



**TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated**  
**MAX & JEFF BROWN – TASMANIAN PILOTS 1930 - 1938**

**Max & Jeff Brown – Tasmanian Pilots 1930 - 1938**

*Author: C Byrne, August 2021*

**Acknowledgments**

The TAHS acknowledge the donation of the Pilots Log Books and associated memorabilia of A. J. (Jeff) Brown by Patricia Lucas and Lesley Anderson, (his daughters). This story also draws on the recollections of both Patricia and Lesley. It also includes their family photographs for which we are very grateful.

**PART 1: INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY**

**Jeff and Max Brown of Longford, Tasmania**

Longford is a township 20 km south of Launceston, where the Brown family operated their general store from the early 1900s. (They also operated stores at Ulverstone and Burnie).

Mr Alfred Brown Senior was also prominent in the Longford Municipal Council. He had three children from his first marriage, Colin, Myra and Alice, and two from his second, Jeff and Max.

Both Jeff and Max became commercial pilots from 1932 to 1938 and were part of the expansion of the passenger services operated by Holyman's Airways, Adelaide Airways and then Australian National Airways.

Alfred Jeffrey (Jeff) Brown was born on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1907 and Max Brown was born in early 1912. (The family only knew Max by his first name, while a newspaper reported his name as Max. W. Brown<sup>18</sup>).

After attending the Longford school, Jeff attended Launceston Church Grammar School, entering at Grade 4 on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1922. (Max is not recorded on the Grammar School rolls).

After high school Jeff was employed as a Jackaroo on a number of Tasmanian properties, whereas Max moved to Melbourne to learn to fly. He obtained his pilot licence in late 1930, aged 18.

Max operated his own business as a commercial pilot from 1932 before joining Holyman's Airways in September 1935. Tragically, on his second day as a pilot with the airline he died in a plane crash near Flinders Island on 02 October 1935. He was just 23 years old.



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**Jeff (L) and Max (R) <sup>1</sup>**

In 1933, Jeff found himself in the middle of a public divorce of Mr and Mrs Oldmeadow. They had a number of farming properties in the state.<sup>2</sup> As was the law at the time, the divorce was adjudicated in a public trial and widely reported in the local newspapers. Jeff was asked to appear as a witness for both sides to support the claims of infidelity made by both husband and wife against the other. To avoid getting involved in the divorce, his father advised Jeff to move to Melbourne and take up flying like his brother.

Jeff followed this advice and moved to Melbourne where he gained his pilot's licence in late 1933, just prior to his 26<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Jeff joined MacRobertson-Millar Airways in Adelaide as a pilot in August 1934 for about 6 months before returning for a time in 1935 to Essendon. Then in January 1936 he joined Adelaide Airways, which merged with Holyman's Airways to form Australian National Airways (ANA) in late 1936.

Jeff met his future wife, Vita Roberts, through her friendship with Max. It was Jeff who informed her of the death of Max in 1935. From that time a friendship developed and they were married in 1936.

With ANA Jeff continued to fly their De Havilland DH.86 and DH.89 fleet and then was promoted to flying both the Douglas DC2 and DC3.



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The life of a commercial pilot, with constant roster changes and flying different routes, was difficult with a young family. In October 1938, Jeff flew his last passenger flight for ANA, coincidentally on the same day the ANA DC2 “Kyeema” crashed into the Dandenongs with the loss of all on board.

Jeff, Vita and their daughter Patricia then returned to Tasmania in late 1938 and became a farmer on a 1,200-acre property “Landridge” at Apsley that they purchased. (Apsley is between Melton Mowbray and Bothwell in central Tasmania). Their second daughter Lesley was born after they moved to Tasmania.

Jeff continued farming till he retired to Triabunna in 1967. He died in 1998 aged 90.

In later life, Vita undertook a Fine Arts Diploma at the School of Art in Hobart and was heavily involved in the regional arts scene and teaching. Vita died in December 2012 aged 96 and left a bequest to support emerging artists.<sup>3</sup>

Jeff did not take up flying after his move to Tasmania and his family rarely heard him talk about his flying days. In the 1970’s, when Jeff and his son-in-law Peter were flying from Wynyard to King Island in a chartered plane, Jeff sat next to the pilot throughout the flight and did not mention that he was a pilot with almost 3,000 hours experience.



**Arthur Schutt (L) and Jeff Brown (R), July 1977.**  
**(Jeff was a guest on the TV show “This is Your Life” recording the life of Arthur Schutt)<sup>1</sup>**

This is their aviation story, interweaved with the development of Australian Commercial Aviation.



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**PART 2: MAX BROWN**

**Max Brown Becomes Pilot**

We do not know what triggered the interest Max had in aviation. Possibly it was the visit to Tasmania in May 1928 of Bert Hinkler with his Avro Avian?

Bert Hinkler completed the first solo flight from England to Australia in February 1928 in 15 ½ days. He then took his plane on a promotional tour of Australia, which included Tasmania. In May 1928, a huge crowd turned out at Elphin Showgrounds in Launceston to welcome the aviator.

Was the 16 year old Max amongst the crowd? A few years later Max would have his pilot's licence and own an Avro Avian like that used by Hinkler.



**Photo: Bert Hinkler in front of his Avro Avian G-EBOV at Elphin, Launceston<sup>4</sup>**

After finishing school Max moved to Melbourne in 1929 and started a two year aircraft mechanics apprenticeship<sup>5</sup> with Matthews Aviation at Essendon. He also started to learn to fly with the Victorian Aero Club, gaining his private flying licence in December 1930.<sup>22</sup>

(Pilot training was not available in Tasmania in 1929. When the Western Junction Aerodrome was completed in late 1930, the Aero Club of Australia (Tasmanian Section) then commenced training local pilots).



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In May 1931, Max made the news when he crashed into a hangar at Essendon aerodrome:

*A Moth aeroplane, piloted by Mr. Max Brown, aged 19, an apprentice mechanic of Matthews Aviation Pty. Ltd., crashed on to the roof of an Australian National Airways hangar at the Essendon aerodrome to-day. Brown, who is a former resident of Longford, Tasmania, received a shaking but was not injured. He is a member of the Aero Club, and holds a pilot's certificate.*

*The wheels of the undercarriage of the plane struck the back of the hangar as Brown was descending over the aerodrome preparatory to landing. This tilted the nose of the machine into the roof of the building where it remained jammed into the iron and steel cross bars of the building. The back of the machine broke and the fuselage from the rear of the pilot's seat was hanging over the back of the roof suspended by only a few stays. Brown was strapped to his seat, and about 15 minutes elapsed before he could be extricated. The plane was damaged to the extent of £150. <sup>6</sup>*



**MOTH MACHINE ON HANGAR ROOF**—After landing on the roof of the Australian National Airways hangar at Essendon, Melbourne, the pilot, Mr. Max Brown (aged 19 years), was stranded for a quarter of an hour before he could be extricated unhurt from the wreckage. Damage to the aeroplane is estimated at £150.

**Photo: published in the Adelaide News:<sup>7</sup>**

(Note the “Australian National Airways” hangar was built for the airline operated by Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm in 1930 and 1931 which operated between Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne and also to Western Junction in Tasmania. In 1936, the name would be used a second time for the airline formed by the merger of Holyman’s Airways and Adelaide Airways).





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Sometime after completing his mechanics apprenticeship, Max leaves Matthews Aviation. He purchases his Avro Avian biplane, (VH-UFZ).

**The Avro Avian – VH-UFZ (What is the best place for this section?)**

The Avro Avian was an English 2-seater biplane, produced from 1926 to the 1930s. It was a competitor in the light aviation market with the De Havilland Moths.

