

Airbus electric plane to fly across English Channel

10/07/2015 21:06 by admin

London: A French pilot is slated to fly a plane powered solely by electricity across the English Channel later on Friday, a media report said.

More than 100 years since French aviation pioneer Louis Bleriot became the first person to fly across the Channel in a plane, Didier Esteyne will aim to make history of a different kind -- in a battery-powered aircraft -- British daily The Telegraph reported.

The flight in Airbus Group's E-Fan 1.0 plane will be in the reverse direction of Bleriot's landmark Channel crossing 106 years ago on July 25, 1909.

"Like so many others in aviation history, Louis Bleriot has been a hero and inspiration to me and it gives me great pride that I am able to honour his legacy with the first ever electric-powered Channel crossing," Esteyne said.

The two-seat E-Fan has a 31-foot wing span, is two metres in height, with a total engine power of 60 KW and it operates on a 120-cell lithium polymer battery system.

With no fuel burden, the plane, which made its maiden flight in March last year, can be landed, its batteries unplugged, and fly again after having a spare set fitted.

Describing the experience of flying the aircraft, Esteyne said: "It is closer to a glider because there is less noise than an aeroplane. Also, there is no vibration at all. It's smooth and very quiet."

The E-Fan 1.0 has undergone 100 flights, and this project has taken 18 months from paper to its first flight, said Simon Bradley, head of global innovation network at Airbus Group.

"This is a really exciting project for us. It's the first time that an all-electric aircraft will have flown across the English Channel and mirrors the flight by Bleriot in 1909," Bradley added.

- IANS