

UK OFFICE

January 2017 REPORT

**Prepared by: Venessa Alexander
UK Director**

Tour Operators

- **DNATA** – A general update meeting was held with Tom Dale, Senior Purchasing Manager for the Americas & The Caribbean to discuss the DNATA structure and to provide Tom with an area overview. Tom advised of the internal structure in relation to the various DNATA brands. Jonathan Couch will continue to be our usual day-to-day contact for purchasing / contracting / overall DNATA conversations for our area. Ross Sinclair and Ashley Pilkington will be looking after Gold Medal and Travel2 product, and Harriet Hudders will be looking after Gold Medal marketing. Anne Salte and Lindsay Miller will handle all Travel2 marketing. Oliver Lomas and Sebastien Boulenzou will look after Travelbag and Netflights product and Kevin Coles will be looking after marketing for these brands. Steve Dean will continue to be our main point of contact for Travel Republic and Charlene Jagannath looks after all Travel Republic marketing. Tom advised that the US in general across all brands was doing OK but that the exchange rate was not helping and that January sales will be the true test to how well the destination is faring into 2017. Provided Tom with an area overview as to what was new in our area.
- **USAirtours/TravelPlanners** - Met with Linda Dixey, Product Manager to discuss the current joint Visit Florida campaign that is taking place between January and March 2017. Also discussed possible activity for the remainder of our allocated budget and a proposal has been received. Linda advised that USAirtours/TravelPlanners ended 2016 up by 25% overall and that January sales were already exceeding 2016 levels – up 15% year on year. Provided Linda with an update on what is new for our area for 2017 and also provided her with the most up to date New & Now newsletter. We also discussed a possible internal staff incentive around the same time as the additional co-op marketing activity, which is likely to take place in May/June.
- **Tour America** – Met with Veronica Flood, Marketing Manager and Liz Wight, Product Manager for Tour America, Ireland. We were advised that January sales were going really well with Florida sales up 15% year on year and the US overall being up 9% year on year. Their top selling hotel in our area continues to be the Sheraton Sand Key Resort with the Opal Sands, Sandpearl Resort and Tradewinds resorts also doing well in terms of room nights booked with their customers. They currently contract directly with the Sheraton Sand Key, Marriott Suites on Sand key, The Postcard Inn and The Sirata Beach Resort. They use many of the usual receptives including Hotelbeds, Mark International, and Bonotel etc to book all other area hotels. Liz advised that their current lead in selling price for a 7 night holiday to Orlando (with American Airlines and including hotel accommodation) is currently starting at €399 per person which is assisting in pushing other area destinations for people looking to take a twin centre holiday. Discussed the

forthcoming Out of Home campaign that we are looking to run in Ireland around the same time as the UK Advertising Campaign and a full proposal will be with us soon.

- **American Holidays** – A general update meeting was held with Dee Burdock, Product Manager for American Holidays in Ireland. Dee advised that January sales were good but not as good as they had hoped and she thinks that Florida and the US may suffer this year due to the exchange rate or that it will prove to be a late booking market. Having said that she advised that cruising holiday's, New York and West Coast USA sales do not seem to have been affected. Their top selling hotel continues to be The Sirata Beach Resort with The Sunset Vistas, Marriott Suites on Sand Key and the Sandpearl Resort also doing well in our area. Discussed what is new in our area and also talked about the possibility of running an internal staff incentive for their sales agents.
- **Bookabed Ireland** – Met with Beverley Fly for a general catch up and to discuss our joint co-op marketing promotion that launched at the beginning of January. Bev advised that their US bookings were doing really well and already up 30% year on year as of the end of January. They are also seeing a growth of 6% in UK bookings. Discussed the possibility of doing joint agent training evenings around the UK with their sales team and Bev will let us know if this will be possible. Bev also advised that they were looking to host a FAM trip for Irish Travel Agents in May 2017 and we offered assistance and support should this go ahead.