Several variants of the Avian were produced. VH-UFZ was an “Avro 594 Avian II”, built in late 1927 (c/n R3/AV/127) with a Cirrus II engine. It was shipped to Australia in early 1928 and purchased by Wings Ltd of Broken Hill. Its original registration of G-AUFZ was changed in 1930 to VH-UFZ when Australia commenced using its own prefix “VH” instead of the English “G” prefix.

The plane was then transferred to Jacques Flying Services at Parafield in Adelaide. In 1931 it was converted to an Avian IV, which had a revised undercarriage and ailerons.<sup>8</sup> The plane had dual controls.

Max purchased the plane on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 1932.



**VH-UFZ – note the “Mickey Mouse” image on the fuselage<sup>1</sup>**



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**Max in the Cockpit <sup>1</sup>**

In the photo above, the small metal name plate on the pilot's cockpit (immediately below the Pilot's head in the photo) has the owners name "M Brown". The name plate is in the care of the family today.

Ownership was transferred from Max to Jeff on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1934. Jeff had his last flight in the plane in September 1934. It was put up for sale sometime after this. Its Certificate of Registration lapsed in March 1935. It was later purchased by J. E. Price of West Geelong in November 1935 and re-registered a month later.

It is possible that Max flew the plane in October 1934 and may have used it until its registration lapsed the following year. The sale date was 8 weeks after Max was killed and just before Jeff started work for Adelaide Airways.

The plane was deregistered in 1947. A restoration commenced in 1988 by Lang Kirby who installed a more powerful Gypsy II engine. With the plane restored he then undertook a re-enactment of Bert Hinkler's flight from England to Australia in September 1998.<sup>9</sup>

In 2001 Lang Kirby sold the plane to Greg Herrick of Minneapolis (USA) and it was shipped to the US. (At this time, it was the oldest registered flying plane in Australia).

Today it is registered as N7083, with a current airworthiness certificate, and is displayed at the Golden Wings Flying Museum in Minneapolis.<sup>10</sup>



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In August 1928, Amelia Earheart became the first woman to fly solo across the North American continent and back. To commemorate this flight, N7083 / (VH-UFZ) was used to re-enact the flight in 2001.



**VH-UFZ after Restoration by Lang Kirby<sup>9</sup>**





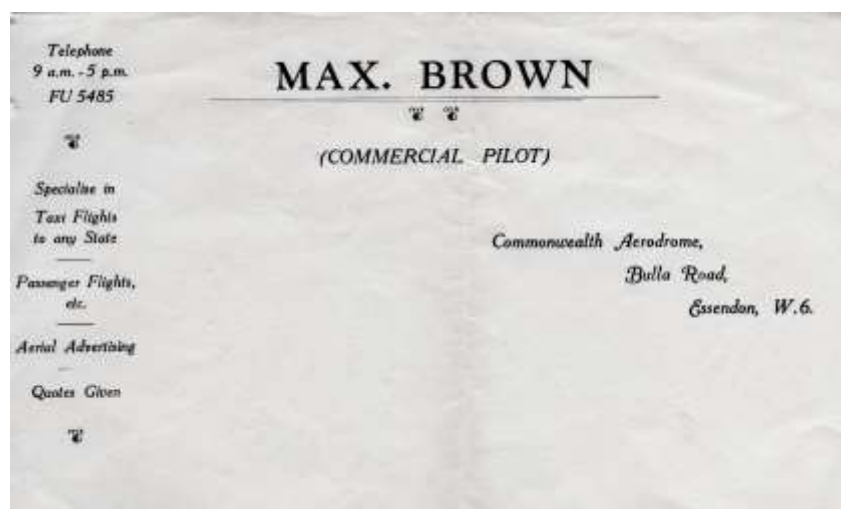
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**Max Brown becomes a Commercial Pilot**



**Max Brown, (Date Unknown)<sup>1</sup>**

After Max gains his Commercial Pilots “B” Licence in March 1932<sup>22</sup> he operates his own business from Essendon aerodrome with his Avro Avian. This includes charter and joy flights.





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In January 1933, Max flew his Avro Avian to Tasmania to coincide with various Air Pageants which were held in Wynyard and Western Junction in late February, followed by Hobart in early March. For the flight over Bass Strait he was accompanied by the two amphibian flying boats of Matthews Aviation who were promoting their proposed new service:<sup>11</sup>

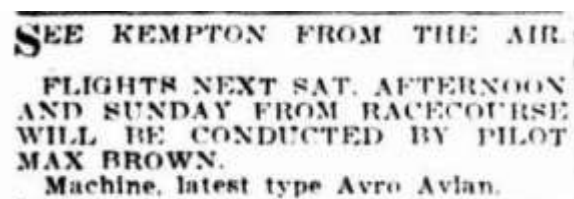
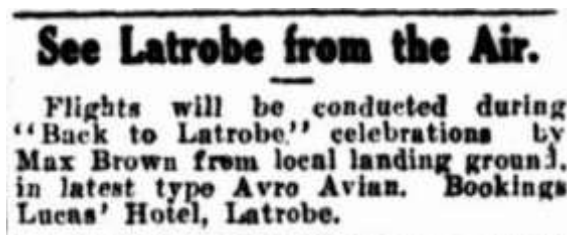
*Accompanying the two amphibians was a small single-engined aeroplane belonging to Mr. Max Brown, a native of Longford, Tasmania, and an ex-pupil of the Launceston Church Grammar School. Mr. Brown stated that he left Smithton at 2.45 p.m. on Saturday a quarter of an hour after the machines arrived at the Coastal aerodrome and flew direct to Launceston, arriving at about 4.10 p.m.*

*Mr. Brown, who was formerly employed by Matthews Aviation Pty. Ltd. has done about 30,000 miles in his plane joy-riding in Victoria and New South Wales. His Victorian tour was of an extensive nature, covering most of the small country towns. The New South Wales tour covered the outback portions from the Victorian border to the Queensland border.*

*The machine has done about 900 hours flying and is of the same make as the Southern Cross Junior, which Sir Charles Kingsford Smith used for his record-breaking flight from England to Australia some years ago, and which was later used for an attempt on the England-Australia record. The Avian is fitted with a Cirrus engine and dual control.*

*Mr. Brown expressed the intention of remaining in Tasmania until the aerial pageants and he will probably visit many country centres.*

Max advertised his sightseeing flights in the local newspapers:



Advertisements in "The Advocate"<sup>12</sup> and "The Mercury"<sup>13</sup> newspapers

During this trip to Tasmania, Max was reported to be the youngest Commercial Aviator in Australia at the time.<sup>14,15</sup>

It is likely that Max would have taken Jeff for a flight in his Avro Avian during this visit. When the Oldmeadow divorce "scandal" arose a few months later, Jeff may already have had an interest in becoming a pilot.

Max continued operating as a Commercial Pilot on the mainland.



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There are occasional news reports of incidents he suffered when flying. In October 1933, there is a report of his plane suffering engine trouble near Walwa in the Upper Murray.<sup>16</sup>

In October 1934 another newspaper reports his plane suffering engine trouble while flying a passenger at Albury.<sup>17</sup> The identity of the plane he was flying was not recorded. It may have been the Avro Avian VH-UFZ as Jeff had flown the plane for the last time the previous month and it was not sold until the following year.

### **Max Brown a Pilot for Holyman's Airways**

Holyman's Airways started its Western Junction to Essendon (Launceston to Melbourne) passenger service in 1934 with the twin engine De Havilland DH.84 "Miss Launceston". The plane could carry six passengers and the route flown alternated between King and Flinders Islands.

