: November 6, 2013

For newcomers: who we are, what are we doing, and why....



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In mid-July 1914, French aviator Maurice Guillaux flew from Melbourne to Sydney, seated on his flimsy Bleriot XI aircraft. The journey took 2 days, 5 hours and 43 minutes, and he carried 1785 postcards (Australia's first air mail) and some Liptons Tea and some lemon cordial (Australia's first air freight). At the time this was the longest such flight in the world: it was front-page news. However, two weeks later, World War I broke out, and Guillaux' epic feat was largely lost to historic memory.

The Aviation Historical Society of Australia, NSW (inc) is a group of people dedicated to preserving aviation history and heritage, and we are co-ordinating a re-enactment flight which will occur on 12-14 July next year. A wide

coalition of business, aviation groups, historians and philatelists are working together to carry out the re-enactment, which aims not just to recognise the work of Maurice Guillaux, but to showcase the wonderful history of Australian aviation over the past century and more. Now read on....

The re-enactment Aircraft

Several proposals were put before the AHSA committee, and it was decided to have an Australian-designed, Australian-made Jabiru as the symbolic mail-carrying aircraft. Of similar size and weight to the Bleriot, it showcases the latest technology in light sports planes. The Sporting Aircraft Association of Australia, Garland Aerospace, Jabiru Aircraft and many other individuals and groups have combined to organise and support the aircraft.

Our pilot has been chosen!

John Fowles of Albury has been nominated as the pilot of the lead Jabiru. His exploits in his Jabiru are legendary: for example, in 2007 he flew around Australia, leading a group of eight light aircraft, keeping to his announced timetable throughout. He is flying his trusted early-model Jabiru, brought up to date by a full refurbishment conducted by Garland Aerospace.

Jabiru Australia are also making available a second, new model Jabiru.



Planning progress....

We also have a definite route and itinerary for our flight. Guillaux left Flemington racecourse at 9 12 am on 16 July 1914 and flew via Seymour, Wangaratta, Albury, Wagga, Harden, Goulburn and Liverpool to land at Moore Park, Sydney at 2 55 pm on 18 July 1914. He landed in open fields that are now residential areas: his landing at Liverpool was in a paddock just behind the main street! Our route follows the original as closely as is reasonable, using modern airfields. See our itinerary on the next page.

Guillaux landed at Moore Park, near Sydney Cricket Ground, where he was met by the state Governor and by the Governor-General. We are hoping that we can persuade the relevant authorities to let the Jabiru land at the nearby Parade Ground, Centennial Park, where the French community will be celebrating Bastille Day.

Please go to our website, www.australiasfirstairmail.com, and follow the link to our latest plans.

Watch for our next newsletter, early in December.

Our itinerary....

	Jabiru departs	time	destination	distance (nm)	ETA	Time on ground
Sunday, 12 July	Essendon	09:12	Mangalore	52	09:56	1 hour 30 minutes
	Mangalore	11:30	Wangaratta	61	12:25	1 hour 30 minutes
	Wangaratta	14:00	Albury	38	14:41	overnight
Sunday, 13 July	Albury	08:30	Wagga	60	09:22	1 hour 30 minutes
	Wagga	11:00	Temora	45	11:44	1 hour 45 minutes
	Temora	13:30	Harden	44	14:14	overnight
Monday, 14 July	Harden	09:00	Goulburn	68	09:55	45 minutes
	Goulburn	10:40	Bankstown	87	11:46	2 hours 30 minutes
	Bankstown	14:20	Centennial Park	38	14:55	nom 2 hours

The Jabiru stage times are calculated at a cruising speed of 100 nm/hr and the Jabiru cruises at 115 nm/hr. This should allow for adverse winds. 15 minutes is added to each stage for taxiing etc. For full details of the Jabiru course, see http://australiasfirstairmail.com/planningfolder/flightplan/flight_plan%20index.htm.



The Jabiru will be accompanied throughout the journey by two escort aircraft. A de Havilland Caribou, operated by the Historic Aircraft Restoration Society at Albion Park, will carry any equipment needed, and will be a wonderful drawcard at each stop en route. People will be able to get 'up close and personal' with this wonderful aircraft. Shell Australia have expressed interest in supporting the Caribou, and final details are being worked out.

