

Aviation Historical Society of Australia (NSW) inc

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Air Mail Centenary Commemoration Group Newsletter 1: 14 August 2013

It's a goer!

At our meeting last Wednesday AHSA NSW adopted the recommendation of the Commemoration Group to celebrate the centenary of air mail and air freight in Australia. French aviator Maurice Guillaux took off from Flemington racecourse, Melbourne at 9 12 am on 16 July 1914 and landed at Sydney's Moore Park at 2 55 pm on 18 July, carrying postcards and some Liptons tea and other small items.

The commemorations will largely involve a re-enactment of Guillaux' flight, as described overleaf, but AHSA doesn't want to just mark this anniversary: we want to use the occasion to publicise the wonderful history and heritage of Australian aviation.

Since the idea was first mentioned at June's AHSA meeting, there has been a remarkable amount of interest and enthusiasm for the project. The reaction of the French community has been amazing: French Consul-General, M Eric Berti, is obtaining support from a wide range of French organisations and businesses: the re-enactment will be run on Saturday 12 July, Sunday 13 July, and will conclude as centrepiece of Sydney's Bastille Day commemorations on July 14. Shell Australia supplied fuel to Maurice Guillaux and also sponsored the 1964 and 1989 commemorations, and this time are sponsoring the use of Caribou supplied by HARS (Historic Aircraft Restoration Society). It will be an escort aircraft for the principal mail plane.

There has been considerable discussion about the type of aircraft to be used as the centrepiece of the mail flight. AHSA have decided to accept an offer to supply a Jabiru, a modern Australian-designed, Australian-built light aircraft. This will showcase Australian skills and expertise, using a modern aircraft

that has many similarities with the Bleriot in terms of size, weight and dimensions. However, there is always room for more participants. We hope that many aircraft, of all sizes and ages, will join in, if only for part of the journey or at a fly-in at any one of the airfields en route.

A few more details have to be worked out before we formally contact the airfields en route, which we will do in about a month. We aim to have the final plans complete by next April. In the meantime, if you have a suggestion, or you would like to help, please send an email to guillauxcentenary@gmail.com. Your input will enable us to have an exciting, safe and memorable series of events.



99 years (to the minute!) from Guillaux' arrival at Goulburn, the 'Thursday volunteers' at PowerHouse Museum celebrated the anniversary of the flight. With the knife: senior volunteer Margaret Waller;

looking on are ex-QANTAS pilot Geoff McGirr, a former QANTAS 747 pilot, former industrial chemist Bill Aitken, who is the historian and webmaster for the North Weald airfield in southern England and secretary of the Spitfire Society of Australia, and Leah Miller, our expert on environmental science.

PHM and PDC volunteers of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences are particularly keen to assist and are bringing many useful skills to the project!

The 1914 and the 2014 flight paths

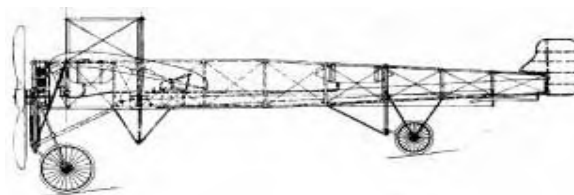
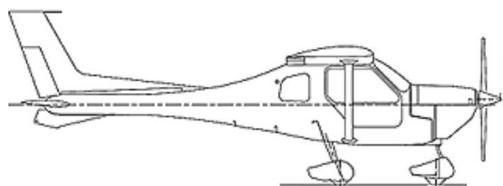
Maurice Guillaux, 1914:

1. Flemington racecourse 9 12 am 16 July
2. Jordan's paddock. Seymour
3. J Sisley's paddock, Racecourse Road, Wangaratta
4. Albury racecourse
5. Wagga Wagga racecourse (he landed at the wrong racecourse, in the middle of a race meeting, then quickly moved to the right one!)
6. Harden (no exact details of the landing ground are available); overnight 16 July, delayed one full day by weather, overnight 17 July, Carrington Hotel
7. Goulburn racecourse
8. Paddock near centre of village of Liverpool
9. Moore Park 2 50 pm 18 July

Our indicative itinerary at this time:

