

SOME RECORD BOOK FIRSTS

FIRST INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

1909. French aviator Louis Bleriot is the first person to fly across the English Channel from France to England.

LONG DISTANCE FLIGHT

The routes from England to Australia, and between Europe and America became tests of endurance for pilots and their aeroplanes. The pioneer aviators had to be physically fit to fly the many hours required for long distance flying. Many hours of planning and preparation were needed. Excellent navigational skills were essential for the wide expanses of sea which often became hit and miss affairs. Many areas over land were unmapped.

FIRST ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

1919. John Alcock and Arthur Brown fly the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic Ocean. They take off from Newfoundland in Canada and land in Ireland, a journey of 3032 kilometres.

FIRST SOLO ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

1927. Charles Lindbergh makes the first solo flight across the Atlantic from New York to Le Bourget Airport, Paris. He covers the 5810 kilometres through fog, rain and storms.

FIRST WOMAN TO FLY FROM ENGLAND TO AUSTRALIA

1928. Jessie (Chubbie) Miller flies with Bill Lancaster from Lympe in England and lands in Darwin, Australia five months later.

FIRST ACROSS THE PACIFIC

1928. Charles Kingsford-Smith and Charles Ulm make the first flight across the Pacific Ocean in the famous Southern Cross aeroplane.

FIRST ALL WOMEN AIR DERBY

1929. California to Ohio, USA. Nicknamed the Powder Puff Derby there are 20 ace female flyers who participate, including Amelia Earhart, and the only Australian Jessie (Chubbie) Miller.

FIRST SOLO WOMAN FROM ENGLAND TO AUSTRALIA

1930. Amy Johnson flies from England to Darwin, Australia in a Gypsy Moth. She completes the journey in nineteen and a half days.

FIRST WOMAN SOLO ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

1932. Amelia Earhart flies non-stop from Harbour Grace in Newfoundland, Canada to Culmore in Ireland. The flight takes 15 hours.

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LEOF KINGSFORD-SMITH IN



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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The extracts from letters, the pilot's logbook and court transcripts used in this play are factual. By kind permission of Harper Collins Publishers Australia.

1919- 1939

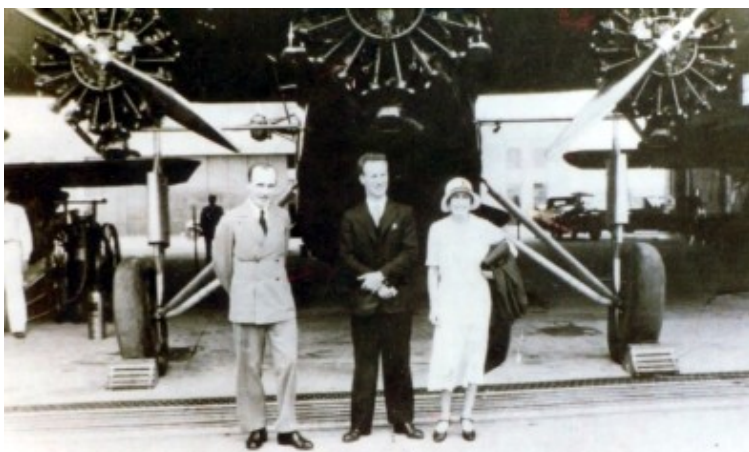
The period between two World Wars was the Golden Age of Aviation. This was the time of Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, Charles Kingsford-Smith, Howard Hughes and a host of other pioneer daredevils that took to the skies in search of adventure, fame and fortune. The Mission of Flowers was a charity assisting returned servicemen from the First World War. Maud Lancaster, known as Sister Red Rose, was a leading light in the movement which distributed pamphlets of homiletic poetry and prose.

THE TANEZROÛFT

Sitting on the Greenwich meridian at the heart of the Sahara Desert is flat, featureless expanse known as The Tanezrouft. It is one of the most desolate and inhospitable areas on earth, lacking any water, landmarks or vegetation. Temperatures can reach to over 50⁰ c and drop to near freezing. Even the desert dwelling Tuaregs don't venture into the 'Land of Thirst'. The Trans-Sahara track runs South for over 1000 kilometres from Bechar in Algeria to Gao in Nigeria. There is an oasis and settlement on the track at Reganne.

