

Commemorative clog was a gift to Albury mayor

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The flight 20–24 October 1934 of the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines 'Uiver' from Mildenhall to Melbourne was designed to test the feasibility of an air service from Europe to Australia in heavy all-metal monoplanes.

Despite the hiccup of an emergency landing in Albury, the flight proved that such a service could be successfully established.

Then, Australia was a semi-independent nation whose citizens were British not Australian. Its government resolutely refused to grant a licence to KLM or KNILM (Royal Netherlands Indies Airlines) to establish a scheduled air service from Europe to Australia because they were not part of the British Empire. Instead, Imperial Airways-Qantas Empire Airways were subsidised to fly to Australia. The first scheduled QEA flight to Australia (Singapore to Brisbane) carrying passengers was made on 22-25 April 1935 using a wood and fabric de Havilland DH86 aircraft.

On 13 December 1934, a Netherlands East Indies delegation, led by merchant navy Captain H. Sluiter, arrived in Albury and gave lavish presents to those who had saved the 'Uiver'. He returned to Java on *SS Nieuw Holland* with Albury mayor Alderman Alfred Waugh, where Waugh expressed Albury's thanks for the gifts from the people of NEI.

The Imperial Airways and Qantas Empire Airways air service using antiquated de Havilland DH86 aircraft was much inferior to the air service which the Dutch could have established using American Douglas aircraft. Following the successful flight of the Uiver, Imperial Airways acted to replace the DH86 service to Australia with flying boats designed and developed by Short Brothers plc and known as Short Empire flying boats.

Australia was expected to financially support the venture, but did not agree with some of the conditions sought to be imposed. Its participation in the proposed Empire Air Mail Service (EAMS) was in doubt, when in January 1937 the Dutch renewed their request to establish a Batavia (now Jakarta)-Sydney air service. The Australian government, in the face of mounting public pressure, could not politically hold out on both the Dutch and the EAMS.

In April 1937, the government announced that it would allow KNILM to fly a scheduled Batavia to Sydney passenger service, which connected with a KLM Amsterdam-Batavia service.

The inaugural flight in a Lockheed 14 PK-AFM departed Batavia on 3 July 1938 and arrived at Mascot, Sydney, on 5 July 1938 carrying four crew and four passengers. With this flight, KNILM



Mini-clog with KNILM logo, part of the 'Albury Collection.'

became the first foreign airline corporation to establish a scheduled passenger service to Australia.

A souvenir mini-clog was issued with the KNILM logo on its top side. Mayor Alfred Waugh received a souvenir clog, probably from Captain Sluiter. The clog is now held by the Albury LibraryMuseum and reminds us of a significant event in Australia's aviation history.