Holyman's Airways then ordered two of the bigger De Havilland DH.86 biplanes. These four-engined planes could carry 10 passengers. The first DH.86 put into service was the "Miss Hobart" in October 1934, followed by the "Loina" in February 1935. ("Loina" was an aboriginal word for "sun").

Tragically the co-founder of the airline, Victor Holyman, was lost with the other crew and all passengers when the "Miss Hobart" crashed into the sea near Wilsons Promontory on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1934.

In August 1935 it was announced that Max and three other pilots would join Holyman's Airways in September,<sup>18,19</sup> as part of the airline expanding their operation to also provide a daily service between Melbourne and Sydney. It was reported Max had between 450 and 600 hours of flying experience.<sup>18,22</sup>

Max was assigned to the passenger and mail service between Essendon and Western Junction (Launceston), via either King Island or via Flinders Island. His first flight for Holyman's Airways was on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1935 as co-pilot/first officer and radio operator, with pilot Norm Evans in the DH.86 "Loina".



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## **Aerial Services**

**October 1**

Miss Currie arrived at Western Junction at 9.35 a.m. from Hobart.

Lepena left for Melbourne, via Flinders Island, at 9.40 a.m. with Mrs. C. H. Scott, Master A. Scott, Dr. Cater, and Messrs. C. H. Scott, Joseph, C. C. Lilley, G. J. Suter, B. P. Gordon, Winfield, and G. Brown. The machine returned to Western Junction in the afternoon with several passengers, landing at 3.30 p.m.

Loina arrived from Melbourne, via King Island, at 10.45 a.m. with Miss E. Forster and Messrs. G. Kidd, A. E. Gunn and E. Johnson. The machine left for Hobart at 11 a.m. and landed on return at 2 p.m. with Mr. Bennett, who was the only passenger when the plane left again for Melbourne at 2.15 p.m.

Miss Launceston left for Hobart at 3.40 p.m. with several passengers.

**Air Services at Western Junction – 01  
October 1935<sup>20</sup>**



PILOTS OF THE LOINA, Messrs Maxwell Brown (senior pilot), left, and Arthur Norman Evans (senior pilot) in the control cabin of the Loina on a previous flight to Tasmania. The picture was taken by Mr W. S. Corfield, of Melbourne, who recently made a return trip in the lost air-liner.

**“Loina” Pilots Max Brown (Left) and Norman Evans  
(Right) – 01 Oct 1935<sup>21</sup>**

### **The Crash of the “Loina” and the Loss of All On Board, including Max Brown**

The following day (02 October 1935), on his second day flying with Holyman’s Airways, Max was again the first officer and radio operator on the DH.86 “Lionna” with the Pilot Captain Norman Evans.

They departed Essendon for Flinders with engineer Edward Best and two passengers. On its approach to land at the Whitemark aerodrome on Flinders Island, the “Loina” crashed into the sea. A witness saw it “turn upside down twice” and then fall into the sea “like a tumbling pigeon”. Although considerable debris was found, the main wreckage and the bodies were not located.

Max Brown was aged 23. He was not married but had a strong friendship with Miss Vita Roberts from Melbourne.

The enquiry into the crash of the “Loina” could not determine its cause. The airworthiness of the plane was questioned which resulted in its sister plane, the DH.86 “Lepena”, being extensively tested without identifying any problems.



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**Max Brown (left) and the “Loina” photographed at Laverton a week before the crash <sup>22</sup>**

The crash of the “Loina” and the loss of all on board influenced the Federal Government to change its policy by allowing the registration of American built planes from November 1935. At this time the American passenger planes, like the Douglas DC2, were far superior in design and construction to those being produced in Britain like the DH.86. (Previously, only British planes could be registered in Australia). Ivan Holyman, the Managing Director of Holyman’s Airways, was instrumental in lobbying the Government to change the policy.<sup>23</sup> This allowed Holyman’s Airways to purchase Australia’s first Douglas DC2, named the “Bungana” (VH-USY), which arrived in Australia in early 1936.

Another of the small interlinking parts of this story. The first DC2 Jeff Brown flew as co-pilot was the “Bungana” in April 1937.





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**PART 3: JEFF BROWN**

This section draws heavily on the entries in Jeff's two Pilots Log Books.

**Jeff Brown becomes a Pilot**

After departing Tasmania in mid-1933, Jeff arrives in Melbourne and begins to learn to fly.

The inside cover of his first Pilot's Log Book records Jeff's name and his address as C/- Matthews Aviation Co at Essendon Aerodrome in Melbourne. It is likely that Max stored his plane (VH-UFZ) at the Matthews Aviation Hangar.

The first entry in his Pilots Log Book is on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 1933 when he flew for 30 minutes in the Max's Avro Avian VH-UFZ, with dual control, presumably with Max as instructor.

D.3794/7.30.—C.5413.					
RECORD OF FLIGHTS.					
Date.	Aircraft.		Journey.	Time in Air.	
	Type.	Reg. No.		Hrs.	Min.
			Brought forward ...		
25/5/33	Avro/Av.	FZ	Local	30	Dual.
26/5/33	"	"	"	35	"
4/6/33	"	"	"	30	"
10/6/33	"	"	"	35	"
13/6/33	"	"	"	20	"
2/7/33	"	"	"	10	"
4/7/33	"	"	"	15	"
7/8/33	"	"	"	40	Spins
7			Carried forward ..	3	35

**First Pilot's Log Book, the first flights undertaken**

Jeff had his first solo flight at Essendon on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1933. He continued to fly the Avian in July (18 flights), August (6), September (1) and November (15).

During October 1933 Jeff had no flights as Max was undertaking joy flights. A newspaper report described Max being forced to land with damage to the undercarriage near Walwa in the Upper Murry on 18 Oct 1933.<sup>24</sup>



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Jeff completed his private pilot ("A") licence test on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 1933. His Log Book noted "Test A Licence OK". By 06 December 1933 he had completed nearly 36 hours of flying in the Avian.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1933 Jeff took his first flight away from Essendon when he flew the Avian to Lake Corangamite (southwest of Melbourne) in 1 hour 35 minutes and returned the following day. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of December he flew to Ballarat and return. Over the next four months he is flying very regularly, often to regional Victoria.

During a flight from Ballarat on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1933, Jeff recorded his first forced landing at Cape Clear (about 35 km southwest of Ballarat) with a "broken push rod on No 1 cylinder". He takes to the air from this location on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1934.

Ownership of the Avro Avian (VH-UFZ) was transferred from Max to Jeff on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1934.

#### **Jeff Brown becomes a Commercial Pilot**

Jeff then commenced additional training to obtain his Commercial Pilots "B" Licence after completing about 111 hours in the Avian. He undertook "Blind Flying" in the in DH60 Moth VH-UAT of the Royal Victorian Aero Club on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1934. The following month he flew another Aero Club Moth for "dual night flying".

With nearly 140 hours of flying experience, Jeff successfully undertook his "B" Licence Test on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of June 1934 using the Avian and an Aero Club DH60 Moth.

Now Jeff can undertake joy riding flights for paying customers. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 1934, his Log Book records a 20-minute flight in the Avro Avian at Essendon with the remark "Joyriding (1)". The following day his Log Book records 2 hours 45 minutes flying with "(24)" recorded. We assume this is also joy flights, conducting 24 flights on the day. This number code is recorded at various days till mid-August 1934.

His Commercial Pilots "B" licence was issued on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1934. He was 26 years old.

On July 16<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> 1934 Jeff undertook an extensive trip in the Avro Avian from Essendon - Albury – Tocumwal – Deniliquin – Swan Hill – Balranald – Swan Hill – Essendon. He had another forced landing during this trip at Tocumwal (in NSW, near border with Victoria) with engine trouble, "broken rocker gear No 4 cylinder". He resumes his trip three days later after repairs.