Meetings/Training/Events

- **Icelandair Mid-Atlantic** – Attended the Mid-Atlantic Seminar in Reykjavik including a meeting with Sales & Marketing for Icelandair to discuss promotion of the Tampa route launching early September. Currently awaiting a marketing plan.
- **Reiselivsmessen** – As part of Florida Beaches, we attended the annual show at Telenor Arena in Oslo, which received approx. 40,000 visitors across the 3 days. Generally the customers we spoke with had booked their flights and were looking for information on hotels and things to do. Many of these were travelling in the next 4 months. We also spoke with customers who were planning for next year and had not booked anything as yet. During the show we distributed our brochures and maps. Following on from last month, we worked with Elisabeth Stai at Nordmanns Reiser to design a flyer promoting the new Icelandair route into Tampa, with some holiday prices and destination information about St. Pete/Clearwater. Icelandair printed these flyers, which were also distributed at our stand during the show, as well as Nordmanns Reiser's stand. Elisabeth advised at the end of the show that they have received great interest from the consumers and have some good leads, which they will follow up on.
- **Discover America Sweden** – We attended their meeting in Stockholm and Johnny advised that they have managed to secure more money from Brand USA, so will be investing in bigger and better events this year to attract more agents. They are currently working on Malmo which will be on 21st September and Gothenburg on 11th October, details to be advised. At the moment they have 12 participants including 2 journalists signed up for IPW 2017. Johnny confirmed that there was a slight decline of arrivals for the Swedish market into the USA for 2016 compared to 2015, driven by currency. The

presidential elections did not have any impact on bookings, and they will continue to promote the USA as good value for money.

- **Resia, Stockholm** – We visited their Stockholm office to provide training to their sales agents. We gave a detailed overview of the destination as they had not been to Florida before, an update on the new hotels, and distributed brochures and maps.
- **Ving, Stockholm** – We visited their Stockholm office to meet with Jarno Holmstrom, Product Manager and Mari Sandrup, Product Development Manager to provide training/destination overview. We provided them both with brochures and maps. Jarno advised that Florida was doing ok, however they were seeing huge growth in Dubai, Thailand and Malaysia. Currency was also having an impact on their bookings in general to the USA, but New York still remains strong.
- **Discover America Stockholm** – We attended their evening workshop which consisted of timed speed networking sessions for their agents. Approx. 150 agents attended. During each presentation we gave a quick destination overview including details of the new Icelandair flights, and distributed brochures, maps and giveaways.
- **Holiday World, Ireland** – We attended the Holiday World Trade & Consumer as part of the Florida's Beaches consortia. The event was held over a three-day period from 27th – 29th January in Ballsbridge, Dublin. The show was very well received with many enquiries from consumers who had visited Orlando previously but were looking to explore other areas on their next trip. We were situated opposite American Holidays who advised that customers we had spoken to had then visited them to book their holiday to St. Pete/Clearwater. Attendance figures have been received and the show attracted 801 trade personnel, 42,200 consumers and had 575 exhibitors in total.
- **Travel Bulletin** – A meeting was held with Matt Gill of Travel Bulletin in advance of the North America Travel Trade Showcase we will be attending in Bristol in March. Matt discussed the advertising possibilities that we have available to us as well as confirming the training event details that will see around 60-70 travel agents attending this event.

TRADE LIAISON -

- **VSPC/Virgin Holidays February Campaign**
 - TV ad finalised and is currently being cleared
 - Digital desktop/mobile/tablet have been received and now signed off by all parties
 - Cinema ad needed separate Dolby sound which is currently being worked on
 - Social campaign being worked on by VSPC US Office with input from UK Office and Rooster PR. Both are also in contact with Virgin Holidays social team to ensure maximum amplification
 - Media Agency Group have been put in direct contact with Virgin Holidays regarding tracking pixels on the Vhols site to ensure maximum tracking and to ensure that campaign elements can be tweaked
 - Discussions taking place with Virgin Holidays regarding call centre and retail incentives to run during the campaign

James Killick, Product Manager advised that during the beginning part of their January sale, Florida overall was doing ok, particularly from Boxing Day through to the beginning of January. They had a strong couple of weekends since, with July and August travel months filling up, however they are wary of ensuring low season continues to book. They have extended their sale with tactical airfares, so it will now end mid-February. Overall their business to Florida is flat compared to last January.

