

Thursday, July 16, 1964

## FIRST AIR MAIL PLANE "POWERED" BY TEA!

Australia's first air mail flight went through from Melbourne to Sydney — via Harden — 50 years ago this week, in an aeroplane that was "powered" by tea!

Maurice Guillaux, the adventurous French aviator whose historic flight in 1914 is being re-enacted this week, financed the three-day Melbourne to Sydney crossing by carrying a consignment of Lipton's tea in among the bags of air mail, and by advertising the tea at every stop on the way.

When he landed at Harden on Friday morning, July 17, 1914, he stepped from his plane with a carton of tea under one arm and a mail bag under the other.

He held the carton up so that the crowd rushing to

welcome him could clearly see the name "Lipton."

Then he opened a flask and took a long swig of tea.

"This is a good drink to have after a flight," he said.

Guillaux was not only Australia's first long distance flier—he was also one of the first "flying salesmen" seen in the country.

Manufacturers paid him handsomely to endorse and promote their products, because he and his flying machine were a sensation in a country that had seen only a handful of aircraft before his arrival in Australia in April, 1914.

Before embarking on the

Melbourne - Sydney flight, Guillaux had conducted one-man air pageants in Sydney and Melbourne, demonstrating the "amazing versatility" of the Bleriot machine, which could perform aerobatic tricks like climbing, diving, rolling and — on one memorable occasion — looping the loop.

His biggest stunt was the attempt at the first Melbourne-Sydney flight.

His main patrons were the Postmaster General's Department, who gave him the mail contract and their official blessing; and Lipton's Tea, who gave him the thermos flask, the carton and a sizable cheque for his trouble.

Guillaux did his share at every stop en route to Sydney — Seymour, Wangaratta, Albury, Wagga, Harden and Goulburn.

And this week, as the re-enactment flight takes place, "Maurice Guillaux" will fly again, with his air mail, his tea carton and his flask.

At each landing he'll swig from his flask, keeping strictly in character.

When the re-enactment plane — a tiny Vicia Air-tourer — lands at Harden at 12.40 p.m. tomorrow, pilot Vic Walton will be seen wearing the flying rig of Guillaux's day, Guillaux's own red - white - and - blue scarf around his neck.

And, to celebrate the occasion, tea will be served from a special stand to raise funds for the Harden Senior Citizens' Club.

It will be Lipton's, of course!

## 50 YEARS ELAPSE, BUT

# Stan Brady flew again

Mr Stan Brady received the second aviation thrill of his 75 years Friday when he flew with Vicia chief test pilot Vic Walton in the aircraft commemorating Maurice Guillaux's first air mail flight 50 years previously.

Mr Brady was one of three local residents who enjoyed a flight in Guillaux's Bleriot monoplane when it put down here on July 17, 1914.

Mr Brady "jumped" at the chance of emulating the ride.

On landing his first remark was: "Just like riding in a car."

It was far removed from the experience he endured after winning a sweep for the first ride with Guillaux.

A large crowd welcomed participants in the commemorative flight.

The Mayor (Ald. N. Lanham) and Shire President (Cr L. Flanery) welcomed the visitors.

Mr Vic Walton responded and handed Ald. Lanham a

letter from the Mayor of Wagga, Ald. I. J. Jack (see page four).

Earlier, Harden Postmaster Mr Jim Tedd outlined the purpose of the flight and gave some background of the happenings at Harden in 1914.

Mr Rowley May, Murrumburrah Postmaster, was also present to officially welcome the flight of four aircraft.

Included in the flight were representatives of Lipton's Tea, the PMG and Civil Aviation Departments and a journalist from an aircraft magazine.

Local Shell representative Mr Brian McGee of Young met the participants at the airstrip on Mr Eldon Smith's property.

The planes landed 10 minutes early here at 12.30 and left for Goulburn at 1.45.

The crowd present was the biggest pro-rata of population anywhere along the route.

Driving winds, rain and icy conditions Thursday night threatened a repeat performance of the weather experienced by Guillaux, which forced him to stay two nights in Harden.

However, clouds cleared and although cold winds prevailed the schedule was not upset.

Mrs I. E. H. Coddington, on behalf of the Senior Citizens' Club, today thanked the Lipton company for enabling the Club to serve tea at the landing.

"As a result," said Mrs Coddington, "we made over £15."

A former resident of Harden, Mr Yeomans, was an interested visitor when the 50th Anniversary Air Mail Flight landed here on Friday. Mr Yeomans left the district in 1914 and has been back only on rare occasions. He was a mine-worker here in the early days and renewed acquaintances with old friends, including a workmate, Mr W. Armstrong of Scott Street.