



Aviation Historical Society of Australia Air Mail Centenary Commemoration Group Newsletter 3: January 30 2014

For newcomers.....

In mid-July 1914, French aviator Maurice Guillaux flew from Melbourne to Sydney seated on his Bleriot XI aircraft. The journey took 2 days, 5 hours and 45 minutes, and he carried Australia's first air mail and air freight. 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 co-ordinating a re-enactment flight which will occur on 12-14 July next year. Now read on...

The big development this month: Sale of our postcards

Australia Post is releasing commemorative stamps on July 1, 2014. Unless postage charges change they will be in 60c and \$2.60 denominations.



The most collectable philatelic item will certainly be the postcards produced by us. There are exactly 1785 numbered postcards, modelled on the originals, and the

major focus of the re-enactment.

Cards cost either for \$30 or \$35, including all postage and handling fees. The \$30 'standard' postcard will have only the lower denomination stamp, and the \$35 'premium' postcard will have both stamps.

So please go to www.australiasfirstairmail.com, enter the shop, and complete your purchase in the normal way using a credit card or PayPal. You can print off a receipt as part of the purchase process and you will receive, through ordinary mail, a certificate of purchase, as described later. Your postcard will be sent to Melbourne for the re-enactment flight. During the period 12-14 July 2014 it will be carried to Sydney. Appropriate postmarks and backstamps will be made and it will be imprinted with a special logo modelled on that used for the 1964 re-enactment. It will be sent by registered mail in a fully protected envelope to the address you have provided.

The early purchase of postcards is of huge assistance to us in running the best possible re-enactment flight. Please buy your postcards now, and encourage your friends to do likewise!

If you haven't got a credit card.....

We can accept bank transfers or cheques. It is a little more difficult to select the number you want on your card. Email guillauxcentenary@gmail.com for details. You can also buy from Mike Hill, Bexley Stamps, (02) 9920 5057

One of our customers.....



Dick Smith has heard of our efforts and has given us \$1000 for our project. At this stage it is invaluable assistance: our budget remains slender. The money is a personal donation from Dick, and a great

endorsement of our efforts.

Dick has also bought one of our cards. His order included the comment "*Congratulations for organising the centenary of the flight. I am delighted to buy a postcard and I hope many others will also – it is a very historic document and will increase in value over the years, I'm sure*".

So next time you go shopping please support *Dick Smith Foods* – as Dick says, the food company deserves help because it gives all its profits to charity and assists Aussie farmers.

What is the money used for?

We will firstly use all proceeds from the sale to ensure a safe and efficient re-enactment flight. Our main need is to get an escort aircraft with ILS capability to take over the mail carriage for a stage or two if the weather becomes troublesome for the Jabirus and to carry support teams.

We do anticipate that when we sell all the cards and pay for the re-enactment we will have a surplus, which will be donated to appropriate organisations to