It is planned that another all-weather aircraft, funded by the commemorative committee from sales of philatelic material, will fly ahead of both aircraft to ensure that all goes smoothly at each stop. The Jabirus will also be supported by a

mobile workshop that will travel by road, staffed by SAAA volunteers.

Weather may be a big problem, so we are working on several alternative plans. Working from historical meteorological data, it has been calculated that we have at least a 75% chance of adhering to our schedule, and over a 90% chance of having nothing more than variation of an hour or so. In the worst case, mail can be carried on the Caribou or the other escort aircraft for a stage or two. Barring something like 'once in a century' storms over the entire area, we will have a great event.

Aero Clubs, local government authorities and civic groups are being invited to celebrate the arrival of the re-enactment by holding fly-ins, historical displays and similar events: even though we have not fully publicised the idea, we have already had a wonderful response from several of these places.

Other aircraft may join in the flight, either for one or two stages or for the whole journey to Bankstown. Technically, there is no reason why these aircraft cannot fly along with the other aircraft, using standard safety rules. However, all participants are determined to emphasise safety, and the commemorative committee has appointed Tony Coleiro as safety consultant. Tony is employed by QANTAS as an A330 ground instructor conducting pilot endorsement training, and is a senior RAAus instructor with Sydney Jabiru Flying School conducting flight training on high performance light sport aircraft at Bankstown NSW. He has a Commercial Pilot Licence with Grade 1 Flight Instructor rating. Including general aviation aircraft, ultralights and gliders, he has flown 47 different types of aircraft.

Tony is working on a pilot handbook for the event, with airfield specifications and safe flying rules, and it is envisaged that he will fly in an escort aircraft and offer briefings and timing suggestions to anyone joining in.

Coming soon: the philatelic event of the decade!

There are several philatelic products in the pipeline, but one stands out as a unique opportunity.

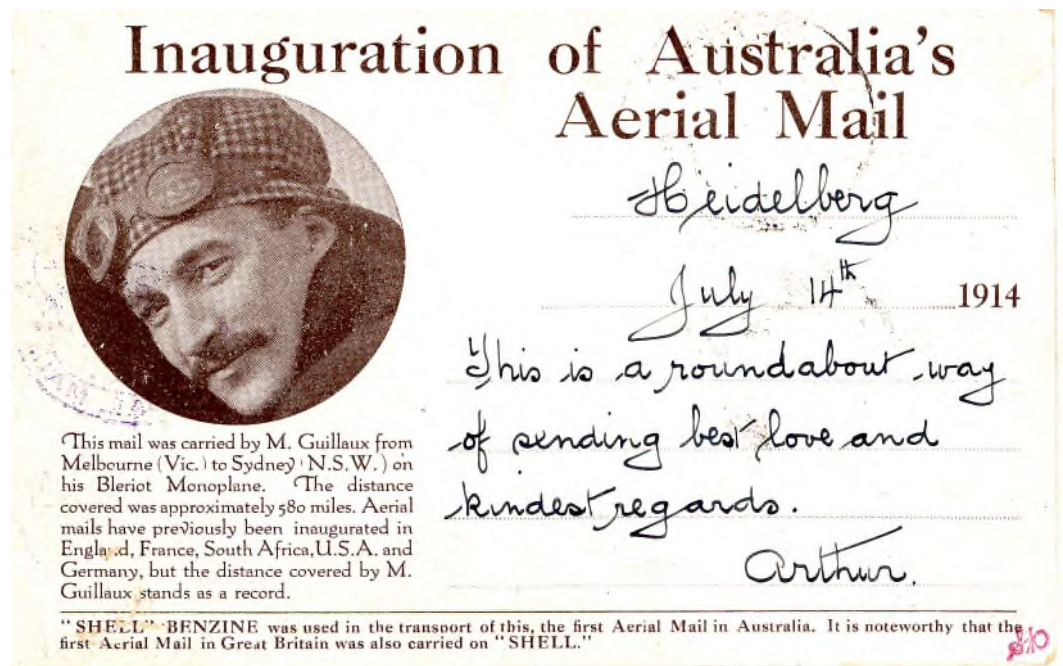
Exactly 1785 numbered postcards will be carried, in the Jabiru if at all possible. They are modelled on the originals, seen on this page, with minimal change to the wording, eg *Re-enactment of Australia's Aerial Mail* rather than *Inauguration of Australia's Aerial Mail*. The postcards are shown here at their actual size.



