

DID YOU KNOW?

JEAN BATTEN



ROTORUA
museum

Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa
ART | CULTURE | HERITAGE



Jean Batten was born Jane Gardener Batten in Rotorua on 15 September 1909. Whether by accident or as a nickname she was soon known as Jean.

Jean developed a keen interest in flying when she was around 11 years old after learning about record breaking long distance flights. She was well supported by her mother in her interests.

In 1929 aged 20 Jean had her first flying lessons when she was taken to Sydney by her mother.

A year later they moved to London and she continued to fly at the London Aeroplane Club, earning her A and B licences.

It was a dream of Jean's to fly solo from England to Australia. In the early 1930s Jean made two attempts at flying this route however was unsuccessful. However in May 1934 she was able and complete a return journey to much fanfare.

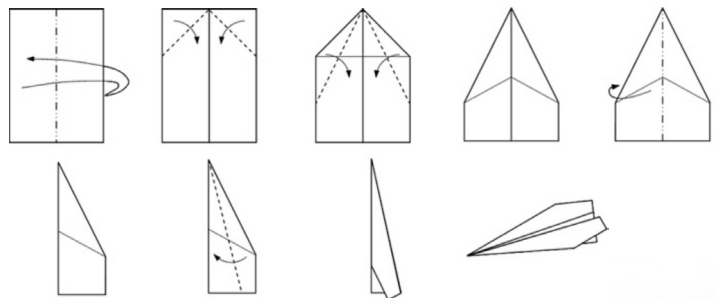
She made further tours to Australia and New Zealand. Being a woman and achieving long distance flights, she captured a lot of media attention. In 1935 she was the first woman to ever fly across the South Atlantic. In 1936 she made a first direct flight from London to New Zealand.

Celebrated and remembered for her pioneer flights after all the publicity died down Jean Batten was occasionally mentioned in the news. She continued to travel with her mother in later years.

It is believed that she died in 1982 in Majorca. Her passing was not reported and therefore not even her own family knew. It wasn't until investigations were conducted later in the decade were the tragic details revealed.

CHALLENGE

Use the instructions and make your own paper plane and see how far it can fly. Make a couple of attempts while measuring the distance. You can use a measuring tape or how many steps to see how far your plane goes.



What is your longest distance?

FACTS

- It took her 14 days and 22.5 hours to fly from London to Darwin, Australia in 1934 setting a new women's world record
- Jean did not travel alone on her long distance flights, her black cat Buddy kept her company
- In Rotorua there are different ways we remember Jean Batten in Rotorua. A small road called Batten Street off Devon St, a sculpture and artworks at the Rotorua Airport, a plaque and a park dedicated to her in front of our very own Rotorua Library Te Aka Mauri
- Jean Batten's birth place (where her home once stood) is currently marked with a plaque on a building at 1242-1246 Amohia Street where the Salvation Army shop is today



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