- **Tour America** – Following on from our meeting in November, Veronica Flood has confirmed that they would like to partner with us on a joint marketing campaign to launch in February. We have provided an update on the UK campaign elements and Veronica will work on providing us with a proposal for activity in Ireland.
- **Icelandair, Denmark**– We have started discussing with John Rasmussen, Account Manager, about producing flyers to hand out at Ferie, to promote the Tampa route from Reykjavik and St. Pete/Clearwater. We have contacted Thomas Elsgaard, Marketing Manager at Profil Rejser to see if they would like to be the CTA with a price for a holiday to our area. Charlotte Lindholm confirmed that they would like to support us and will be starting work on creating the flyer. We have sent her logos, images and copy.
- **Visit USA Ireland** – We have received the results of the Facebook competition which was launched in December offering the chance to win a 4 night stay at Postcard Inn on the Beach. The competition was live for 2 weeks.
 - Facebook page promotion - Total Page Likes Dec 2016 – Jan 9th 2017: 162 Likes (Before 20th of Dec 2016): 2,036 Likes (up to 9th of Jan 2017: 2,198
 - Visit USA spent €80 on advertising; 2 boost posts: at €40
 - Reach totalled 24,099 over the competition posts, shares made up 249, likes equalled 283 and finally 124 comments.

In addition Clodagh Oxley has sent us the latest Irish traveller stats which includes travel up to July 2016;

- 241,605 visitors (Jan – July inc) -4% versus last year, largely driven by Q2.
- July 2016 – 40,776 visitors -12.6%.
- **Barrhead Travel** – We have received the results from Jade Semple for the social media campaign we ran at the end of December, to win a luxury goody bag.
 - 7981 reach with 450 reactions
 - 184 likes, 213 comments, 51 shares
 - 637 post clicks with 426 photo views.
 - Jade advised that this was one of the top well-received posts and they were delighted with the response.
- **Icelandair, Sweden October Fam trip** – Michelle Poyet has sent out a solicitation to our partners to ask for accommodation for the group, which will be travelling in October. We

have received an offer of rooms at Alden Suites, which we have accepted for the group. We will work on the itinerary in the coming months.

- **SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment/VSPC VIP Event 2017** – Work has started on our annual joint event that will take place again this year at Amberley Castle. The date secured is the 4th May and we are currently finalising the guest list so that the email invitation can be sent to our tour operator/ airline partners at the beginning of February.
- **Bookabed** – The January campaign is now in place and will run until the end of January. Results will be reported next month.
- **USAirtours/TravelPlanners/Visit Florida** – Signed off creative for the USAirtours trade email, TravelPlanners Florida solus email to their consumer database, Cheapflights holiday offers email, USAirtours poster and the Waitrose Magazine App as part of the Visit Florida campaign.
- **Virgin Retail** – Discussions are still on going with regards to the possibility of sponsoring a Virgin Retail Store.
- **VSPC/Kissimmee/Tampa/SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment** – Discussions have started regarding a joint mini training mission with the partners listed. We will be arranging visits to our top tour operators around the UK and the mission has been planned for the week of the 24th April.
- **Gold Medal Travel** – A co-op marketing proposal was received from Gold Medal and we have now confirmed our participation in a joint promotion. Activity includes both trade and consumer promotions and will be as follows: A tactical magazine inclusion, a dedicated 2 page flyer, an e-shot inclusion and A4 dedicated destination newsletter as well as a full page advert in the consumer travel magazine in April to tie in with the April retail campaign that we have planned. We have already signed off all creative and the campaign is now live and will run until April.
- **American Sky** – Kathryn Glover has provided us with a co-op marketing plan to run a joint campaign starting in February 2017. Activity includes direct mail (A5 mini brochure with a full page ad), email blasts in the UK & Ireland, a content marketing campaign to cover social media activity and homepage carousels on their website. Imagery, logo, key selling points and area copy has been provided. St. Pete/Clearwater was featured in their January e-newsletter promoting a twin centre holiday with Orlando. This activity was complimentary.
- **American Holidays/Experience Kissimmee/VSPC** – A joint campaign has been secured in partnership with Experience Kissimmee and American Holidays in Ireland. The campaign will include a half page ad in the Sunday Business Post and Sunday World in Northern Ireland, a consumer e-newsletter, social media activity, flyer and plasma screen adverts and coverage on the American Holidays website. We have provided copy, images, logos etc and already approved and signed off the creative for the press ads.
- **Ocean Florida** – Following on from our call last month with Lisa Barrington, Head of Commercial, and ahead of our Brand Affinity Campaign with Tesco, we have received

the landing page from Muna Abanour, Destination Executive. This has now been approved.