Australia Post is issuing special stamps, but they will not be available until 1 July 2014. Frankly, we (the commemorative committee) need money now to ensure that we can carry out our planning properly. Therefore we are beginning to sell the postcards within the next month; purchasers will receive a statement detailing their purchase, and the card will be delivered shortly after the

centenary date, 18 July 2014. This is a standard practice in the philatelic world.

We plan that the cards will be stamped, and addressed according to the purchasers' instructions, and will also have imprints of official stamps for the start and the finish of the flight as well as a specially-made commemorative imprint for the flight itself. Details such as this are still being finalised.



The initial issue of cards will consist of all cards except numbers 1 to 10 and 1776 to 1785. Early purchasers will be able to select the numbers they want. We want to be sure that the issue will not be taken over by profit-making stamp dealers, so no-one will be allowed to buy more than two cards.

Michael Hill, a highly respected philatelist and dealer, is being employed to manage the issue. When the stamps go on sale, there will be a full description of the process.

To ensure that you do not miss out on this great opportunity ensure you have sent your email address to guillauxcentenary@gmail.com.

The first seaplane flight....

Guillaux is best known for his mail flight, and his spectacular flying exhibitions also are remembered. But he holds another record, less well-known, as the first person to fly a seaplane in Australia.

Lebbeus Hordern, of the wealthy family who owned the huge retail store Anthony Horderns, imported a Maurice Farman seaplane in 1914 and employed Guillaux and his associates to assemble and test fly the aircraft. It took to the air on May 8, 1914; within the next few days Guillaux took up some twenty passengers, including some rather attractive ladies!



Picture Sam Hood. State Library of NSW -a128591

Hordern and Guillaux had big plans for the expansion of Australia's aviation activities, but these were cut short by the outbreak of war in August 1914. Lebbeus' seaplane was donated to the military, where it actually became the first aircraft to be sent from Australia for military purposes before becoming a training aircraft at Point Cook.

The Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia is planning to mark the centenary of the first seaplane flight. This will probably take the form of a gathering of seaplanes in Sydney, possibly on the weekend following the centenary of the first flight.

Fly-over of historic aircraft

A FLY-PAST OF VINTAGE AIRCRAFT is being planned for the business lunch hour between 1300 and 1400 hours on Monday 14 July 2014. It is hoped that this will draw attention to the historic flight and attract exposure via TV and the media.

Judy Rainsford is negotiating with Roy Fox, who has expressed support and interest in the event. With his Dragon Rapide, Eagle, Cobra Swift and other vintage aircraft and networks, Roy is a familiar figure in aviation and his experience welcome. If you have ideas, or would like to participate, please contact Judy Rainsford - judy rainsford@hotmail.com .

The French Connection.....

M Berti, Consul-General of France, has been untiring in his efforts to assist the commemorations. He has plans well in hand for the Bastille Day commemorations, and is lobbying people such as Tom Enders, head of EADS, which among other things produces the Airbus. Many exciting things are happening: we are sending out another newsletter early in December, so we will give full details then!

A word from Harden.....

The township of Harden is centre of the Harden Shire, population about 4000. The smallest of the towns visited by Maurice Guillaux in his mail flight, it was also the most important: he was delayed here for a full day because of bad weather. Harden was also the first of the stopping points to get involved in the re-enactment. Debbie Astill, of the Carrington Hotel, where Guillaux stayed, immediately offered overnight accommodation to the flight crew and is spreading the word so that the overnight stay in Harden, Sunday 13 July, will be a wonderful occasion. We have also heard from Lorraine Brown from the Harden Murrumburrah Historical Society whose enthusiasm is inspiring. During this month we are making more formal contact with airfields, aero clubs, local government and other organisations en route, and will have more information for you next month. We hope to send newsletters out every month from now on.