

# Aviation Historical Society of Australia (NSW) inc

## Airmail Centenary Commemoration Group

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**This email is going to many new people, including the members of AAMB Bankstown. We have had some problems with our mailing list, but think all these difficulties have been solved. However, if you do not wish to receive these newsletters please advise by email.**

### 14 June 2014: Four weeks to go!

In just 28 days, the centenary re-enactment of Australia's first airmail flight will take place. To our regular readers, apologies for the shortage of newsletters, but things have been developing at great speed..... the re-enactment is on course to be a wonderful event, though the process has been a bit of a roller-coaster ride. We hope, from now on, to send a daily newsletter to everyone on our mailing list.

### The Jabiru

Father Fowles of Albury has had to withdraw as lead Jabiru pilot due to emerging personal circumstances. We must thank him, Vanessa Williamson and Ken Garland for the great work they did in the early stages of planning.

Jabiru aircraft were immediately contacted, and have provided an aircraft and suggested a pilot. Owen Zupp is a former Ansett pilot who is a well-known aviation writer and experienced Jabiru pilot, quickly agreed to take over, and Jabiru are supplying the aircraft for him to fly. Owen's website, <http://www.owenzupp.com/> gives more information.



### Second mail-carrying aircraft.

At the August 2014 meeting AHSA NSW debated what kind of aircraft would be used to perform the re-enactment. In that discussion the Jabiru was the clear winner over the idea of having a more 'historic' aircraft. However there is huge enthusiasm for this project from the aviators, and so we there will be a second mail-carrying operation, made up essentially of a relay of other aircraft. The Jabiru will carry the modern version of Guillaux' load – the 1475 postcards and the symbolic tea and fruit juice. The relay of mail-carrying aircraft will carry the Australia Post philatelic load of about 18 kilograms.

Australia Post is delighted with the idea.

There has been an excellent response from aviators, and early next week we can release the details of this relay. Some wonderful historic aircraft and groups of aircraft will participate.

## And maybe a Dragon-Rapide?



Efforts are also being made to have this wonderful aircraft join the event.

VH-UXZ is a beautifully presented example of this 1930's airliner. These aircraft are very expensive to maintain, and the owner has generously offered to fly it in the re-enactment for a fraction of its usual costs – considerably less than \$10 000. However, we cannot guarantee any help with money: everything we have received is already committed and we have no real idea of how much more we will receive.

We hope that there may be people who would

be willing to donate towards the costs of the Dragon Rapide. It is a pity the aircraft is not commercially registered, because many people would be happy to buy a ticket either for the trip to Melbourne or for a stage or two in the return trip. But certainly if the aircraft was involved in the flight there could be opportunities for people to fly in this wonderful machine. It is presently being stored at the historic airfield at Tooraweenah, near Coonabarabran.

We are hoping that it may be able to carry a third mail load: we are investigating ways of having mail delivered to, and picked up from, various points on the Melbourne – Sydney route, and also it might carry privately produced philatelic material. If you have suggestions or ideas, or want more information, please be in touch and we will do what we can to assist.

## Changes to the re-enactment route

We have been able to include a stop at Benalla on Saturday 12 July. This centre is making a big effort to preserve aviation history and heritage. On Monday 14 July we will also be making a stop at Mittagong. Owen Zupp, our new Jabiru pilot, lives in this area. The earlier timetable, circulated in our brochure, is being modified; details will be published soon.

We made a big effort to get permission to land at Centennial Park, but there were too many legal, safety and insurance problems. M Berti, Consul-General of France is in charge of the last stop in the re-enactment and we are happy to advise that the formal reception of the mail will now be held at the PowerHouse museum. More details shortly!

## Today's events

The Powerhouse Discovery Centre at Castle Hill is having an aviation weekend. See <http://castlehill.powerhousemuseum.com/visit-us/> for details of how to get there, and <http://castlehill.powerhousemuseum.com/open-weekend/> for information about the planned activities.

The highlight for many will be the 'behind the scenes' tours of the Sir Henry Barraclough engine collection which will also include a viewing of original Hargrave models, which are in a very fragile state and are seldom seen. The Airmail Centenary Commemoration Group is very grateful for the co-operation of the PDC staff and volunteers in this regard.

## Fuel sponsor

TOTAL, the French oil company, only has a presence in Australia through the supply of special lubricants, and their head office is in Perth. However they are supplying funds for the purchase of fuel for the re-enactment flight. This is very welcome. We also are being supported by other French firms and this basic level of support means that we are certain that there will be no problem financing the basic re-enactment. Many participants are paying their own expenses. We are also being strongly supported by other French firms – details provided soon.

## Postcards

Postcard sales are continuing, and each card sold will add to the resources that can be used for the re-enactment. We are getting excellent support from the stamp media: *Australian Stamp Professional* devoted its cover and a major article to the re-enactment.

## New Tea provider, and juice provider

We are now being sponsored by the Australian tea company Madura Tea Estates, based in Murwillumbah. They will be providing tea products for many of our functions. Madura has a great interest in Australian history and traditions, and will be supplying the symbolic tea 'freight' for the re-enactment. We welcome their enthusiasm. Similarly Murray Valley Breweries of Beechworth are providing us with some fruit juice. They are still making the Chilli cordial O.T. drink and are providing a small amount for us to carry, as did Maurice Guillaux in 1914. We have, however acquired a bottle of the original O.T. cordial, a mixture of fruit juice and chilli extract, which was widely sold in the early 1900s. Our bottle, untouched, dates from about 1920: its contents would be a bit risky to use at this stage!

## Commemorative stamp launch – Bankstown July 2

The two commemorative Guillaux stamps will be launched in Melbourne on July 1. On July 2 at Australian Aviation Museum Bankstown there will be a function 5pm to 7pm to introduce the stamp in Sydney. Stamp clubs, aviation enthusiasts, historical societies and other groups will be represented. This will precede the July AHSA meeting which will also be held at AAMB.

We have finalised the design of the replica postcards. The stamps that are being produced by Australia Post are 35 mm square, which means that we need to increase this size of the original postcard, and we have also included a brief explanation of how they were used in 1914. We are designing a special folder to contain the postcards, and this both protects and enhances the postcard package. We will have some drafts of this to show people at Castle Hill today and will print more details of next week.

## IT Helpers needed

One reason for the delay in getting news out to our supporters is a shortage of resources in the IT department! If there is someone who could edit sound and video files this would be very helpful!

Another need is for someone with skills in Wordpress. Our website has been very cheaply constructed – the shop and the basic Wordpress site being constructed by Damien Ferguson and his team at Purple Hive Media at a small cost. We appreciate the additional work done by Purple Hive at no charge to us. However we cannot outlay the type of money needed to upgrade the site to the standard that the enterprise merits, and more significantly, we need things done quickly.

We shall shortly have our draft timetable for the whole event, but we cannot deny the possibility, indeed the probability of delays because of bad weather. We need some way of being able to tell everyone where the aircraft are at any given time. At its most basic, a twitter feed and /or a web page that is being continually updated will be established, but all ideas will be gratefully received.

## Australia All Over

Last week the commemoration was well publicised by 'Macca' on Australia All Over on ABC Radio, from about 7 40 until 9 am, with a total of about 17 minutes of this time being devoted to Maurice Guillaux. This can be listened to today by going to <http://www.abc.net.au/australiaallover/> and listening to the hourly broadcasts. This has created a lot of interest in the country areas. Particularly, the organisers of the events at Harden have had many people contacting them to find out about their activities.

Tom Lockley, secretary, Airmail Centenary Commemoration Group of the Aviation Historical Society of Australia, (NSW) inc.