- **TUI/Travelopia** – Discussions are taking place with TUI/Travelopia and Experience Kissimmee to possibly run a joint co-op marketing campaign. TUI/Travelopia are currently in the process of working on a campaign proposal.
- **SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment/VSPC Mega FAM** – Following on from our meeting back in December, progress is being made to secure flights for the joint mega FAM in partnership with SWP&E. October 2017 dates are being discussed and discussions with airline partners are taking place.
- **Trailfinders** – We have received a revised bespoke proposal from Tiffany Cope, Marketing Executive to launch in March/April and will include; dedicated offers page on their website for 4 weeks, e-newsletter to their database of 800,000 customers, and solus newspaper adverts for 5 publications. We have confirmed our participation and will send assets as required.
- **Barrhead Travel** – We have received a proposal from Jade Semple, Business Development Manager, which includes; 2 direct mailers, one full page newspaper advert, 30 second radio advert with Heart radio for 2 weeks, blog on their website, dedicated St. Pete/Clearwater landing page, e-shot, Social media and retargeting. We have confirmed our participation. This will be in partnership with Kissimmee and is due to launch in February. We have provided Jade with images, logos, and copy so that they can begin designing the creative. We will await the artwork for approval.
- **Gold Medal/Travel 2** – Ross Sinclair, Senior Product Manager advised that they would soon be working on the next edition of their brochures for Travel 2 and Gold Medal. We have provided him with an update on the new hotels, as well as copy and images. We have confirmed training for their sales agents in Preston in March ahead of their Florida brochure launch in April.
- **Kenwood Travel** – Suzanne Halil, Product Executive, advised that Lyn is the new Florida Product Manager and will be our main contact going forward. We have introduced ourselves and offered our assistance. Also, following on from our previous meeting, they have updated their website with new images and Opal Sands is now on sale.
- **Lotus Travel Group** – Sarah Wilson, Hotel Product Director, advised that their January sale had started off slow, which she believes was due to people having extended time off for Christmas and New Year, but it is going well now. US destinations still remain more challenging to sell compared to other worldwide countries. Despite this, they have already booked 50% of the total room nights booked in 2016, for 2017 travel.
- **Truly Travel** - Following on from our meeting in October, St. Pete/Clearwater now has a destination page on their Beat the Brochure website. This includes destination information and images.

- **British Airways Holidays** - Keri advised that before the January sale launched, room nights to our area for 2017 were at +70% vly. During the sale, they were pacing flat at +43% vly, which they were happy with given the challenges with exchange rates.
- **British Airways** – We have received a proposal from Marc James for the Florida campaign with investment levels of £15k and £45k. We have confirmed our participation at the £15k level and are waiting for final details including launch date and activity. We have also asked for a proposal for activity outside of the campaign for St. Pete/Clearwater.
- **Thomson** - Following on from our previous conversations, product in St. Pete Beach has now been added to their programme and they feature a destination page on their website. We have contacted David Pastor, Product Manager, to see if they are considering adding product in other areas in our destination. We have also provided him with new imagery and copy for their website. Thomson now offer customers the ability to book multi-centres online. At the moment they are just offering Thailand, Costa Rica, India, Cuba, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.
- **Hotels.com (Scandinavia Markets)** – We have contacted Keri Appleford, Business Development Manager to discuss marketing opportunities for the Scandinavian markets. She advised that room nights booked during 2016 from Sweden were +15.5% versus the previous year, whilst from Norway they were +6.7%. We have asked Keri to provide a proposal.
- **Funway Holidays** – Work has started on the Funway Holidays Florida Beaches campaign. We have approved and signed off the Florida Beaches Brochure (We were also given the opportunity to have an area image on the front cover of the brochure), the My America Holiday Microsite and landing page.
- **Travel Counsellors** – Andrea Lovatt, Sales agent contacted us to advise that she had booked her customers a holiday to St. Pete/Clearwater and could we send her some information. We sent her a brochure, map and some giveaways for her clients.
- **Premier Holidays** – Tim Greathead, Product Executive, advised that there is still a lot of interest being shown for the US, however the dollar rate is still having an impact. He said that they are having to be very competitive to ensure they get the business.
- **Gold Medal** – As part of their campaign last year, Gold Medal ran a competition for their retail partners to win a 3 night stay in St. Pete/Clearwater. Harriet Hudders, Partnerships Manager, advised that they have now announced the winner. We have contacted Sheraton Sand Key, who have supported by offering a complimentary stay for the winner. We have also sent the winner a goody bag containing a brochure, map and some giveaways, ahead of her trip.
- **Carrier Travel** – We spoke with Jenny Basham, Product Manager, who advised that they have 8 sales agents who sell USA, Caribbean and Canada. 70% of business is booked through the trade, mostly small independents and they have a core of 60-70 agencies that always book with them. They are the sister company of Kuoni, so they have started to get their retail business too. Florida and California are their two top destinations, but they

