



Aviation Historical Society of Australia Air Mail Centenary Commemoration Group Newsletter 4: March 27, 2014

For those who do not know the story: 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...

An Invitation:

You are invited to come to the next meeting of the Aviation Historical Society of Australia, to be held at **The North Ryde RSL Club, corner of Pittwater Road and Magdala Roads, North Ryde**, next Wednesday, 2 April, at 7 45 pm. The project's historical background will be explored, and the re-enactment plans will be discussed.

Apologies for the late notice of this meeting: the venue was in doubt until yesterday, because of the uncertain position of the PowerHouse Museum, which, having Guillaux' Bleriot on display, would have been the ideal venue. However, building and construction projects, and the present difficulties of the PowerHouse Museum, have necessitated the use of this venue.



Our principal support pilot

The lead mail carrying aircraft is the Jabiru flown by John Fowles of Albury. John is confident he can carry the mail to timetable, but we really need to take steps to ensure that, whatever the weather, 'the mail must get though'. The Jabiru must fly under Visual Flight Rules, and will be grounded in times of poor visibility.

Over the past eight months our aviation experts have been considering various options for a support plane and the choice has now been made. We needed an aircraft that is fully equipped for instrument flying, with the latest avionic and navigational equipment, and the ability to land on any airstrip under the worst conditions.

More important than the aircraft is the pilot, and we are delighted to announce that the lead support aircraft will be flown by Aminta Hennessy, AOM, one of the most capable light aircraft pilots in the country. In 1978 she became the first Australian woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. She was also the first woman to fly solo back-to-back crossings of the Pacific Ocean in 1994. She has flown Pacific Ocean solo more

than 20 times and has flown throughout the Indian Ocean and Asia many times, delivering aircraft. With over 40 years of pilot experience, Aminta's feats are the stuff of legend.

She has also been active in other aviation areas, such as establishing the 'Fear of Flying' clinics on behalf of the Australian Women Pilots' Association, in conjunction with QANTAS. She established the Australia Association of Flight Instructors and was President for more than five years.

We asked her to select, from the fleet of her (and husband Ray's) company Clamback and Hennessy, the aircraft best suited to handling the worst conditions we could encounter in this project, and she suggested a Cessna 182 which is comprehensively equipped with the latest instrumentation and the best available undercarriage and tyres for handling any conditions.

The re-enactment flight will not just consist of two aircraft. Indeed the participating aircraft numbers are increasing day by day, and our next newsletter will list some of these. If you would like to join in, please email us: guillauxcentenary@gmail.com.

Postcard sales

Sales are continuing at a steady rate, and the overall level of sales is OK for this stage of our development.

However we are about to embark on a major advertising program, through email and direct mail to stamp clubs and aero clubs, and also by advertisements in Australian and UK stamp magazines. Also work is being done on the 'user interface' of the website so that anyone attracted by the advertisements will find it easier to use. The work on the website will be complete in a fortnight, before our major advertising campaign gets under way.

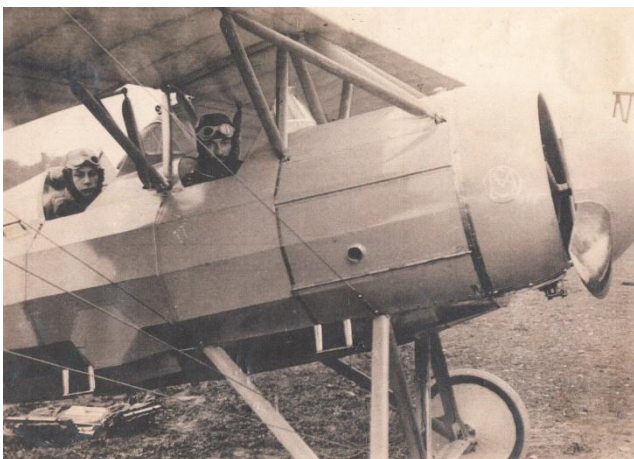
The advertisements have been designed by Juanita Franzi, with the assistance of our philatelic manager Christine Ewoldt who wrote the 'copy'.

