



The Desoutter Comes to Australia

Author: C Byrne, Sept 2020

After Iona National Air Taxis & Flying School sold the Desoutter, it was flown to England in April 1931 and registered as G-ABOM. At the same time, two Melbourne businessmen were planning their “Holiday Trip by Air” where they would buy a plane in England and leisurely fly it back to Australia, seeing the sights along the way.

Harold Jenkins was a Melbourne Dentist who had a passion for motorbike and cars, he came 4th in Australian Motor Racing Grand Prix at Phillip Island in 1929. He had only recently taken up flying, qualifying as a pilot in 1931.

Harold Jeffrey was a Director of Dimmeys Models Stores. He was an observer in the Australian Flying Corps during World War 1 and qualified as a pilot at the end of the war.

Jenkins and Jeffrey arrived in England and after looking initially for a Gipsy Moth, they purchased G-ABOM on 11 November 1931. Dual controls, wheel brakes and an additional fuel tank were then fitted.

After a test flight to Europe, the left London on December 28th 1931, bound for Australia. The newspapers at the time regularly reported on their progress.



The Route from London to Melbourne



MISS FLINDERS - THE TRIP TO AUSTRALIA

As Tourists, they visited the Pyramids in Cairo and went tiger shooting in India, (as you do).

Their last leg to Australia, across the Timor Sea was flown in bad visibility and took 5 hours. They touched down in Darwin at 6.35 pm of the 10th February 1932.



Jenkins (L) and Jeffrey (R) at Darwin. (National Library Australia obj-144694818)

Once in Australia, they flew back to Essendon, and were escorted to the aerodrome by the Desoutter VH-UPR, arriving on the 18th of February. (VH-UPR is now in the Australian National Air Museum at Moorabbin Airport).

Speaking to the Press upon their arrival in Melbourne, Harold Jenkins said:

The absence of trouble on our long flight was remarkable". He further commented that with "modern" planes, it was not a question of "whether, but when" they arrived at each landing ground.

Generally the weather was good, but I am sorry that we did not take longer than six weeks for the flight. The ideal time for such a tour would be three months to give adequate time for sight-seeing. We spent only about 14 days sight-seeing. That is not enough.

Upon arriving in Essendon, they sold the plane to Hart Aircraft Services, who were the Australian agents of Desoutter.