don't sell St. Pete/Clearwater at the moment. We have sent Jenny some destination information and luxury hotel recommendations to consider adding to their programme.

ENQUIRIES:

Telephone/website enquiries for information and/or literature

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MARKET INTELLIGENCE:

6 January 2017, Source TTG

Thomson predicts Saturday will be 'busiest day of the year'

Thomson is predicting that this Saturday (January 7) will be the busiest day of the year for holiday bookings. Thomson and First Choice are calling the day "Sunshine Saturday". Following the Brexit vote, the firms are predicting a rise in all-inclusive bookings as Britons seek value from their holiday experiences. Thomson and First Choice are expecting to see more than 27,500 customers book a holiday for 2017 on Sunshine Saturday. For 2017, Thomson said it had already seen all-inclusive holidays make up 53% of bookings for the coming year. The holiday companies are expecting nearly one million holiday-seekers to go online or visit their high street stores this Saturday, with bookings predicted to peak in-store at 2.07pm specifically and online at 4.02pm, with Thomson Gateshead Metro Centre expected to be the busiest store on the day. A new mobile booking record for 2017 is also predicted to be set. Thomson and First Choice are forecasting more people than ever before will search for and book their holiday on a tablet or smartphone. Forty three per cent of the online bookings made this Saturday are expected to be made via these devices, up 4% versus last year. Short and mid-haul beach destinations such as the Balearics, mainland Greece and the islands of Corfu and Rhodes will continue remain firm favourites with Brits, according to Thomson, however far flung, long-haul hotspots are expected to top the wish list in 2017. With 77% happy to travel more than nine hours for their break, many more people are expected to book exotic holidays in 2017, with Vietnam, Cuba's Cayo Santa Maria and St Lucia topping the list of predicted 'hot' long-haul destinations next year. Thomson Cruises will also see long-haul a focus for winter 2017 with more ships based in the Caribbean than ever before and new ports of call added. Thomson Airways is estimated to fly more than 107 million miles to 92 holiday destinations. Andrew Flintham, commercial director for Thomson and First Choice, said: "With plenty of great deals on offer, we've already seen a rise in all-inclusive bookings for 2017 as customers seek value for money from their holiday experiences following the Brexit decision. "This year will see Brits travelling to more exotic destinations such as Vietnam and Cuba, with our multi-centre and city break holidays making long-haul destinations more accessible than ever before."

6 January 2017, Source TTG

Long-haul boom helps Gatwick to new record

Gatwick has set a new record for annual passengers helped by a boom in long-haul services from the airport. More than 43.1 million passengers used the Sussex airport during 2016 – an increase of 7.1% on the previous year's figure of 40.3 million passengers. Gatwick was boosted by a strong performance in December with passenger numbers rising by 15% to 3.1 million for the month, as long-haul traffic rose by 26.8%. Transatlantic traffic drove much of this increase with a 59.6% rise in passengers during December and a 43% increase across the whole of 2016. The key destinations of Toronto and New York saw year-on-year increases of 97% and 123% respectively. Short-haul destinations to see major passenger increases included Belfast International, Dublin, Milan, Paris and Tenerife. Gatwick's chief executive Stewart Wingate said achieving the 43 million figure was "14 years ahead of industry predictions". "Gatwick's booming long-haul services and increased cargo volumes illustrate the vital contribution the airport continues to make to the local and national economy, in the airport's busiest-ever December, as we continue to offer the UK government a credible and deliverable option for runway expansion," added Wingate. The airport is predicting that the most popular long-haul destinations in 2017 will include Barbados, Dubai, Jamaica, Las Vegas, New York, Orlando and Vancouver. The top short-haul destinations from Gatwick are set to be Amsterdam, Edinburgh, Barcelona and Venice.