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1		2	
CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY.		CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY.	
		Particulars.	Description.
Photograph	of Holder.	Surname	BROWN
		Christian Names	Alfred Jeffrey
		Nationality	British
		Place of Birth	Tasmania
		Date of Birth	27th December, 1907.
Signature of Holder	<i>A. J. Brown</i>	Address	C/o Matthews Aviation Co., Aerodrome, Essendon, W.6.
This Pilot's Certificate of Competency for passenger, mail, or goods flying machines (public transport), No. 459		Types of Flying Machines referred to on page 1 of Certificate of Competency.	Initials of responsible officer.
dated 20th June, 1934,		Avro Avian, D.H.53.	
has been issued to A. J. BROWN,		D.H.60 <i>the</i> DH80A	
for the types of flying machines referred to on page 2 of Certificate of Competency.		Short Sear, Monoplane	
Given at Melbourne this 20th		DH89 <i>the</i> DH84	
day of June, 1934.			
(Signature) <i>E. Johnston</i> Controller of Civil Aviation.			

**A. J. Brown's Commercial Pilots Licence**

**Jeff Brown a Pilot for MacRobertson – Millar Airways in Adelaide**

Captain Horace ("Horrie") Clive Miller was one of the pioneers of commercial aviation in South Australia.

He formed the Commercial Aviation Company in South Australia in 1923 to establish an Adelaide to Port Lincoln service. But when this did not eventuate, he briefly joined the RAAF in 1925, but resigned the following year. He then returned to SA and operated a DH.9 for charter flights, joyrides and medical emergency flights. In 1927 he was operating a weekly Adelaide to Mount Gambier services, later expanding to include Renmark and Broken Hill.

He formed a partnership with Macpherson Robertson in late 1927 to form MacRobertson-Miller Aviation Company (MMA). With financial backing from chocolate manufacturer Macpherson Robertson, the company purchased additional planes and started services from the newly opened Parafield Aerodrome in Adelaide. Included in their purchases were two



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Gipsy Moths (VH-UJW and VH-UJX) which were used mainly for charter work. By 1930, they had three pilots.

MMA won the Government tender for airmail services in Western Australia in 1934 and the company expanded again. MMA continued to be a successful aviation company, particularly in WA. It became part of Ansett Australia in 1990.<sup>25</sup>

Jeff flew his Avro Avian (VH-UFZ) from Essendon to Adelaide in August 1934 to become a pilot for MMA, with 194 hours flying experience. During the flight he was forced to land at Bordertown (4 hr 15 min) with engine trouble. He flew on to Adelaide (3 hr 10 min) the next day.

The day after his arrival in Adelaide, Jeff undertook a 25-minute flight around Adelaide in the MMA Gipsy Moth VH-UJX. Three days later he flew from Adelaide to Renmark (1 hr 55 minutes) and return (1 hr 25 minutes) in VH-UJX.



**Gipsy Moth VH-UJX (Photo: Ed Coates Collection<sup>26</sup>)**

Jeff undertook two short flights in his Avro Avian (VH-UFZ) from Parafield Aerodrome on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> August 1934 and another on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 1934 before flying it back to Melbourne on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 1934, (4 hrs 30 min). This was his final flight in VH-UFZ.



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Jeff returned immediately to Adelaide and continued to pilot the Gipsy Moth VH-UJX for MMA until the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1935, when he has 271 flying hours. After six months flying for MMA he returned to Essendon having only recorded 77 hours of flying. This low number of flying hours suggests that MMA did not have enough work to keep him actively employed.

**Jeff Brown in Tasmania 1935**

During his period with MMA Jeff also spent six weeks on a flying holiday in Tasmania. He accompanied Frank Thomas, another Launceston Church Grammar student, who owned a De Havilland Puss Moth (DH.80A) VH-UQK.

Thomas flew the plane from Sydney to Sale in Victoria. Jeff then accompanied him as the passenger on the four-hour flight from Sale across Bass Strait to Flinders Island and then on to Western Junction on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 1935.<sup>27</sup>

They both conducted joy flights across Tasmania in the Puss Moth. While based at Latrobe Pilot Thomas had an incident with a fence on 10 February 1935:<sup>28</sup>

*When a Puss Moth plane owned and piloted by Mr. Frank Thomas, of Victoria, crashed in a paddock at Thirlstane yesterday morning, the pilot and a passenger, Mr. Vincent Abey, of Latrobe, had miraculous escapes.*

*When over Thirlstane the plane went into a spin and then nose-dived. It collided with a barbed wire fence, breaking the two top wires, and then tipped forward and struck the ground, making a deep hole. The propeller was torn asunder, and the undercarriage considerably damaged. The damage to the 'plane is estimated at £50.*

Both the accident and the damage were less than originally reported:<sup>29</sup>

*The Puss Moth plane which crashed at Thirlstane on Tuesday was repaired with little difficulty, and the machine was in the air again yesterday.*

*The accident, it was stated yesterday, was not caused through the plane going into a spin. It was necessary, owing to the almost entire absence of wind, for the pilot Mr. Frank Thomas to fly low when approaching the landing ground, and when doing so on this occasion the undercarriage struck the top wire of a fence. The damage was slight and was repaired at a cost of less than £10.*

Jeff conducted flights at Western Junction for two days after their arrival, followed by flights at Antill Ponds, Bothwell, Swansea, Latrobe, Smithton and Longford. His last flight in the Puss Moth was on 05 March 1935.

As a footnote, Thomas and a co-pilot flew the Puss Moth from Sydney to England, departing on 9<sup>th</sup> of October and arriving on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1935. He then sold the plane.<sup>30</sup>





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**Frank Thomas makes a flypast at Mascot on 9 October 1935, in his Puss Moth VH-UQK, before setting course for England in VH-UQK. (Geoff Goodall collection<sup>30</sup>)**

### **Jeff Brown back at Essendon Aerodrome**

From May to December 1935, Jeff's Log Book introduces a new set of DH60 Moths flying out of Essendon. He pilots a number of planes owned by different organisations, including Victorian & Interstate Airways and the Victorian Flying School and Taxi Service.

Another two forced landings were recorded in his Log Book.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 1935, while flying a Fox Moth at Deniliquin, he had a forced landing due to a jammed elevator.

Then on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1935 he was flying a Simmonds Spartan biplane (VH-UIT) at Benella in regional Victoria. After taking-off with a passenger and travelling a mile from the aerodrome at a height of 200 feet, the engine cut out due to an air-lock in the petrol feed. He was forced to land in a small paddock, after flying under some high-tension wires, and crashed through a fence. The plane overturned, damaging the wing tips, the undercarriage and the propeller. Jeff and the passenger were unhurt.<sup>31</sup>



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During this period, Jeff also flew two other noteworthy planes.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 1935 he flew the Fokker VH-UMG for 20 minutes at Essendon. This was the “Southern Star” when formerly operated by the first Australian National Airways operated by Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm during 1930-1931.

Jeff also had 10 hours flying the Cierva C.30A Autogiro, VH-USQ. This was of the first rotary wing aircraft produced and three were brought to Australia in 1935.



**Photo: Ed Coates Collection<sup>32</sup>**

It was during this period when Jeff was in Melbourne that his brother Max was killed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1935.

Their Avro Avian VH-UFZ was sold on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 1935.



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**Jeff Brown a Pilot for Adelaide Airways**

Adelaide Airways was established by the Adelaide Steamship Company in mid-1935 to provide regular air services in South Australia and the other states. With two new planes, a Short Scion and Monspar, they commenced operations on 29 October 1935, with their two inaugural pilots, Kirkman and Cook. Their main routes were services between Adelaide, Melbourne, Port Lincoln and Broken Hill.



