



The neat lines of the Chrislea Super Ace give obvious pleasure to Norman Adam (left) and Norman Adler.

# The Ace Takes a Trick

The Chrislea Ace, first post-war personal type seen here, was imported by Brown & Dureau who have an impressive sales and service record.

**T**HE first flight made by the first really post-war light plane yet seen in Australia occurred in March before an admiring audience of one — a representative of this magazine. In a country which has seen the light plane sport almost die and in which the average person rarely sees a light plane, the arrival of the first Chrislea Super Ace is an event.

There is no more distinctive aircraft in the sky: the Ace is a gift to recognitionists. Its fixed tricycle undercarriage and Lockheed-like twin-fin tail cannot be mistaken in flight. And the parasol, with its blue-silver paint increase the character. To the passenger, the most attractive feature is all-round-the-horizon visibility through the completely glassed cabin. To the on-looker during taxiing, it seems queer that a lightplane's tail should be off the ground and bouncing about rather madly. This configuration, of course, takes the strain off the fuselage and conforms to modern practice in heavier designs.

With a Gipsy Major X of 145 hp, a cruising speed of 112 mph, 650 lb. payload (4 seats) and a petrol consumption of 6½ gallons per hour, the Ace may have one drawback: it costs £3150 in Australia. But there is no similar aircraft to be secured at much less. The price is just a part of present inflation, and the added cost of import. (The Ace is £1995 sterling ex-works in Britain.)

The Chrislea agents, Brown & Dureau's Aviation Division, have sold the first Ace (VH-BRO) to a Western Queensland grazier. B & D do not expect big sales, for Australians have neither big incomes nor petrol to put into personal aeroplanes. The Queensland buyer — Mr R. Green, of Nelia Station — has been using a Tiger Moth to make regular inspections of his numerous properties, but the Moth is not large enough. He wants to carry equipment and assistants. The 4-place Ace will do this for him.

Much of the credit for introducing the first really post-war lightplane to Australia goes to the two Normans who run B & D's Aviation Division — Norman Adam and Norman Adler, and it must be observed that it is not B & D's first "first" in aviation, for they imported the first Lockheeds and the first Convairs.

Back in 1935, B & D anticipated the Commonwealth's decision to lift the embargo that existed on American aircraft and negotiated the Lockheed agency with nice judgment of timing and demand. The company had traditionally specialised in American agencies, as it does today.

As Brown & Dureau had no aviation expert, they sought and found one in the person of Norman Adam. He was at that time chief pilot of Adastra Airways, running the flying school and flying regular schedules on the firm's Sydney-Bega service. He had been flying since the late 1920's and, of equal importance, had a sound business training in one of Sydney's big importing firms. He is still Brown & Dureau's aviation chief and an associate director of the company.

## First Sales

In 1936 B & D sold two Lockheed Electras to Guinea Airways; in 1937 three to Ansetts, three to Union Airways of NZ; two to McRobertson Miller, another to Guinea Airways and a VIP Lockheed 12A to Zinc Corporation. The Lockheed agency prospered from the start.

As these aircraft were powered with Pratt & Whitney engines, it was a logical move for the company to seek and obtain Australian representation of United Aircraft Corporation, manufacturers of Pratt & Whitney engines, Hamilton-Standard propellers, Sikorsky and Vought aircraft. Today the sale and service of P & W engines and replacement parts constitute Brown & Dureau's biggest single activity in the aviation field. From the DC-6 down through the DC-4, Convair, DC-3 and Lockheed Electra, the major por-

tion of the Australian airline fleet today is P & W powered.

Another valuable agency was added in 1937 — BG aircraft spark plugs. In the same year the first Lockheed 14 was sold to Guinea Airways "off the drawing board." The first aircraft of this type did not fly until a year later! To round off their aviation picture, Brown & Dureau finished the year by concluding an agency arrangement with Consolidated Aircraft, manufacturers of PBY Catalina flying boats, and promptly sold one to Richard Archbold, who had wrecked his Sikorsky boat in the course of an exploration expedition in New Guinea.

In 1938 B & D negotiated and finalised a contract with the Commonwealth for 50 Lockheed Hudsons — the first of several such orders before Lend-Lease stopped further transactions except on a Government to Government basis. In further vindication of astute judgment, an order for 17 Catalinas was also finalised. Then the war came, and B & D's Aviation Division devoted itself to manufacturing an aviation item of vital importance — spark plugs.

Aviation Manufacturing Company was formed and a manufacturing licence obtained from the BG Corporation in New York. Throughout the war this small but vital industry supplied the hundreds of thousands of precision-built spark plugs that were needed by the USAAF and RAAF in the Pacific theatre.

Before the war, young Jim Emerton, a Citizen Air Force pilot, had been Norm Adam's assistant. Jim was among the first to see action in the RAAF and fought in Malaya and NEI as a Hudson skipper. Later he went to New Guinea as CO of a Boston squadron and there met his death in circumstances of utmost gallantry. After the war, Group Captain Geoff Nicoll came in from the RAAF as assistant to Norm Adam, but a year later he left to head the Aviation Division of Over-

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## ACE TAKES A TRICK

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seas Corporation. He was succeeded by Group Captain Norman Adler, who is now technical manager of the Aviation Division. Norm Adler is an engineering graduate of Sydney University and joined the RAAF as a technical officer in 1937. He is also an experienced pilot, and, in fact, flew the Chrislea Ace on its delivery flight from Melbourne to Queensland.

