



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

MISS FLINDERS - THE FIRST OWNER: IONA NATIONAL AIR TAXIS & FLYING SCHOOL

The First Owner: Iona National Air Taxis & Flying School, "EI-AAD"

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Hugh Cahill established Iona National Air Taxis & Flying School in Dublin in July 1930 as the first commercial civil aviation company in Ireland to operate an Air Taxi business (operate charter flights), and also to train pilots.

He purchased two planes, a Gypsy Moth and the Desoutter. The Desoutter was the fourth plane to be entered onto the Irish Aircraft register as "EI-AAD".



Welcoming party at Baldonnel aerodrome (Dublin) on 06 September 1930 for The Gypsy Moth G-ABBV and Desoutter EI-AAD of Iona National Air Taxis & Flying School. The young boy is Pearse Cahill, aged 13.

The Desoutter now undertook charter flights, including to England and back.

The size of the Desoutter and its need for a longer runway than the Gipsy Moth proved to be too big a problem. The number of airfields that the authorities would allow the Desoutter to operate from was limited. At this time, civil aviation in Ireland was in its infancy, and the Desoutter was bigger than the Avro 594B Avian IIIA and Gipsy Moths already on the Civilian Aircraft Register.

Therefore, Hugh decided to sell the Desoutter as it was not suitable for commercial aviation work in Ireland at the time. Its last local flights from Baldonnel occurred on the 1st and 3rd of November



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1930. At this time, the plane had flown for 35 hours, 50 minutes. No flights were undertaken for another six months.

The Desoutter EI-AAD left Ireland for the last time on 21 April 1931.

On 11 February 1931, the company was renamed as Iona National Airways Limited and operated until November 1933, when it ceased operation.

In 1955, his son, Pearse Cahill re-established Iona National Airways, which operated until December 1994.

In 1988 Pearse Cahill visited Launceston to view the plane, "Miss Flinders" which was on display at airport. Until his death in 2011, aged 93, Pearse Cahill actively planned to bring back EI-AAD to Ireland for display as it is the oldest surviving airplane on the Irish Aircraft register.

Links:

Video of the Recollections of Pearse Cahill in 2010 (including the Desoutter)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JJqTTYMx1s>

Shuttleworth Collection Mark I Desoutter

In flight: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAybk3UrC9A>

Pilot talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_Vcl6ly5w

(Note "Miss Flinders" is a Mark II Desoutter, which visually has a different tail)

References

Michael Traynor, *Iona National Airways, Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of Ireland's First Commercial Airline*, Dublin, 2004