**Adelaide Airways Postcard from the Jeff Brown Collection**

The company soon expanded with additional planes. Jeff was employed as their third pilot on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 1936.<sup>33</sup> He had 363.5 flying hours experience when he joined Adelaide Airways. (The company had not been formed while Jeff was in Adelaide flying for MMA).

After operating for six months, Adelaide Airways had carried approximately one thousand passengers without mishap.<sup>34</sup> As well as providing passenger services, Adelaide Airways was also called upon to conduct numerous aero medical evacuations, a number of which Jeff undertook.

Adelaide Airways then purchased two new De Havilland DH.89 Dragon Rapide's. These bigger planes were faster and increased the number of passengers carried to 8.



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**Adelaide Airways Pilots – Commemorating the first Six Months of Operation – April 1936. First Pilot H. O. Cook, Pilot Flight-Lieut. H. G. Kirkman, and Pilot Flight-Lieut. A. J. Brown<sup>34</sup>**



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The "Murry Pioneer" newspaper in Renmark recorded a trip in the new DH89 Rapide with Jeff Brown as Pilot in July 1936:<sup>35</sup>

*The striking manner in which Renmark has been brought close to centres hundreds of miles away by the splendid bi-weekly service of Adelaide Airways—shortly to be merged with Australian National Airways—can only be fully appreciated when one has actually made a trip in the large up-to-date plane regularly in commission. Last Friday a representative of this paper travelled by the air mail to Broken Hill and return, and the following story of the flight, it is hoped, will give those who have not yet used the air some idea of what modern travel is like. Pilot A. J. Brown came out of the clouds from Adelaide and landed at the Renmark Aerodrome on schedule.*

*The plane, a Dragon Rapide costing £6000, has twin Gipsy VI 200 h.p. engines, and soon soared to 2000 feet and on compass course headed eleven points east of north. A following wind increased the pace of the plane from 130 miles an hour into 150. She flew as steady as a rock heading from the river into sombre land dotted with dams, tiny square holes in the ground. The height was too great to see sheep or cattle or horses. Air drift demanded the attention of a skilled airman and a good navigator. Some variation and deviation of the compass occurred, but the direction was checked at once by one who had been in the air for nearly a 1000 flying hours. Safety first is the motto of Pilot Brown, a young man with a splendid record in the air.*

*At 2 o'clock Pilot Brown rose into the air on his homeward journey [from Broken Hill]. A head wind was encountered and this helped keep the plane steadier than ever. At about 1,000 feet the pilot, just as a demonstration, cut out his starboard engine. The writer, watching the "rev. clock", saw it fall from 2,000 to zero. The pace of the Rapide dropped from 135 miles an hour to 110. But she kept a true level and flew easily and with perfect safety on her port engine. The drone of the one engine was normal. Then to show the port engine's great strength the plane rapidly mounted skywards. Then the pilot flattened the plane out and she picked up normal speed in a few miles. The star board engine was again started, and Pilot Brown, with pride in his voice said, "Well, what do you think of that demonstration of air safety and strength in one engine?"*

*3 p.m. and a sky clear with visibility of 40 miles, the plane neared Renmark. It swooped over the town at about 1,000 feet and in a perfect landing comes to rest at the aerodrome with the hands of the clock at 3.30 exactly. The pilot dead on schedule. Passengers climbed aboard and in three minutes the plane has gone, leaving behind it a regret that one could not fly for ever.*

Jeff Brown and Vita Roberts were married in 1936 and visited Tasmania for their honeymoon.





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**Australian National Airways is Formed**

Adelaide Airways and Holyman's Airways were part of the newly created Australian National Airways (ANA) which started operation on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 1936. In December 1936 ANA had 25 pilots, 13 based in Melbourne, 7 based in Adelaide (including Jeff), one in Perth and four in Sydney.<sup>36</sup>



**Four ANA Pilots at Western Junction, A. J Brown is on the right<sup>1</sup> (Date unknown)**

**The Crash of DH.89 Dragon Rapide “Monana”**

Jeff was the pilot of the DH.89 Dragon Rapide VH-UVT “Monana” which crashed while landing at Mount Gambier on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1937. He and all the passengers survived although the plane was severely damaged.

The “Monana” (VH-UVT) was one of the two original DH.89s which Adelaide Airways purchased new and first flew in April 1936.

The “Monana” departed Essendon on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1937 with five passengers on the Melbourne to Mount Gambier to Adelaide mail service. While preparing to land at Mount Gambier aerodrome, Jeff noticed a flock of sheep near the landing strip. In order to keep as much distance between the sheep and his plane, he decided to land as close to the other side of the airstrip as he thought it safe to do so. The hangar and windmill were located on this side of the landing strip.



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**The newly assembled VH-UVT at Parafield, April 1936. The Adelaide Airways group include pilot Len Diprose on the left. Photo: Civil Aviation Historical Society<sup>37</sup>**

While gliding down to land Jeff activated both engines to lift the plane slightly but only one engine responded. This caused the plane to veer towards the windmill which was hit by the tail of the plane. The plane then hit the roof of the hangar and crashed to the ground, facing the direction in which it had come. Corrugated iron from the hangar roof was wrapped around the undercarriage.

The passenger cabin was only slightly damaged but the pilots cabin was totally wrecked. None of the five passengers were seriously injured but Jeff suffered a sprained ankle, several deep cuts and bruises on his body, and slight shock. He was kept in hospital for a number of days.

Although Jeff recovered, the crash left its mark as he suffered back problems throughout his life.



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**The crash of VH-UVT at Mt Gambier, 30 Jun 1937<sup>1</sup>**

D.2794/7.30.—C.5413.

RECORD OF FLIGHTS.						
Date.	Aircraft.		Journey.	Time in Air.		Remarks.
	Type.	Reg. No.		Hrs.	Min.	
			Brought forward ...	1770	45	
30.6.37	89	VT	Ad - me7b	3	45	
30.6.37	89	VT	me7b - Gam	1	45	
				1776	15	
16.7.37	84	RD	Pana		30.	
19.7.37	84	RG	Ad. Courten Lincoln	4	40	
21.7.37	84	RG	" " "	4	20	
23.7.37	84	RG	" " "	4	30	
26.7.37.	89	FF	Ad. A. Newi hulle	6	10	
			Carried forward ...	1796	20	

**The entry of the crash in Pilot's Log Book Signed by L. M. Diprose, ANA Flying Superintendent**



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**Jeff Brown - Adelaide Airways & ANA – January 1936 to August 1937 (Prior to DC2 Service)**

The following table presents the number of days flown each month, the total hours flown, and the longest flight flown in the month, (some flights being over two days).

