



# 1938



## KLM CELEBRATES 50 YEARS SERVICE TO AUSTRALIA.

On July 5, 1988, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines celebrates the event which makes the company the oldest international airline serving Australia through Kingsford Smith Airport.

Fifty years ago, on Tuesday, July 5, 1938, at 2.42 p.m., PK-AFM, a Lockheed Super Electra of KNILM, KLM's associated Dutch East Indies Company, touched down at Kingsford Smith Airport.





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It was the first international scheduled service to use Sydney's airport, and carried four crew members, four passengers and 20,000 letters from Europe. All four passengers were Dutch officials and the first Australian to travel with the new service was Mr. W. D. Pye, who departed Sydney on KLM's second flight, on July 10.

"Kingsford Smith Airport officially became an international airport with the arrival of PK-AFM", commented the Sydney Morning Herald. Newspapers of the day reported that the aircraft, piloted by Capt. G. van Messel, arrived "without any fuss" and the speed that mail could be carried from Europe was in fact bigger news than the carriage of passengers.

But the flight to Sydney on July 5 was not KLM's first flight to Australia.

Negotiations to start an air service from the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) to Sydney began in 1931. In May of that year KLM operated a special mail flight from Amsterdam to Sydney, and the company's president, Dr. Albert Plesman, offered a regular scheduled Amsterdam-Wyndham service, which would have given a then-speedy 12-day mail service between Australia and Europe.

In 1934 KLM entered the London-Melbourne air race, carrying paying passengers and mail to demonstrate that a fast commercial link between Australia and Europe was possible. The Douglas DC2 won first prize in the handicap section, and second prize in the speed section, with an elapsed time of three days, 18 hours and 17 minutes. Flying time was 71 hours and 28 minutes at an average speed of 278km/hr (170 m.p.h.).

In 1929 KLM started a regular fortnightly scheduled service to Jakarta with its Fokker F VIIb aircraft covering the distance in 89 flying hours spread over 12 days. By 1935 this service was operating twice a week with Douglas DC aircraft and flying time had been cut to 57 hours spread over six days. Two years later the DC2 was replaced with the larger DC3 and there were three flights a week.

An official KLM publication of the day said the new aircraft were "roomy, noiseless and very fast, being able to cover the 4,000 miles between Java and Sydney in a little more than 20 hours' flying time."

The proving flight of the new run landed at Sydney on June 18 with Captain J. Schott in command, and this was followed on July 5, by the first scheduled flight. The Sydney-Jakarta fare was £68 and the Sydney-London fare was £207 - about the same as a saloon ship fare, and included accommodation, meals and tips. An early brochure warns that drinks in hotels were extra, "except beer and mineral water" and that cameras had to be sealed in a trunk before departure, as in nearly all the countries along the route it is forbidden to take photographs from the air or on the ground.

Each night was spent at a hotel along the route. The



On February 22, 1938, Australia's Minister for External Affairs, Mr. W. M. Hughes, signed a letter granting KLM and its associated Royal Dutch East Indies Airways permission to open a connecting service between Jakarta and Sydney, using Lockheed 14 Super Electra aircraft. Three Super Electras, then the fastest commercial aeroplane on the market, were specially ordered for use on the Java-Australia line.

itinerary of the trip reads like a page out of another era, with names long since changed appearing on the list of stops. On the southern flight from Batavia (Jakarta) overnight stops were made on Bali and at Cloncurry (staying in the old Post Office Hotel). Landings were made at Brisbane, and on the flight north one overnight stop was made at Darwin. It was the stated aim of the company to decrease regularly the time and increase the comfort. "The day is not far distant" said a company





publication, "when it will be possible to fly between Sydney and London in three or four days".

Planes travelling between Sydney and London were specially arranged for long-distance voyages, with seating available for only 11 passengers, a reduction of the 21 carried in Australia and Europe. Pullman chairs fitted with Pullman footrests were placed in such a way that passengers could stretch out and rest full-length.

Two suitcases, provided free by the company, were placed in the passenger cabin beside the footrests so passengers could have access to their luggage during the journey.

Besides the new London-Sydney service, KLM flights already formed an extensive network over Europe in 1938.