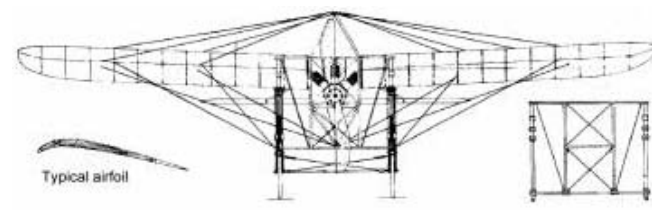
1. 9 12 am 12 July, 2014, Flemington racecourse, ideally with mail-carrying aircraft, otherwise helicopter or even land vehicle, AHSA Victoria to be asked to help
2. Mangalore airfield, 20k N of Seymour
3. Wangaratta Airport
4. Albury Airport, probable overnight
5. Wagga Wagga Airport
6. Temora (additional stop, being considered)
7. Harden airport, overnight Carrington Hotel
8. Goulburn airport
9. Bankstown – just possibly Camden if AAMB has moved
10. Moore Park ideally with mail-carrying aircraft, otherwise helicopter or even land vehicle, Bastille Day commemoration

The Bleriot and the Jabiru



The drawings are not of the actual aircraft to be used, but the scale used is approximately the same for each aircraft.

	Jabiru 3300A	Bleriot
Engine	3.3 l, 120 hp	3.5 l, 50 hp
Span	9.58 m	8.53 m
Length	6.55 m	7.7 m
Height	2.6 m	2.4 m
Gross weight	600 kg	450 kg
Max speed approx	259 km/hr	105 km/hr



The Bleriot's complex rigging is made necessary by the 'wing warping' method of control as well as to add strength.

Carrington Hotel, Harden



(Picture from gdaypubs.com.au)

Maurice Guillaux stayed here on 16 and 17 July, 1914. (His attempts to move on to Goulburn on 16 July were thwarted by bad weather, so he had to stay an extra night). When the current manager, Debbie Astill, heard of the re-enactment she insisted on providing accommodation for the re-enactment party. The evening of Sunday July 13 2014 is already shaping up as an exciting time in Harden!



**IT WAS
LIPTON'S
TEA
THAT WAS
CARRIED
ON THE
AERIAL MAIL.**

**M. GUILLAUX--THE HERO OF THE HOUR.
LIPTON'S TEA--THE PRIDE OF FIVE CONTINENTS.**

M. Guillaux carried with him tea in a Thermos flask. He was well protected from the cold, with his leather jacket round his waist. He wore a scarf, and from his neck floated the French colours. —Extract from "The Daily Telegraph," 17/7/14.

He eagerly availed himself of the warmth of a bandana which had been lighted on the racecourse as a beacon to guide him to the landing place, and drank with evident relish a cup of steaming tea poured from a thermos flask which he was carrying. —Extract from "The Daily Telegraph," 20/7/14.

Sensations daggered me to Goalburn. The high stratum of air was bitterly cold. When I alighted I was practically frozen; but soon came in under the influence of a cup of hot tea which had kept its temperature in the thermos flask I carried with me. —Extract from Sunday "Sun," 10/7/14.

As Guillaux, in a water-soaked Esquimaut-like costume, stood up in his machine and quaffed another draught of hot tea from his thermos flask, he looked none the worse for the grueling ordeal through which he had passed. —Extract from "The Daily Telegraph," 20/7/14.



*Je l'ai trouvé très calmant.
On me dit que le Thé Lipton
est tenu en haute estime par
le public aussi je trouve*

*M. Guillaux
Grand Secrétaire*

Sydney 18 Juillet 14

*Messieurs Lipton Ltd
Marchants de thé à Sydney*

Pauline Kanakis, Liptons product manager, has stated that her organisation 'will be honoured to participate' in the re-enactment. The reproduction of Guillaux' picture does not do justice to his 'matinee good looks'!

Some postcards.....



Maurice Guillaux' total load in his epic Sydney / Melbourne flight weighed a total of only about 40 pounds, less than 20 kg. The most important part of the load was 1785 specially printed postcards. These had been produced in somewhat of a hurry: this might explain the fact that the aircraft illustrated has no resemblance to Guillaux' Bleriot. Originally sold for one shilling, the cards are now worth about \$450. This example is from the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences.

But there was at least one unofficial flight before July 16. On 9 June 1914 Guillaux flew from Bendigo to Ballarat; carrying a letter from the Mayor of Bendigo to the Mayor of Ballarat.

Even before this, Guillaux had the habit of distributing postcards to the mayors and other important people in the country towns he visited.

The specimen illustrated is believed to be the only survivor, and is worth around \$17 500.



This airmail card was prepared for a proposed flight by the American aviator, 'Wizard' Stone. He had come to Australia in 1912 with an American-built Bleriot monoplane. Plans were made for an airmail flight, but unfortunately he crashed on 1 June 1914. He was injured and his aircraft was badly damaged, and Guillaux was given the task. Incidentally, Stones's mechanic was Bert Hinkler, later to become famous in his own right as a long-distance solo aviator..

Watch for our next newsletter, late in September: and don't forget to send your ideas, suggestions and offers of help to guillauxcentenary@gmail.com