Month	No of Flying Days / Hours	Log Book Flying Hours	Longest Flight	
			Plane	Route (R=Return)
10 Jan1936		363.5		
Jan 1936	11 / 33.5	397	Monospar	Adelaide – Broken Hill (R) 6hr 25min
Feb 1936	15 / 37.5	434.5	Monospar	Adelaide – Ceduna (R) 6hr 25min
Mar 1936	18 / 80	514.5	Monospar	Adelaide – Melbourne (R) 8hr
Apr 1936	21 / 91.5	606	Scion	Adelaide – Melbourne (R) 10hr 15min
May 1936	17 / 59	665	DH.89	Adelaide – Melbourne (R) 8hr 5min
June 1936	23 / 80.5	745.5	DH.89	Adelaide – Melbourne (R) 8hr 20min
July 1936	24 / 81.5	827	DH.89	Adelaide – Melbourne (R) 9hr 10min
Aug 1936	22 / 111	938	DH.84	Adelaide – Broken Hill – Melbourne (R) 16hr (2 days)
Sep 1936	18 / 87.5	1,025.5	DH.89	Adelaide – Broken Hill – Melbourne (R) 12hr 15min (2 days)
Oct 1936	18 / 109	1,134.5	DH.89	Adelaide – Broken Hill – Melbourne (R) 11hr 50min (2 days)
Nov 1936	19 / 101.5	1,236	Monospar	Adelaide – Tenant Creek 10hr
Dec 1936	14 / 65.5	1,301.5	DH.84	Adelaide – Melbourne (R) 8hr 45min
Jan 1937	21 / 97.5	1,399	DH.84	Adelaide – Broken Hill – Mildura – Renmark – Adelaide 7hr 20min
Feb 1937	6 / 29	1,428	DH.84	Melbourne – Adelaide 5hr 30min
Mar 1937	11 / 68	1,496	DH.89	Adelaide – Melbourne (R) 7hr 35min
Apr1937	12 / 77	1,573	DH.89	Adelaide – Perth 11 hr 45min (2 days)
May 1937	19 / 100.5	1,673.5	DH.86	Sydney – Melbourne (R) 7hr 45min
Jun 1937	14 / 102.5	1,776	DH.89	Adelaide – Melbourne (R) 7hr 40min
Jul 1937	7 / 34.5	1,810.5	DH.89	Adelaide – Melbourne (R) 7hr 35min
Aug 1937	16 / 90.5	1,901	DH.89	Adelaide – Narracorte – Mt Gambier – Melbourne (R) 8hr 05min

The Log Books present a very busy schedule with Jeff flying 464 hours in his first six months with Adelaide Airways. (Compared to the 77 hours he flew with MMA for six months the previous year).





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**Jeff Brown - ANA – DC2/DC3 (September 1937 to October 1938)**

In 1936, the first Douglas DC2 entered service and by late 1937 the first DC3 arrived.

By August 1938 the ANA fleet comprised four DC2s (“Bungana”, “Loongana”, “Pengana” and “Kyeema”) and a DC3 (“Kurana”).

Jeff flew in the DC2 “Bungana” (VH-USY) as second pilot on a flight from Perth to Adelaide on 07 April 1937. (He had just completed a flight from Adelaide to Perth, taking 11 hr 45 minutes, over two days in a DH.89).

He returned to piloting the smaller De Havilland planes till he obtained his “Third Class Commercial Operator’s Certificate of Proficiency” on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 1937, which was required for the Douglas airliners.

Reg. 127.  
Form 13.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Wireless Telegraphy Regulations.

Certificate No. 324

**Third Class Commercial Operator's Certificate of Proficiency.**

This is to certify that ALFRED JEFFREY BROWN has satisfied the Postmaster-General that he possesses the knowledge and qualifications specified hereunder:—

(a) a practical knowledge of the working and adjustment of the following type of wireless telephony installation  
A.V.A. Type 0.110, 50 watts

(b) the ability to send correctly and to receive correctly messages by telephony;

(c) a knowledge of the Radiocommunication Regulations enacted in the Telecommunications Convention relating to the exchange of radiotelegrams;

(d) a knowledge of the precautions necessary for the safety of the installations covered in to paragraph (a) of this Certificate.

The holder of this Certificate has made a Statutory Declaration that he will preserve the secrecy of wireless communications.

Dated this thirteenth day of August 19 37

Certifying Officer—  
*[Signature]*  
Senior Radio Inspector.

(Date)  
13/8/37

By direction of the Postmaster-General,  
*[Signature]*  
Chief Inspector (Wireless).

Photograph of Holder.

Signature of Holder

Date of Birth 27th December, 1907

Place of Birth Somerset, Tasmania

**Description of Holder.**

Height 5' 11"

Colour of Eyes Blue

Colour of Hair Dark

Complexion Fair

Any special disabilities

Jeff undertook training in Sydney flying the DC2 for a few weeks.<sup>38</sup> He then commenced regular pilot service on the DC2s as the second pilot on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1937.

Ten weeks after the Mount Gambier crash, Jeff had undertaken two flights as co-pilot and wireless operator in the DC2 “Pengana” on the Adelaide to Essendon to Brisbane service. On the third trip, (10 September 1937), he became ill:<sup>39</sup>

*When the Australian National Airways Douglas liner Pengana, which had nine passengers aboard, was about half an hour out from the Essendon airport, on her flight to Adelaide this afternoon, the co-pilot and wireless operator Mr. A. J. Brown became suddenly ill, and the plane returned to Essendon. The pilot was Captain P. L. Taylor. All the air hostesses of the company are trained nurses, and the hostess aboard the plane*





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*(Miss Edwards) attended to Mr. Brown until the plane landed. He was examined by a doctor at the airport and admitted for observation at a private hospital in the district.*

The following day, ANA declared he has fully recovered.<sup>40</sup>

His Log Book details the flight on 16 December 1937, DC2 VH-UXJ ("Loongana") from Hobart to Essendon via Western Junction and return, which he lists himself as the "1st Pilot". Other than this entry, there is no indication whether he was the first or second pilot.

Jeff's next flight on 21 Dec 1937 was his first in the new DC3, VH-UZK, "Kurana" which had just entered service, also on the Essendon to Tasmania route. He then regularly piloted DC3s, mainly on the Essendon – Tasmania service.

One memorable flight was on the DC3 "Kurana" as "The Argus" reported on the 17 June 1938:<sup>41</sup>

*Five passengers, who arrived at the Essendon airport at 12.35 p.m. yesterday in the Douglas airliner Kurana, had flown over Launceston twice and Essendon once on Wednesday, 1,436 miles in six hours, without completing their journey, because the airports were veiled in clouds.*

*The passengers were in excellent spirits as they stepped from the plane yesterday and laughed away any suggestion of concern for their safety as the airliner sought a safe landing-ground in the reduced visibility on Wednesday.*

*The Kurana left the Cambridge aerodrome, near Hobart, on Wednesday morning on the scheduled flight to Melbourne. When a landing was impossible at Western Junction, Launceston, because of bad weather conditions, the plane returned to Hobart and refuelled before setting out for Melbourne direct. When it was found impracticable to land at Launceston after circling Essendon without landing, the Kurana flew to Flinders Island, where the weather was reasonably good, and landed there without difficulty. The Kurana flew down to Hobart before coming on to Essendon yesterday. The air hostess (Miss Nancy Danne) said that everything had gone very smoothly, and the passengers were in good humour all the time.*

*Mr. Norman Kaiser, manager of Rayneon Signs Ltd., Melbourne, one of the five passengers, said that the greatest courtesy had been shown to them by the staff of Australian National Airways. On Wednesday the Kurana had flown over the top of Tasmania and across to Essendon, and then got into the clouds. They had circled the aerodrome here for about three-quarters of an hour, and had not seen it. Then they had gone back and tried to land at Launceston, where conditions were also very bad. They had then been sent on to Flinders Island. There was no thrill in it, and there were very few bumps. They had flown nearly 2,000 miles in the two days. The other passengers*



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*were Messrs. W. C. Wansbrough, D. C. McKenzie, F. C. Geappen, and W. Davies. The pilot was Captain R. Watt, and the second pilot, Captain A. J. Brown.*

*All the services which were disorganised by the weather on Wednesday ran to normal schedules yesterday.*

The DC3 “Kurana” also features in the family photograph:



**(L to R) J Chapman (Pilot), Mr A. J. Brown (Snr), Hostess, Mrs Chapman, Mr Chapman (Snr) and A. J. Brown (Pilot), ca. 1938<sup>1</sup>**



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**Jeff Brown – Retirement from ANA and the Crash of the “Kyeema”**

Jeff flew his last DC3 flight in the “Kurana” on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1938 from Hobart – Launceston – Melbourne and return (5 hours 45 minutes total). His last flight as a pilot for ANA was six weeks later on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 1938.