The company was operating regular flights connecting Amsterdam and Rotterdam with London, Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Cologne, Frankfurt, Milan, Rome, Brussels, Paris, Knocke, Hamburg, Malmo, Doncaster and Liverpool. The oldest service was that from Amsterdam to London, which was inaugurated on May 17, 1920 and was scheduled on alternative days. On September 1, 1920 a service to Hamburg was established.

In 1921 KLM had a staff totalling 101 which had swollen to 1,010 in 1936. The company then employed 42 pilots, of whom 17 were commanders on the Amsterdam-Batavia run, 27 engineers, 31 wireless operators, station and technical personnel numbering 423 and office staff totalling 482.

On June 17, 1939 KLM celebrated 100 flights between London and Sydney. "Ninety-three of these have been on time." Flights between Australia and Europe ceased on February 15, 1942, when the Japanese invaded Indonesia, and between 1940 (when the Germans invaded Holland) and 1942 the flights continued on schedule, but the departure point was Naples.

KLM resumed scheduled services to Sydney in 1951 with the Lockheed Constellation and introduced the Super Constellation in 1954. Flying time was reduced to about 50 hours. Douglas DC8-30 aircraft put into service in 1961 reduced the flying time to 30 hours and the Boeing 747 B's (introduced in 1973) now fly to Amsterdam in 25½ hours from Sydney and 23½ from Melbourne.

*Above:*  
The crew of the first foreign airliner to use Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport (left to right): co-pilot F. van Breemen; pilot G. van Messel; mechanic H. Veen and wireless operator H. F. Verheyen.

*Far Left:*  
The cabin of a KNILM Lockheed 14. This was the height of luxury for travellers flying to Europe in the 1930's.

*Front Page:*  
Crowds turned out to welcome the first scheduled international air service when it landed at Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport (Sydney Morning Herald photo).

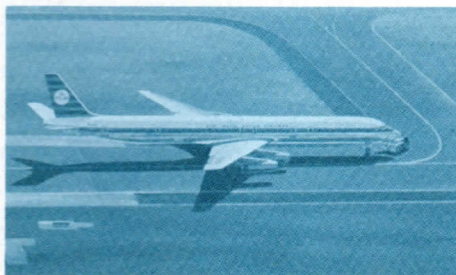
*Next Page:*  
Reproduction of the first issue of the Official Organ in Australia and New Zealand of KNILM and KLM.

*Overleaf:*  
Extracts from this first issue.

## Dutch airliners serving Australia through the years.



The Lockheed 14 Super Electra that started it all. They were the fastest commercial aeroplane on the market!



**1961** KLM's ultra-modern Douglas DC-8's carried Australians to and from Europe in just over a day.



**1951** KLM introduced their Lockheed Constellation. The pressurized cabin let Australians fly above the weather in unheard of comfort!



**NOW:** The spacious KLM 747B jumbos. Australians like them best, so KLM flies them to Australia every week!



# The INTERCONTINENTAL AIR EXPRESS

An illustrated record of the combined Netherlands Indian and Dutch Lines—K.N.I.L.M. (Royal Netherlands Indies Airways) and K.L.M. (Royal Dutch Air Lines)

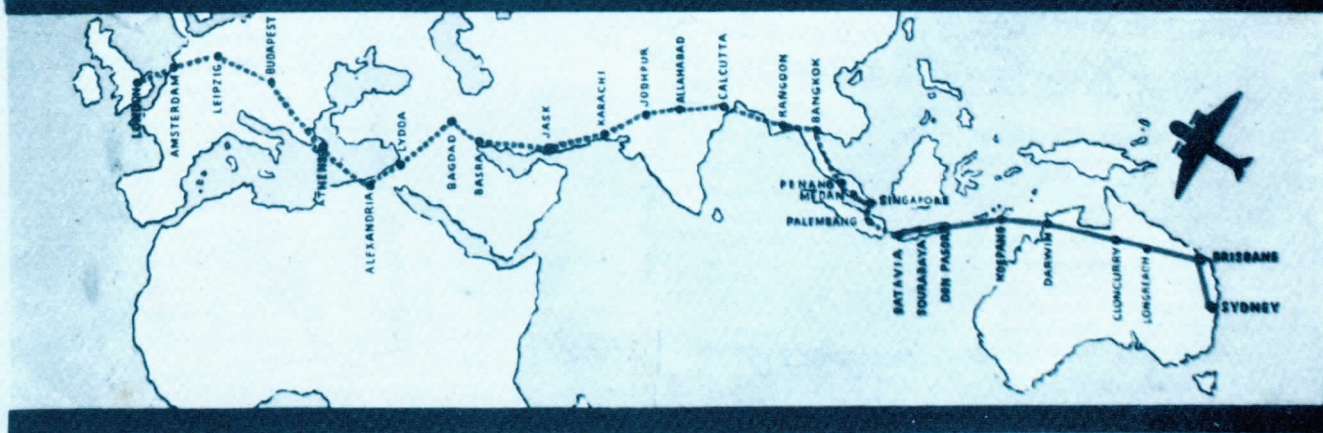
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## THIS MONTH!