The sale of the postcards is what pays the basic expenses of the project. There is no doubt that they will be sold: this is the most exciting project of its type in Australia, and indeed in the world, and the signs are that all will indeed be sold.

However, many people are holding off in making their purchase. We are handicapped by the fact that the stamps will not be released until July 1, so the cards must be sold in advance, and many people are obviously not going to make their purchases until the last moment.

There are still some very good 'low number' postcards available, and this is a good inducement for people to buy early. And also, purchasers will have the

The Guillaux family



Michel also sent an obituary notice for his grandfather. His funeral was attended by the Morane brothers, owners of the firm, by M Caudron, his former employer, M Marlin from the Rhône engine company, and many famous aviators such as Audemars and Guynemer, himself to die later in the year. Many British officers also attended,.

2014 LIMITED EDITION

FIRST AIRMAIL FLIGHT AUSTRALIA 1914-2014

100th Anniversary Australia's First Airmail



In July 1914 the first official airmail was flown within Australia.
Its cargo: 1785 postcards. Its journey: Melbourne to Sydney.

A hundred years later we are re-enacting that amazing flight: carrying 1785 postcards based on the original design with Australia Post 2014 commemorative stamps and postmarks. Get the full story, and purchase one of these unique postcards at:

www.AustraliasFirstAirmail.com
Aviation Historical Society of Australia, NSW (inc)

or Bexley Stamps, sales@bexleystamps.com.au, ph 02 9920 5057

knowledge that they have assisted the running of the project in the best possible way.

So, if you have not yet bought your postcards, please do so as soon as you can.

And especially, spread the word to all the philatelists and historical collectors that you know.

There are several big gaps in our knowledge of Maurice Guillaux, and one of these is his family life. Guillaux is not a common name, and so we sent letters to all people with that surname whose addresses were listed in the French telephone directory. This week we received a package of information from Michel Guillaux, 81 years old, and the grandson of Maurice. He sent a considerable amount of information, and this very interesting photograph. It shows Maurice and his son Bernard in a Morane-Saulnier Parasol P, which was used both by France and Britain in 1916-17. This photo was obviously taken before Maurice's death, May 21 1917!

25 April 1914: the first significant Guillaux event

25 April 1914 was not Anzac Day, for obvious reasons. But it was a very important day for Newcastle and for Australian aviation. Maurice Guillaux conducted a flying display at Newcastle Showground: his Bleriot was the first aircraft to be seen in Newcastle.

On 25 April this year the Newcastle Aero Club intends to conduct a flypast of a group of Tiger Moth aircraft

over both Sydney and Newcastle. The flight will be led by Bill Purdy, a distinguished, and still very active, World War II veteran.

As well as being an appropriate feature of Anzac Day, and a well-deserved recognition of Bill Purdy, the flypast operation is also very relevant to the story of Maurice Guillaux in Australia.

Seaplane centenary

The following is an extract from the journal of the Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia (SPAA). The event that is described will be a major item in the lead-up to the mail flight re-enactment.

Issue 38 February 2014

100 YEARS OF WATER FLYING SYDNEY CELEBRATION

On 8 May 1914, Maurice Guillaux made Australia's first seaplane flight in a Maurice Farman Seaplane. The flight started in Sydney's Double Bay, adjacent to Rose Bay the site of the current seaplane base, and flew a circuit of Sydney Harbour. The story of that first flight can be found in the previous issue of On-the-Step (Issue 37, December 2013).

We could not let the 100 year anniversary of such a significant event pass without holding a special celebration.

As best we can for a small group, we want to make sure the public appreciate the significance of the day, and then we want to make sure we make it an enjoyable celebration for the seaplane pilots. On the morning of Sunday 11th May we will plan a gathering of seaplanes off the Sydney Harbour Heads. Performance matched groups will then fly circuits of Sydney Harbour using R405. Depending on conditions and timing the larger seaplanes will alight on Rose Bay

and moor close to the shore or beach for public viewing. Some shore based displays will also be arranged for public viewing. Planes will depart Sydney Harbour between 10:00 and 10:30 and proceed to Rathmines seaplane base on Lake Macquarie for a barbecue lunch and a bit of fun flying.

We will be sending out regular bulletins giving details of the arrangements as the date approaches.