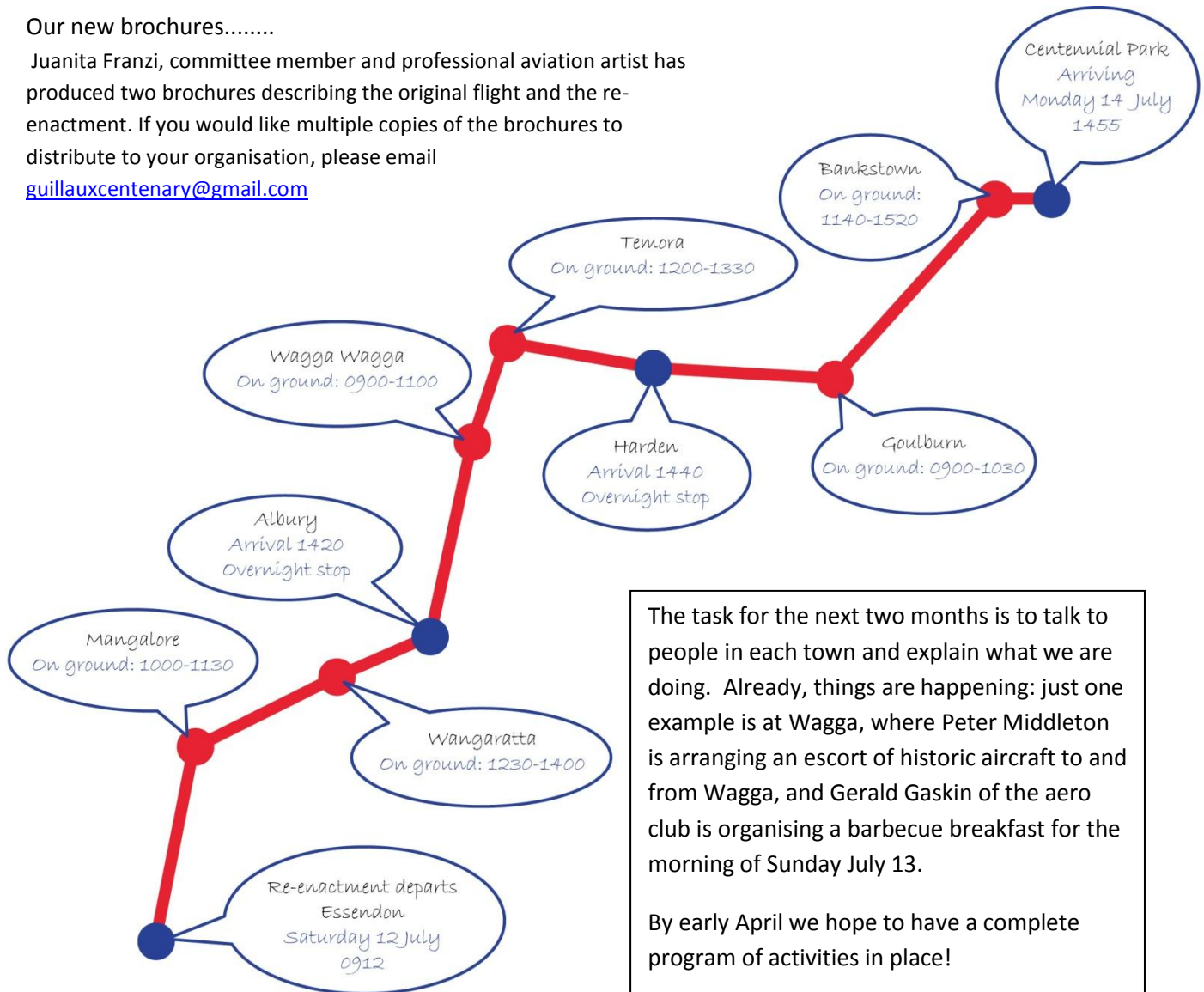
assist in the preservation of Australia's aviation heritage.

Full details of the organisation of the commemorations, including the terms and conditions under which your purchase has been made, will be found on www.australiasfirstairmail.com. A full financial statement will be published on this website at the conclusion of the program.

The re-enactment flight timetable

Our new brochures.....

Juanita Franzi, committee member and professional aviation artist has produced two brochures describing the original flight and the re-enactment. If you would like multiple copies of the brochures to distribute to your organisation, please email guillauxcentenary@gmail.com



David Kelly's collection

David Kelly, managing director of Lucrum Consulting in North Sydney is one of several people who have contacted us. He has been collecting Bleriot information and plans for over ten years.

The aim of collating all available information is being achieved!



Safety first, last and always

Technically, AHSA does not have to worry about safety regarding this operation. A Jabiru, properly registered and prepared, in the hands of a suitably qualified pilot, is perfectly entitled to fly from Essendon to Bankstown, as is any aircraft that wishes to fly along with it. Each aircraft pilot is responsible for the safety of his or her aircraft, and AHSA has no role at all in this.

The people connected with the Jabiru are negotiating with CASA re the possibility of landing in Centennial Park; it will be wonderful if this can happen, but if not there is a plan B and a plan C.

However, AHSA member Tony Coleiro, a highly qualified pilot and instructor, has given a lot of thought to what could go wrong with our project. He has produced a handbook for the guidance of participants, and it will shortly be on our website and made available to anyone who wishes to join the project. He will travel with the re-enactment and be available to give advice as required.

A time line for our activities

Our progress has been delayed, largely because of problems with the website shop. We had hoped to have it 'up' for the December meeting at AAMB Bankstown, but it has only in the last few weeks reached an acceptable standard of speed. It is a fully secure website, with no possibility of your bankcard details being improperly used.

So during the next month, our top priority is to get the postcards sold. If we can sell 300 cards in February, we have the necessary finances to get a really excellent re-enactment flight.