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JULY  
1938





## ABOUT ANGLO-DUTCH FRIENDSHIP

MR. E. ENTHOVEN, Chairman of Directors of K.N.I.L.M., said at a dinner tendered to the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, Lord Gowrie, and Lady Gowrie, at Amsterdam, on April 24, that it was significant that while other nations are thinking of their differences, Holland and Australia should be planning improved communications and closer co-operation.

## GREETINGS!



THE Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. J. A. Lyons, C.H., M.P., says: "I welcome this opportunity of contributing a foreword to the first issue of 'The Intercontinental Air Express' because of the close liaison which has always existed between the people of the Netherlands East Indies and our Australian airmen, who have flown across their territory.

"this liaison was established when the first Australian fliers essayed the then hazardous flight from England to Australia and found a hospitable and warm welcome awaiting them in the Netherlands East Indies. This has been maintained up to the present time, when our regular air services pass so frequently over Dutch territory. That camaraderie of the sea, which has been so noticeable a feature of Anglo-Dutch relations for many generations, has now a counterpart in the air, where commercial airmen of all nations regard one another as brothers in the great new adventure of conquering space.

"To the men of this new Dutch air service, I wish fair weather and good flying."

## Currency Bugbears are Outed

There are no currency difficulties for passengers while travelling with K.N.I.L.M. and K.L.M. from Australia to destinations abroad.

A passenger requires little money. As the duration of the flight to London is only eight days, the average expenditure on odds and ends between Australia and Great Britain is negligible.



THE Rt. Hon. W. M. Hughes, Minister for External Affairs, writes: "In 1610 the first 'Australian Company' was founded by a great merchant of Amsterdam, Isaac Le Maire, and a famous seaman,

Schouten. Following the lead that this company gave, a great many voyages were made by Dutch navigators to the southern hemisphere, and much of the discovery of Australia is their work.

"Today, Royal Netherlands Indies' Airways are forging another link between Europe and the once remote antipodes, a link which will bring Australia within eight days of England. The wheel has made full circle, and the nation with whom we once contested the supremacy of these waters has become one of our closest friends, and the means of bringing us nearer to those centres of civilisation to which both we and the Netherlands Indies turn.

"The spirit of co-operation which has always marked our relations with Netherlands airmen makes the extension of this service to Australia particularly welcome. I hope that besides the technical advantages, which I am sure the service will bring, that the trip of only 1½ days from Sydney to Batavia will encourage many people in this country to visit the Netherlands Indies and learn something of their beauty and fascination.

"YOUR Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen," said Mr. Enthoven. "This is an auspicious occasion, and one which gives us a particular pleasure. Not only does it give us the opportunity of doing honour to the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Lady Gowrie, whom we are glad to welcome personally, but we celebrate today the forging of a new link of friendship between Holland and Australia.

"Is it not ironical that the most modern developments of scientific progress are very often perverted into engines for human destruction instead of contributing to weld mankind into one great society. Thank God it is unthinkable that the British and Netherlands Empires should ever willingly wish to use man's conquest of the air for any hostile purpose. Between our two countries there are many ties of friendship and mutual esteem and these grow stronger as the years pass.

"The greatest interest of the British Empire, as of our own, is peace. We share the same tradition of freedom and commercial intercourse. For each of us the enterprise of the pioneer has played a cardinal part in our past. Through generations when our seamen sailed the Seven Seas, little dreaming that their successors would navigate the air, we enjoyed the legend of the Flying Dutchman. It is natural that peoples like the British and Dutch who have the same traditions should have the same ideals. At a time when other nations are thinking of their differences it is surely a happy augury that we and you should be planning improved communications and closer co-operation.