His flight summary for his DC2/DC3 service, and subsequent DH.86 services is:

Month	No of Flying Days / Hours	Log Book Flying Hours	Longest Flight	
			Plane	Route (R=Return)
		1,901		
Sep 1937	9/ 60	1,961	DC2	Adelaide – Brisbane (R) 17hr 40min
Oct 1937	13 / 41	2,002	DC2	Hobart – Melbourne (R) 5hr 50min
Nov 1937	24 / 77	2,079	DC2	Hobart – Melbourne (R) 5hr 10min
Dec 1937	12 / 101	2,180	DC3	Hobart - Melb-Hobart (2 trips) 9hr 05min
Jan 1938	10 / 73	2,253	DC3	Hobart - Melb-Hobart (2 trips) 8hr 55min
Feb 1938	9 / 53	2,308	DC3	Hobart - Melb-Hobart (2 trips) 9hr 25min
Mar 1938	9 / 41	2,349	DC3	Hobart - Melb-Hobart 5hr 25min
Apr 1938	14 / 71	2,420	DC3	Hobart – Lctn-Melb_Hobart 5hr 50min
May 1938	11 / 44	2,468	DC3	Hobart – Lctn-Melb_Hobart 5hr 20min
Jun 1938	13 / 68	2,536	DC3	Hobart – Lctn-Melb_Hobart 6hr
Jul 1938	10 / 55	2,591	DC3	Hobart – Lctn-Melb_Hobart 5hr 55min
Aug 1938	15 / 75	2,666	DC3	Hobart – Lctn-Melb_Hobart 5hr 45min
Sep 1938	13 / 64	2,730	DC3	Hobart – Lctn-Melb_Hobart 5hr 45min
Oct 1938	14 / 86	2,816	DH.86	Melb – Waga - Can – Syd (R) 8 hr 25min

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 1938, Jeff piloted his last flight for ANA. Also on this day, the ANA DC2 “Kyeema” crashed with the loss of all on board.

Jeff piloted the DH.86 “Lepena” (VH-USW) on the Essendon to Sydney and return service (via Wagga Wagga and Canberra). After leaving at 7.30 am, he arrived back at Essendon late in the day, after a flying time of 8 hours and 25 minutes.

On the same day, the ANA DC2 service from Adelaide to Essendon with the “Kyeema” was scheduled to land at 1.45 p.m. When approaching Melbourne the crew encountered heavy cloud cover. To locate Essendon aerodrome, the crew relied upon visually locating a landmark many miles out from Essendon, then calculating their descent to arrive at the aerodrome, and visually find the landing strip.

Due to an error in establishing its position to begin the descent, the plane had travelling about 20 miles further than the pilot thought. So instead of descending to land at Essendon, the plane was descending to a point 20 miles further on, which was near the Dandenong



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Mountains. In the heavy cloud, the pilot had no visual warning that the mountain was in front of them when they crashed, killing all 18 persons on board.

The plane crash was subject to a full Civil Aviation Investigation, which resulted in the implementation of superior UHF radio navigation technology.<sup>42</sup>

In the book<sup>43</sup> “Disaster in the Dandenongs, The Kyeema Airliner Tragedy” by Macarthur Job, the rudimentary flying aids pilots used at the time of the crash and the impact this would have on the pilot were described:

*The advent of modern transport aeroplanes like the Douglas had seemed, in the public view, to be the answer to the safety problems of the past. Here at last were the promised airliners of the future, powerful, superbly engineered, all metal machines whose speed, rate of climb, multi-engine safety and blind flying capability were sufficient to cope with any contingency.*

*The unpalatable truth, unrecognised by politicians, the public or the non-technical bureaucracy, was that without a corresponding technical advance in supporting ground based radio navigation aids, the sophisticated new airliners were no safer for round the clock, or weather operations than the stout old Avro 10s of yesteryear. Indeed, the very speed at which the new machines flew could render them more lethal in the event of a major accident.*

*The industry publication, “Aircraft”, by now desperately concerned that the protracted bureaucratic delays would gravely jeopardise airline operations during the approaching winter, devoted an impassioned, hard hitting leader to the need for extreme operational caution by all concerned:*

*Australian aviation has ahead of it several of the most important months in its brief but spectacular history. Unfortunately, before the end of the year, there is going to be some very bad weather along the air routes, the worst of it probably crammed into the next three or four months. It is during this period that the risk of serious accidents may be greater than ever before.*

*Considerably more schedules are being flown than in the past ... to the layman there is something extraordinarily reassuring in the sight of the big metal transports that now pass over our cities every day. Their speed, their comfort, their admirable equipment ... have been given wide publicity. The spurt the aviation industry has put on in recent years is astonishing. 10 years ago, Australian airlines carried 900 passengers; five years ago they carried 6,300; last year the total was 58,000. No other industry in Australia can show an increase like it with a large proportion of the public convinced that aviation is now completely safe, a bad accident is going to be the big news in the biggest way.*



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*The airlines got through last winter partly because of rigorous safety policies, partly because of the skill and judgement shown by pilots and ground staff, and partly by luck - there were occasions when big transports were flying in very unhealthy conditions. This winter, no one can afford to rely on the slightest degree of luck the stakes are too high*

*We hope every pilot is so conscious of his responsibilities that he will have no hesitation and turning back if he thinks there is the slightest risk in going on. It is up to the senior personnel of all companies to impress upon their juniors that the days of "giving it a go" are over.*

Jeff's wife Vita recalled later that by 1938, following the birth of their first daughter Patricia, they were living in Hobart but Jeff was required to move to other capital cities on short notice to suit air schedules.<sup>38</sup> Jeff was unhappy with this lifestyle and so decided to retire from flying and purchase a farm in Tasmania.

We do not know if Jeff was scheduled to have his last flight on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 1938, the same day the ANA DC2 "Kyeema" crashed, or if the crash prompted him to activate his retirement plans?

Another historical coincidence of this story is that the last ANA plane Jeff flew was a DH.86. Holyman's Airways purchased four of these planes. The first was "Miss Hobart" which crashed into the sea near Wilson's Promontory, killing the airlines' co-founder Captain Victor Holyman, the co-pilot and all passengers. The second DH.86 was the "Loina" in which Max died. The third was the "Lepena" which has commenced service in May 1935 and Jeff flew on his final ANA flight. The fourth was the "Loila" which entered service a week before the "Loina" was lost.



**The "Lepena" (L) and "Loina" (R) Photo: Ed Coates Collection<sup>44</sup>**







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**L M Diprose – Another Tasmanian Aviator**

Len Diprose had two earlier mentions in Jeff's story. They were both pilots with Adelaide Airways when it merged with Holyman's Airways to form ANA. Also, Len was the ANA Flight Superintendent who signed Jeff's logbook after the crash of VH-UVT at Mount Gambier (see p. 26).

As side note to our story, Len Mervyn Diprose was also an accomplished Tasmanian aviator.<sup>45,46</sup>

He was born in Launceston in 1907 and grew up in Ringarooma in north-eastern Tasmania. After leaving school at 13 he first worked on the family farm. He then undertook a mechanics apprenticeship with Holyman's Northern Motors.

He moved to Melbourne in 1926 to learn to fly at the Victorian Aero Club at Essendon, obtaining his pilot's licence in December 1927.

After a period in the R.A.A.F. he became a pilot for Western Australian Airways in late 1933 where he was a pilot on the Perth to Adelaide and Perth to Wyndham routes using DH.84's. These long flights would take many days to complete.