To make this celebration an event worthy of such a special occasion and worthy of the media coverage we are planning, we will need many seaplanes to attend so please set this weekend aside.

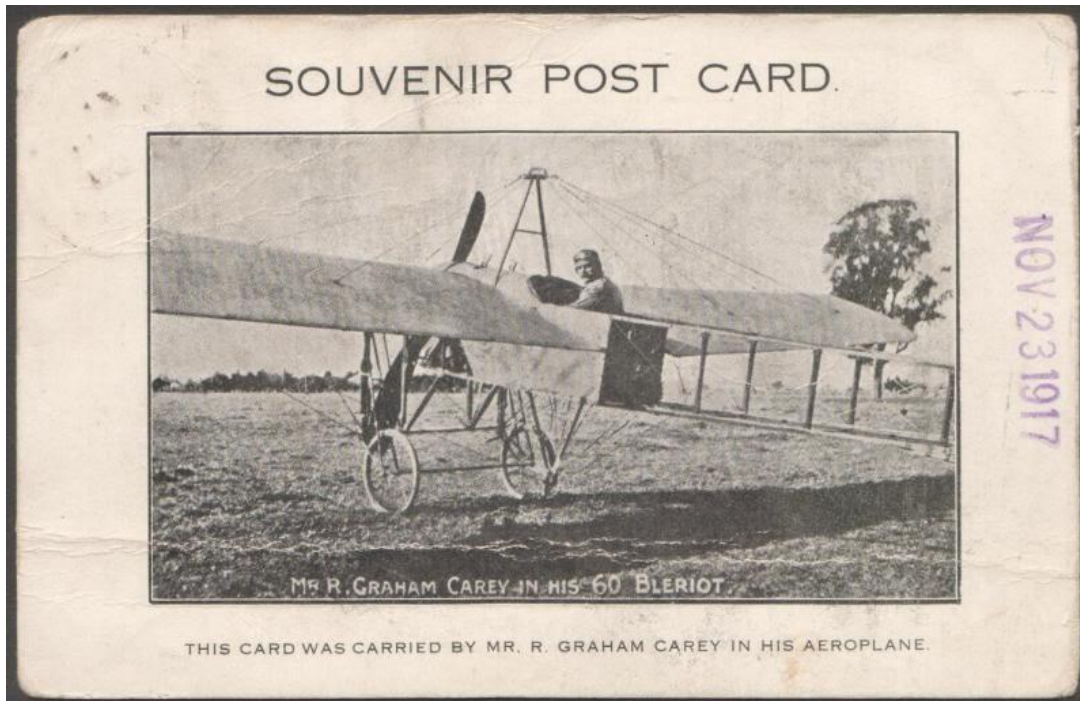
Please indicate if you think you will be able to attend by emailing your details to president@seaplanes.org.au.

We want to see you there!!

We will have more details of these wonderful events as they come to hand.

Philatelic corner

As is well known, the Bleriot XI that is held in the PowerHouse Museum is the very aircraft used by Maurice Guillaux. Genuine pre-World War I aircraft are very rare, and the fact that our machine performed such a remarkable historic flight makes it a real treasure. It is not so well known that the machine was sold to Graeme Carey, a remarkable early aircraft operator. He carried airmail from Adelaide to Gawler on November 23, 1917, and this was the first such event in South Australia.



The original card carried by Graham Carey. The photograph was taken at the Army Nurses' Day celebrations at Adelaide, October 27, 1917.

This envelope, signed by (Robert) Graham Carey was carried on a commemorative flight made by a DC-3 on the 40th anniversary of the original flight. This flight was arranged by the famed philatelist and historian Nelson Eustis. Graham Carey died in 1959, aged 85.



The final philatelic memento of this flight was an envelope that was carried on the 75th anniversary of the flight, 23 November 1992. The drawing of the aircraft is particularly amateurish and may have been a copy of a contemporary (1914) newspaper drawing.

In the current issue of *PowerLines*, PowerHouse museum curator of aviation and Space, Ms Kerrie Dougherty, has written an article on the acquisition of the aircraft. This, and some blog posts, are part of the contribution of PowerHouse to the commemoration of Guillaux' activities. We will seek permission to put the article on our website.