"The K.N.I.L.M. service between Batavia and Sydney, which is to be inaugurated on July 3, has long been a project very near to our hearts. At first it seemed as though the practical difficulties would be insurmountable. It is a great day for us, therefore, to feel that this project is on the point of being realised. For us today it is much more than a stage in the development of the K.N.I.L.M. - it is a milestone in the history of relations between our own country and the great Commonwealth of Australia."

## No Extra Expenses on New Services

All travelling expenses are included in the K.N.I.L.M. Java Air Express and the K.L.M. fares. The total fare between Sydney and London is Aust.Pnds 207, about equal to the cost of a first-class steamer stateroom plus sundry expenses.

The incidental expenses paid by K.N.I.L.M. and K.L.M. out of fares include hotel tariffs for night stops, transport from aerodromes to hotels, all gratuities and meals aboard airlines.

## What K.N.I.L.M. and K.L.M. Mean

K.N.I.L.M. (abbreviation for Koninklijke Nederlaanch Indische Luchtvaart Maatschappij) means Royal Netherlands Indies' Airways.

K.L.M. (abbreviation for Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij) means Royal Dutch Airlines.

Newspapers and periodicals using these abbreviations are at present explaining what they mean inside brackets. We hope to some day become sufficiently well-known in Australia that the explanation within brackets will not be necessary.

## Free Suitcases for K.L.M. Passengers

K.N.I.L.M. and K.L.M. supply passengers to Europe with special luggage - a large suitcase and a small bag.

The small bag is designed for night attire and toilet requirements for use at hotels where overnight stops are made. The large suitcase can be left aboard airlines.

The bags are of modern design, royal blue in colour, and have a neat metal stamp of the property of passengers at the termination of the flight.

## TIME TABLE

INTERCONTINENTAL AIRWAYS

K.N.I.L.M. - K.L.M.

(Combined Netherlands Indies' and Dutch Lines)

OCTOBER, 1938

(Subject to alteration)

### K.N.I.L.M. LOCKHEED SUPER ELECTRA AIR LINERS

		Dep.	Arr.	Local Time	In to Syc. comp. Pleas devel.
Sunday	SYDNEY	5.00	7.45		
Thursday	BRISBANE	6.15	9.15		
	LONGREACH				
	CLONCURRY	Arr.	13.15		
	DARWIN	Arr.	13.45		
	KOEPANG	Dep.	18.15		
Monday	DENPASAR	Arr.	8.00		
Friday	SOURABAYA	Arr.	9.30		
	BATAVIA	Dep.	12.40		
		Arr.	14.40		
		Dep.	15.00		
		Arr.	17.15		

### K.L.M. DOUGLAS D.C.3 AIR LINERS

		Dep.	Arr.	Local Time	of th exist w Pleas Show succe visito inter to ma Flying Exhib for a who, Dutch On associ signer Sloop Lieut massi grach istrat. There to go e young own p find pi When adverti puton! Come i assista ment ii adverti restaur female : bootie notices
Tuesday	BATAVIA	Dep.	10.30		
Thursday	PALEMBANG	Arr.	11.45		
Saturday	SINGAPORE	Dep.	12.15		
	MEDAN	Arr.	14.30		
Wednesday	PENANG	Dep.	15.15		
Friday	BANGKOK	Arr.	17.00		
Sunday	RANGOON	Dep.	6.30		
	CALCUTTA	Arr.	6.30		
Thursday	ALLAHABAD	Dep.	9.00		
Saturday	JODHPUR	Arr.	12.45		
Monday	KARACHI	Dep.	13.30		
	JASK	Arr.	15.15		
	BASRA	Dep.	16.00		
	BAGHDAD	Arr.	17.30		
	LYDDA	Dep.	18.00		
Friday	ALEXANDRIA	Arr.	10.45		
Saturday	ATHENS	Dep.	11.00		
Monday	NAPLES	Arr.	15.15		
Wednesday	MARSEILLES	Dep.	4.30		
Sunday	AMSTERDAM	Arr.	10.15		
Same afternoon	LONDON	Arr.	13.00		
		Arrive	18.00		

# K.N.I.L.M. LINE STARTS JULY 7

BATAVIA 1½ DAYS FROM SYDNEY:  
8 DAYS SCHEDULE TO LONDON IN  
ASSOCIATION WITH K.L.M.