At war's end, the Aviation Division ran into a problem. Lockheed and

Consolidated had competing designs on the drawing board, and each wanted exclusive representation. Brown & Dureau decided to stay with Consolidated, but as it happened the conflicting types never materialised. This was the luck of the game, and Brown & Dureau missed selling the Constellation to Qantas. Late in 1946, however, while Norm Adam was at San Diego, the sale of five Convair Liners was finalised with TAA, Norm Adler handling the negotiations at this end.

One potentially important outcome of B & D representation of United Aircraft is the Sikorsky helicopter. One was sold to the RAAF and arrived here in 1947, but further sales appeared doubtful owing to the dollar angle. Since then United have assigned a manufacturing licence to Westland Aircraft Ltd. in England who now have the type in production, using the Alvis Leonides engine in place of the P & W Wasp Jr. The Westland agency was arranged in conjunction with United, and the two Normans have plans for selling Westland-built helicopters here before long.

Following their traditional pattern of combining aircraft and engine agencies, it came as no surprise when Brown & Dureau announced their appointment as Alvis representatives for the sale and service of Leonides engines.

Additional agencies are Cox & Stevens electrical weighing kits; Grimes landing lights; various aviation hardware items too numerous to mention, and sundry smaller lines. The company also acts as purchasing agents for several foreign airlines and enjoys a substantial export business in aviation merchandise to New Zealand, Malaya, Hong Kong, and other markets overseas.

The Aviation Division maintains a staff of specialists to handle general aviation merchandise, which is distributed through the company's offices in all States and New Zealand. This section is headed by Tom Swinney, formerly of Ansetts. The main bulk store for merchandised stocks is located in Bridge Road, Richmond.

### Sydney and New Zealand

Sydney aviation chief is H. T. (Bunny) Hammond, veteran pilot of the First World War, airline pilot between the wars, Grouper in RAAF last war, when he commanded Laverton and Richmond stations. Although he commenced flying in the AFC more than 30 years ago, Bunny Hammond still maintains a current pilot's licence and flies regularly! In New Zealand, Peter Hindle, ex-RN and son of B & D's New Zealand manager, looks after aviation affairs. Incidentally, the company does not represent Chrislea in New Zealand, but still represents Lockheed there. It also represents Bendix, an important agency not held by the Australian organisation.

A very interesting section of the Aviation Division is the Aerial Survey Department, established in 1945 to undertake vertical photographic surveys. Pre-war Brown & Dureau had acted as managing agents for H. Hemming & Partners, aerial survey specialists of London, who performed a large survey in Australia for the Western Mining Corporation. When enquiries for surveys came in after the war, Brown & Dureau found that H. Hemming & Partners no longer existed. So Norman Adam formed an air survey section and had it operating within 12 months of war's end.

A contract was signed with the Tasmanian Government for a survey of large portions of that State. So far about 16,000 square miles have been photographed in three seasons. Work this season has been seriously retarded by the phenomenally bad weather, but Brown & Dureau hope to complete the job in another year or so.

Other survey contracts have been carried out on behalf of the Victorian Railways, Victorian Lands Department, New South Wales Main Roads Department, CSIR and private industrial concerns.

A fleet of three aircraft is employed — a DH89 Rapide, a DH90 Dragonfly and DH84 Dragon. Photographic equipment consists of two Williamson OSC Mark II cameras and six Williamson Eagle IV cameras. The OSC camera is the most advanced in the world today, the first of its type in Australia, and costs something over £3000. (A £50,000 RAAF order for this equipment will be delivered later). All the cameras of each type are fully automatic, electrically operated.

The Air Survey section is headed by John Kellow, manager and chief pilot, with Peter Payens in charge of photography. John Kellow was formerly Fl at the RVAC and Aero Club of WA, then went with Eddie Connellan as route pilot. In 1946-48 he was a partner in Gulf Aviation Service, Whyalla. The photo laboratory is run by Doug Cracknell, who spent quite a lot of the war over Germany with Bomber Command.

### Spark Plug Production

From the purely physical viewpoint, main showpiece of the B & D aviation group is the AMCO factory at Auburn, Vic. This is undoubtedly one of the most modern and impressive industrial plants in Australia today. Here new BG spark plugs are made, and old ones reconditioned. This reconditioning service is most extensive and is used by all major airlines — plugs are sent back to this factory on a regular return basis from points as far distant as Auckland, Singapore and Karachi. AMCO also produces other aviation items and acts as technical administrator to two associated companies in the same building — Westclox Pty. Ltd. and Club Razors Pty. Ltd. Incidentally, Norman Adam was a foundation director of AMCO and is still a board member.

Brown & Dureau believe the business of supplying and serving the industry provides a vital link between the manufacturer overseas and the airline operator here. After 65 years in business they are convinced that no organisations can operate consistently and profitably unless it provides a real service to the consumer. This is the guiding principle which, coupled with fine aeronautical products from world famous factories, has led Norman Adam and his boys along the primrose path for almost 15 years.

On the record, the Aviation Division of Brown & Dureau seems wedded to the American industry. One wonders what will be the firm's reaction to British leadership in turbo and jet aircraft types. It is significant that Norman Adam was last seen boarding a BCPA DC-6 for San Francisco early last month — outward manifestation, at least, that Brown & Dureau's House motto "On We Go" is being followed in traditional fashion. **END.**

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