7 January 2017, Source Travelbiz

Pack your bags as USA return flights to fall below €300 in price war

Irish holidaymakers are set to benefit from a looming air fare price war as traditional airlines are challenged by budget carriers on money-spinning transatlantic routes. Low-cost airlines, Norwegian Air International (NAI) and Wow, are promising to slash fares on key Irish-US routes from next summer. Return fares could plummet to below €300 in route launch promotions by the budget carriers. Aer Lingus and United Airlines, the two traditionally dominant transatlantic carriers from Dublin and Shannon, are now set to increase seat capacity this year as Ireland targets tourism growth in the US and Canadian markets to offset likely falls in UK visitor numbers due to Brexit and currency factors. Aer Lingus will now offer a whopping 2.5 million seats to the US this year - and will increase its US route schedule from 12 to 13 destinations. This is part of Fáilte Ireland's drive to target major tourism growth in the US market for 2017. Under its summer sale, Aer Lingus offers fully inclusive direct return fares to the US from €498 out of both Shannon and Dublin. United Airlines fares also start at around €500. Wow, which offers connections to the US from Ireland via Iceland, are now offering return fares out of Cork from €298. Norwegian, meanwhile, is hoping to use a new generation of high-efficiency aircraft such as the Boeing 737-MAX to offer exceptionally low fares on its direct Irish-US routes. The airline is now offering launch fares on Edinburgh-US routes from €68 one-way. Airline boss Bjorn Kjos said that pricing structures on their new Irish routes have yet to be set. However, Cork and Shannon airport officials expect the fare structures to closely reflect those of Norwegian's new Edinburgh operation. This could mean that mid-range inclusive transatlantic return tickets could cost substantially less than €300. Norwegian has yet to confirm where the Cork and Shannon services will operate to Boston and New York. The airline last month won a two-year battle to get an operating licence from US authorities for its planned Irish routes. There is now growing speculation that, like Ryanair, Norwegian will opt for secondary

airport hubs rather than prime facilities like JFK and Newark in New York/New Jersey or Logan Airport in Boston. Tourism Ireland boss Niall Gibbons said the North American market will be very important for Ireland this year. "The best prospects for growth next year are across North America," he said. "We will see a growth of at least 10pc in seat numbers so that offers great prospects. "We are also expanding advertising across Germany and France next year."

7 January 2017, Source Travelbiz

London Gatwick airport update: British Airways, easyJet and Virgin Atlantic are all changing terminals