On June 17, 1939, KLM completed 100 flights between Sydney and London, 93 of them on time or early at Mascot. Later, KLM put Douglas DC3's on the route.





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## **“THE AIR OCEAN UNITES ALL PEOPLES”**

### **ALBERT PLESMAN - FOUNDER OF KLM**

In 1938, when KLM started its service to Sydney, it was just another “first” for the company and for its founder, Dr. Albert Plesman, whose life was devoted to the development of commercial aviation.

Albert Plesman, who created a company all Holland referred to as “our KLM”, was born at The Hague in 1889.

After being commissioned as a regular army officer in 1911, he qualified as an air force pilot in 1918. In 1919, the young flight lieutenant saw the wonderful opportunities offered by aviation. He dreamed of building bridges through the air, of accelerating progress, of bringing people closer together. “The air ocean unites all peoples”, he used to say.

But in 1919 people had to be made aware of the new dimensions of their earthly existence. An exhibition was an appropriate way of doing this, and on August 1, 1919 Plesman opened the gates of the first Air Show at Amsterdam. It was a tremendous success, and attracted half a million visitors in six weeks. Four thousand intrepid enthusiasts paid 40 guilders each to make a sight-seeing flight over the city. Flying became the talk of the town. The Air Exhibition created a favourable climate for a band of bankers and businessmen who, like Plesman, wanted to found a Dutch airline.

On October 7, 1919, the memorandum of association of the Royal Dutch Airlines was signed in the offices of public notary H.J.H. Stoop in The Hague, and former Flight Lieutenant Plesman sat down behind a massive oak desk on the first floor of Herengracht 13 in that same city, first as Administrator and soon afterwards as Manager. There was a lot of work to do. Plesman had to go on the road to lease aircraft. The young company owned no aircraft of its own. Plesman had to appoint employees, find pilots - and especially passengers. When there was nothing to discuss or advertise, Plesman would often resolutely put on his coat, rush from the office, yelling: “Come on van de Paauw” (one of his first assistants and later head of the establishment in The Netherlands)...“we’re going to advertise!” In the conveniences of cafes and restaurants, which were only guarded by a female attendant at the door, the dynamic booster of Dutch aviation would himself fix notices near the mirror which read:

“Businessmen fly and send KLM”.

On May 18, 1920 two businessmen and a journalist were assisted into a De Havilland “Airco” DH-16 by Plesman who personally gave pilot Jerry Shaw the signal for departure on KLM’s first flight from Amsterdam to London. The world’s first scheduled air connection had become a fact.

On October 31, 1920, when the cold of the northern winter put an end to activities in the air, KLM had flown 82,000 kms and had carried 345 passengers, 22,000 kgs of freight and 3,000 kgs of mail. The company boasted a network of 924 kms which linked five cities in three countries. Six months later the company bought its first aircraft - including two Fokkers with closed cabins - a comfortable innovation which meant that the four/five passengers no longer had to be equipped with leather coats, flying caps and hot water bottles.

Plesman invented return fares, opened a KLM restaurant at Schiphol Airport, opened the world’s first airline booking office in Amsterdam and engaged the company’s first pilots.

KLM continued to develop adding ever more destinations and countries to the company’s growing network, until war broke out and the Germans invaded Holland in 1940. In 1945, less than five months after the end of World War II, KLM flew again, first serving domestic flights and in November, reviving the Amsterdam-Jakarta line. “The birds have no nationality”, he used to say. More international connections were added and restored to the KLM network. Zurich, Prague, Madrid, Paris, Brussels, London, New York and Curacao.

From 1919, when he was awarded the Order of the House of Orange for resourcefulness and enterprise on the occasion of the Air Exhibition in Amsterdam, and throughout growth and development of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Dr. Plesman was heaped with honours by both Dutch and foreign governments for his untiring services to commercial aviation.

On New Year’s Eve, 1953, after a lifetime devoted to creating KLM and seeing it develop into the world’s third-largest air transport company with the world’s second largest route net, Dr. Albert Plesman died at The Hague.