THE SOUTHERN CROSS MINOR

Australian pioneer aviator Charles Kingsford-Smith flew his single seat bi-plane Southern Cross Minor to England, but ill health forced him to leave it there. In 1933 he sold it to fellow pioneer aviator Bill Lancaster. In 1975 it was recovered by a team led by Wylton Dickson. It is now housed in the Queensland Museum, Brisbane.



Bill Lancaster (left) with Charles Kingsford-Smith and Chubbie Miller in 1933 posing in front of 'Southern Cross' in which 'Smithy' and Charles Ulm piloted the first flight across the Pacific Ocean.

Leof Kingsford-Smith Actor



In almost four decades Leof Kingsford-Smith has played everything from Shakespeare to Ayckbourn, Emlyn Williams and David Williamson in roles ranging from the tragic King Lear and Mark Antony to The Coroner and Rex in the Australian TV series Underbelly II and Home and Away. His career has embraced a steady stream of film and television work. Theatre roles include; Midnite (musical pantomime, New Theatre), Unit 46 (Adelaide & Edinburgh Festivals and Sydney), The Blood on Helmut Lange (Fusebox Theatre), The Shower, Six Minutes (Seymour Centre), Dial L for Love (Newtown Theatre) Our Country's Good (Darlinghurst Theatre) Twelfth Night (Acting Factory), King Lear (Seymour Centre), Roberto Zucco and The Black Dog (Figtree Theatre, Sydney) Charley's Aunt, Bitter Sanctuary, Play it Again Sam, The Day after the Fair (Sutton Arts Theatre; Birmingham, UK) The Elocution of Benjamin Franklin (Mayfair Theatre, London) Macbeth, the Opera (Opera House, Sydney) The Corn is Green and Don's Party (New Theatre, Sydney) Sidney, A Touch of Silk, Saturday Sunday Monday, Zoo Story and The Glass Slipper (Independent Theatre, Sydney), Hamlet (Sydney). Other film & TV roles include: The Bondi Chronicles, The 21 Conspiracy, The Audition, Natural Selection, Captain Heroic, Trapped, Move, The Lamp God, Once more, Misgiving, Nine, The Visit, Sanctuary, Drama School, Nine. Leof is the grand-nephew of one of Australia's most celebrated travellers, the pioneer aviator Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith. Email Leof@kingsford-smith.com

Damien Lay Director



Internationally recognised director and Logie award winner Damien Lay has amassed a wealth of knowledge in film making techniques over the twenty-year period he has worked in the film and television industry. Now the managing director of Animax Films, Damien has worked successfully in almost every facet film and television production and post-production. His many other awards besides a Logie include three ASTRA awards, an ACS award and a nomination for a second Logie. Damien has written, produced and directed numerous, documentaries, animations, and a major feature film "*The Lost Anzac*". As well as films for major corporations he has directed and produced animated series for The Comedy Channel Australia, and an animated series for Foxtel and Channel Nine. His interest in Australia's early flying history is well known, particularly the life and exploits of Charles Kingsford-Smith. "*The Lady Southern Cross*", a feature documentary about the story behind Kingsford-Smith's aircraft of the same name was completed in 2008. Damien's feature documentary "The Battle of Long Tan", which he wrote, produced and directed, is now ranked one of Australia's top 20 best selling DVD's of all time of an Australian made product. Recent productions include "*He's Coming South*" and "*M24 - The last sunrise*" Damien is currently planning a full length feature film of the Mission of Flowers story.

Gerry Greenland - Writer



Gerry has written a number of plays for radio and the theatre. *The Visitor* was nominated for an AWGIE. *Greeting Cards* won a Glen Eira Award. His short plays are regularly performed at the Short & Sweet Festivals around Australia. *Prime Angus Buttock* was a Sydney finalist, and *Return to Sender* was awarded Best Drama Script. He has also co-written television and radio comedies with his wife Jackie. *Sydney Plantagenet's Psychedelic Quest* was broadcast live from the Sydney Opera House. As a member of the Sydney arts collective Actors Anonymous he has been involved as a writer and producer in *Journey into Sin* and *Crime Scenes*. His play *Waiting on Jamie Oliver* was performed at Sydney's Newtown Theatre in 2007, and *The Blood on Helmut Lange* at the Fusebox Theatre in 2009.