During March we will be firming up arrangements in the en-route stops.

For the 100 year anniversary of Guillaux' arrival in Australia, early April, we hope to inaugurate our program. The period May-June will be a combination of events marking the centenary of his various efforts and of refining the commemoration flight arrangements.

Australia Post is releasing the commemorative stamps on July 1. We are fully prepared for a busy time making the final arrangements!

AHSA meeting in Melbourne



Tom Lockley visited the Melbourne meeting of AHSA at their invitation to discuss the re-enactment flight and other activities, and as usual, this was a great opportunity for gathering information.

Garry Sunderland brought in his beautifully made Bleriot XI model. He built it some 20 years ago, and it is a free-flight model, the control surfaces being pre-set before the flight. In the picture he is explaining the suspension system of the Bleriot, which is surprisingly sophisticated.

Kevin O'Reilly is a noted historian and author whose award-winning book about early Australian aviation is entitled *Flyers of Time*. He has sent us a wonderful photo of Guillaux' aircraft on the ground at Bendigo, and spoke about the connection with the O.T. juice company and many other matters.

Melbourne AHSA members are keen to become involved and are very interested in the re-enactment and the general emphasis on Australia's aviation heritage that is part of the process.

Australia Post

Tom Lockley met with Australia post philatelic officers while in Melbourne. Teena Barnes, who handles the philatelic aspects of the release of new stamps was joined by other officers and the whole exercise was discussed.

They were very interested in the whole process and were impressed with what the aviation community had achieved.

There is considerable support for the re-enactment, and Australia Post will co-operate in various ways. Christine Ewoldt, our philatelic manager, will have more news on this shortly.

Guillaux at Goulburn



High-quality pictures from 1914 are relatively rare. This picture comes from Goulburn, and was sent to us by Bob Saunders of the Rocky Hill War Memorial Museum. We can identify the men with Guillaux in the centre of the picture: on the left is Clyde Baxter, whose family owned Baxter's boot factory, and in the middle is the mayor of Goulburn, Alderman Betts.

Guillaux had been held up at Harden on 17 July by bad weather. Lucien Maistre, Guillaux' interpreter and associate had telegraphed from Goulburn advising Guillaux to remain in Harden. However, he set out at 2pm and the news was telegraphed to Goulburn.

The *Goulburn Penny Post* described the enthusiastic response to this news. The children at Bourke Street School were allowed to leave and large crowds moved to the racecourse. A few paid an admission fee to enter the course itself, but the majority did not enter, waiting around to see what would happen.

Maurice Guillaux turned back after reaching Galong, twenty miles from Harden, because of strong headwinds. Guillaux feared that the aircraft might not reach its destination and would have to crash in heavily wooded, mountainous country. The news reached Goulburn, and the disappointed crowd headed home.

Guillaux took off at 7 15 am the following day: sunrise was at about 7 am. It appears that the headwind persisted – the average speed was only 47 mph when the aircraft cruised at about 60 mph. He described the ground over which he flew: 'never had I seen such an inhospitable region as this: the deep yawning chasms

seemed to be calling me down, into the merciless depths, never to rise again'. Relatively few people were there to welcome him, but the *Post* description was ecstatic – 'with the grace of a bird selecting a resting place M Guillaux issued from the clouds to the west of South Hill shortly before half-past nine this morning, and soaring gracefully over the eminence descended with a swoop at the southern end of the racecourse and alighted almost in the centre of the ground'. This was the first aircraft seen in Goulburn.

Goulburn is notorious for its bitterly cold weather, and when he landed he rushed to the beacon fire that had been lit. He drank from a thermos flask of tea that he had with him, then personally checked his aircraft very carefully, making sure that the smokers kept well away.

He took off at 10 am, but was forced to return because of a faulty spark plug. Before his next take-off he ran the engine at high power, with the aircraft's wheels chocked and three men holding down the tail. 'The suction from the propeller blades was so strong that the men's clothing blew about as if in a gale of wind and their hats were carried away'..... 'On his second ascent the airman rose to a height of 1100 feet. He circled the race course and then flew in the direction of Murray's Flat, where he altered his course slightly, evidently to give the people at Kenmore Hospital an opportunity of seeing him'.... 'It was amusing to watch the horses stampede across the paddocks and a number of birds flying for safety. Guillaux makes the birds look trivial when he takes charge of the air.'