Swan ready to wing away

by Ian Dormer
Swan Airlines has gained
approval from the UK Civil
Aviation Authority to begin
non-scheduled flights from
London Stansted to the Far East
and North America. The carrier
plans to begin operations in
April or May, using two Boeing
747-200s.

Swan Aeronautics of Virginia
is providing $20 million to start
the airline, but the share-
holding has had to be arranged
so that the US investors have no
control over the airline. The
CAA requires that control of the
carrier must be in British hands.
The founding management and
directors of Swan will own 75-1
per cent of the airline's shares,
with the balance being held by
Swan Aeronautics.

Swan Aeronautics is led by
Jim Jackson. Neither he nor any
of his fellow investors has any
airline experience, but they
believe Swan is founded on "a
very sound business concept".
Jackson refutes suggestions that
repayment of the investment
will prove too demanding, thus
bleeding the airline dry. Swan is
working to a five-year plan;
while considerable work needs
to be done, the repayment
schedule is obtainable,, he says.
"It is like holding a bird: too
tight and it will choke; too loose
and it will fly away," Jackson
adds.

For long-haul routes Swan
Airlines chairman Jaap van der
Zwan believes that- other UK
charter airlines, such as Britan-

nia and Monarch, cannot offer
the same quality of service with
their 757s and 767s as Swan can
with 747s. Swan will be the first
widebodied operator based at
London Stansted, he adds.
Swan raised about $2-5
million when it first applied for
licences in 1987. But with the
demise of Scotland's long-haul
carrier, Highland Express, the
same year, after less than three
months of operation, the CAA

increased its financial fitness
requirements, van der Zwan
believes.
Manufacturers Hanover
Trust will secure 80 per cent of
finance for the two Boeing 747s.
The aircraft are being bought so
that the airline will have assets
to trade in when it acquires
747-400s in about four years,
van der Zwan says. The cost of
operating a 747-400 is "not that
different from operating the

-200s", he explains. "We need
-400s to compete with the likes
of British Airways," says van der
Zwan.

Swan has licences to fly non-
scheduled routes to Hong
Kong, Singapore, Kuala
Lumpur, Bangkok, Brunei,
Jamaica, Barbados, Acapulco,
and Orlando and Miami. Van
der Zwan says that the airline
will operate the routes like a
scheduled carrier.

Novair's 737-400 takes shape

The first Boeing 737-400 for London Galwick-based charier airline Novair (formerly known as Calair International) is nearing completion at Boeing's Renton plant. The 737 is the first narrowbody in the carrier's fleet, joining three McDonnell Douglas DC-lOs. The Rank Organisation is now the sole owner of Novair, following its purchase of British Airways' 50 per cent stake. The new name avoids confusion with BA 's charter arm, Caledonian Airways.

Sabena loses monopoly

The Belgian Gpvernment has
decided to end the monopoly
held by national airline Sabena
on operations to and from
regional airports.
Sabena remains the Belgian
flag carrier, but will specialise
in trunk routes to and from
main cities on international
flights. The decision was taken
in view of the new Constitution,
which made Belgium a federal
state (United Kingdom) from
January 1.
The new Constitution gives
far-reaching * powers to
Belgium's Flemish ' and
Walloon regions, which already
have autonomy and self-
government. These regions
insist on having their own air
links with neighbouring coun-

tries. Saheria has already inau-
gurated air routes between
Antwerp and London and
between Liege and Turin,
reacting to the decision
taken by the European Com-
mission to increase regional air
traffic.

At present these regional
routes are flown by Sabena
subsidiary Delta Air Transport,
using a fleet of Fokker F.28
Fellowships and Embraer
EMB-120 Brasilias.
The federalisation of the
nation also means that both
Flanders (northern Belgium)
and Wallonia (southern Bel-
gium) receive responsibility for
eight of the nine airports and
airfields in the country, which
were previously operated by the

Regie der Luchtwegen/ Regie
des Voies Aeriennes on behalf
of the Ministry of Transport.
From January 1 the Regie
operates only Brussels Airport at
Zavemem. Antwerp Airport at
Deurne, Ostend Airport at
Middlekerke, and Grimbergen
airfield near Brussels have
become regional 'airports
controlled by the , Flemish
Government. Charleroi Airport
at Gosselies, Liege Airport at
Bierset, and the airfields at Spa
and St Hubert are now regional
airfields run by the Walloon
Government. V

Under a three-year agree-
ment the Regie will continue 'l®
operate all these airfields and
airports on behalf of the
regional governments.

Canada-

UK airline

founded
A new Canadian charter airline,
Odyssey International, will start
services between Toronto and
two UK regional airports from
next May, and plans to extend
its service to other UK regional
airports by the end of 1989. The
carrier has acquired two Boeing
757s, and will operate five of the
type before the end of 1989.
Odyssey has been founded by
former Wardair vice-president
sales and marketing Brian
Walker.
Wardair is ending its
Newcastle and Leeds/Bradford
operations, Walker says, and
Odyssey plans to fill the
breach.

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