Western Australian Airways was absorbed into Adelaide Airways in June 1936, six months after Jeff Brown began flying for Adelaide Airways. (Len is one of the people in the photograph of VH-UVT on page 25).

His flying career continued with Australian National Airways, being one of the initial DC2 pilots, and became Flight Superintendent.

He left ANA in 1939 and joined Associated Airlines, (jointly owned by BHP and the Zinc Corporation – now part of Rio Tinto) from which he retired as chief pilot in 1967.

**Jeff Brown - Last Flight**

Jeff undertook one more flight of 45 minutes at Essendon in the DH.82 Tiger Moth VH-UYR of the Victorian Aero Club on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 1938.

With the outbreak of World War 11 in September 1939, Jeff, aged just 31, would have been well qualified to join the RAAF as an instructor and/or fighter pilot. This did not happen however as, being then a farmer, he was required by government rules of the time to 'remain on the farm'.



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**Supporting Information**

**Jeff Brown Flying Career**

25 May 1933 to 7 November 1938

Plane	Hours (hr min)	Plane	Hours (hr min)
Avro Avian	195 hr 25min	Miles Falcon	15min
DH.60 Moth	140 hr 15min	Klemm (German)	15min
Short Scion	277 hr 30min	DH.9	20min
Monospar ST25	244 hr 10min	Avro 10 Fokker	30min
DH.84	271 hr 10min	DH.82 Tiger Moth	45min
DH.86	206 hr 15min	DH.53	1 hr 15min
DH.89	636 hr 50min	Auto Gtro G30	10 h 25min
DC2	220 hr 55min	Sparatan Arrow	2 hr 25min
DC3	535 hr 25min	DH.80A Puss Moth	7 hr 20min
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,817 hr 05m</b>		

**PAST EXPERIENCE.—cont.**

Types Flown.	Hours Flown on each Type.	No. of Accidents.	Remarks.
195. 25.	Avro Avian		Klemm (German) 15.
1. 15.	D.H. 53.		DH 84 271.10
139. 50.	DH 60		DH 89 626.
20.	DH 9.		Short Scion 277.30
7. 20	DH 80A Puss		Monospar ST25 25.05 = 2.24.10
20	Avro 10 Fokker.		Miles Falcon 15
10. 25.	Auto Gyro G30		DH. 86. 93.40
2. 25	Spartan Arrow		Douglas DC 2 8.30

I CERTIFY that the information on this and the preceding pages is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Date 20. 8. 37 Signature of Pilot *Jeff Brown*

**Summary Page of Jeff Brown's First Pilots Logbook**

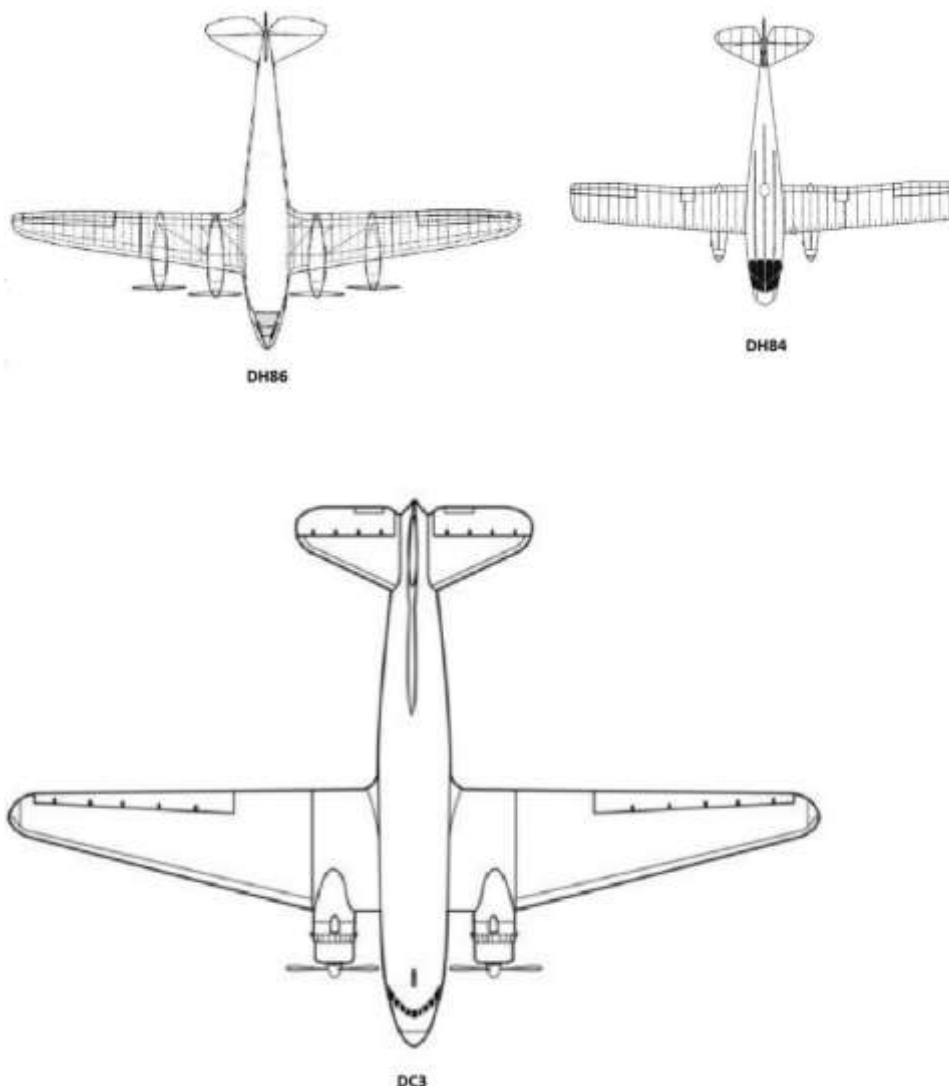


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**Commercial Plane Data**

Plane	Pilots and Passengers	No. of Engines	Wingspan (m)
Short Scion S.16	1 x Pilot, 6 Passengers	2	12.8 m
General Aircraft Monospar ST-25	1 x Pilot, 5 Passengers	2	12.2 m
De Havilland DH.84 Dragon	1 x Pilot, 6 Passengers	2	14.4 m
De Havilland DH.86 Express	2 x Pilots, 10 Passengers	4	19.6 m
De Havilland DH.89 Dragon Rapide	1 x Pilot, 8 Passengers	2	14.6 m
Douglas DC2	2 x Pilots, 14 Passengers	2	25.9 m
Douglas DC3	2 x Pilots, 21 Passengers	2	29.0 m

**Scale Drawing of the DH.84, DH.86 and DC3**





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## References

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- <sup>3</sup> [https://www.arts.tas.gov.au/grants\\_and\\_loans/the\\_vita\\_brown\\_bequest\\_bursary/about\\_vita\\_brown](https://www.arts.tas.gov.au/grants_and_loans/the_vita_brown_bequest_bursary/about_vita_brown)
- <sup>4</sup> Weekly Courier (Launceston, Tas) Wed May 9 1928, p28
- <sup>5</sup> Advocate (Burnie, Tas), Tue 24 Jan 1933, Page 6
- <sup>6</sup> Examiner (Launceston, Tas) Thu 7 May 1931, Page 2
- <sup>7</sup> News (Adelaide, SA) Thu 7 May 1931, Page 16
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- <sup>16</sup> The Age (Melbourne, Vic) Wed 18 Oct 1933, Page 1
- <sup>17</sup> The Argus (Melbourne, Vic) Fri 12 Oct 1934, Page 12
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- <sup>24</sup> The Age (Melbourne, Vic) Wed 18 Oct 1933, Page 18
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