Three big airlines are changing ends at Britain's second-busiest airport. Chris Woodroffe is anticipating a couple of sleepless nights later this month. As Gatwick's chief operating officer, he is the man blowing the whistle that will signal a wholesale change of ends at Britain's second-busiest airport: the biggest airline move since the North Terminal opened in 1988. After the last wave of easyJet flights from South Terminal depart on Monday 23 January, all traces of their tenancy of Gatwick's original terminal will be removed, as teams prepare the ground for the new resident: British Airways. From Tuesday 24 January onwards, every easyJet flight will depart from North Terminal; at present, operations are split between the two, leading to confusion for passengers and cost and complexity for the airline. At close of business on that day, Virgin Atlantic and BA will vacate their current locations in South and North Terminals respectively, and change ends. From Wednesday 25 January, loyal Virgin Atlantic customers who have been checking-in at South Terminal since the airline launched in 1984 will need to board the driverless Shuttle train and head for North Terminal instead. And BA passengers accustomed to using the North Terminal will find themselves back in a rather more beautiful South: for the past year, premium travellers have had to cram into non-BA lounges while preparations for the move took place. When Gatwick's North Terminal opened, the Sussex airport handled about 21.5 million passengers each year — half the current number. At the time, BA was dominant, having just taken over the long-standing incumbent, British Caledonian. In 1988, BA's move from the original terminal (now known as South) was into a new, empty structure. Furthermore, ground handling technology was far more primitive and labour intensive. Nearly three decades on, BA carries more passengers than in 1988, but it has been eclipsed by an airline that was born only in 1995: easyJet. The budget carrier flew almost 75 million passengers last year. A quarter of them — 17.4 million — flew to or from Gatwick, now the airline's main base. That is almost 50,000 per day. As easyJet grew at Gatwick, its operation spilled over from the original location in South Terminal to the North. The split causes a wide range of problems — every day, some arriving passengers expecting to turn up at South Terminal find themselves North, and vice-versa. But to consolidate all the easyJet operations in one terminal, two other big airlines will also have to move. BA, the second-largest carrier at Gatwick, heads south. To provide enough room for it, Virgin Atlantic and its 1.4 million annual passengers (4,000 a day) go north. Some flights have already been tested from the opposite terminals, and starting next Wednesday, 11 January, the daily BA Gatwick-New York flight will switch to South Terminal. It is followed from 19 January by the Naples departures. The big move has been planned for two years. It involves 42 major projects and a "to-do" list for the switch itself with 500 items. To

accommodate it, easyJet has reduced its normal Gatwick schedule by 40 per cent on 24 and 25 January. That means it can safely vacate South Terminal even while BA remains in the North. British Airways should have a clear run to set itself up at the south end of the South Terminal, while Virgin Atlantic takes over BA's location in the North. The intricate puzzle also requires Monarch to shift position slightly from one part of South Terminal to another. All other airlines, including Thomson, Thomas Cook, Norwegian and Emirates, are staying put. Without the luxury of a brand-new building and the chance to gradually to ramp up operations — as Heathrow enjoyed with the six-month move into Terminal 2 — Mr Woodroffe has organised a series of trials for the customer-facing departures experience and operations on the airfield itself. "We've finessed the wayfinding for passengers, and done some line-painting for the aircraft," he said. Midweek in January has been chosen because it is the quietest time of the year, with some slack in the system. But Chris Woodroffe says he is "Very much looking forward to another busy summer" at Gatwick. The Sussex airport now handles more passengers from its single runway than Heathrow did from two runways in 1990.

9 January 2017, Source TTG

Tui and Kuoni in talks over Travelopia

Kuoni is reported to be in talks with Tui over a £400 million deal for its Travelopia division. The Times reported the Swiss-based operator is competing against American buyout firms KKR and Warburg Pincus for the online arm which comprises of more than 50 websites. Travelopia was put up for sale in September in an auction and will be concluded before March. The division generates underlying profits of about €50 million a year while the sale is occurring as part of Tui's strategy to focus on package holidays.

11 January 2017, Source TravelMole

Visit Florida slashes CEO salary

It is understood that the new CEO of Visit Florida will be paid \$120,000 less than his predecessor Will Seccombe, who resigned following criticism over a secret \$1 million payment to Miami superstar rapper Pitbull to promote the state in music videos and on social media. Seccombe has been replaced by Ken Lawson, pictured, the Florida state governor's secretary of business and professional regulation. The 31-member board of directors of Visit Florida, who voted unanimously in favour of Lawson's appointment as president and CEO, also agreed a \$73,000 severance package for Seccombe, who was earning a salary of \$293,000. Both he and the tourism body had come under fire for the secret contract with Pitbull, even though Seccombe claimed it helped Visit Florida reach millions of music fans. Lawmakers have also become increasingly concerned about Visit Florida's spending. It is understood that Lawson, a qualified lawyer, will be paid \$120,000 less than Seccombe. After his appointment, Lawson said: "We have things to do and we are going to do it together." Lawson has limited tourism experience, but he is believed to be a favourite of state governor Rick Scott and experienced in state politics. "The work VISIT FLORIDA does to promote tourism is vital to the continued growth of the state's economy and having someone with

Secretary Lawson's strong leadership background will secure our continued success." said chair of the Visit Florida board William D. Talbert. Lawson, a native Floridian and former US Marine Corps judge advocate general, has spent 12 years serving in numerous regulatory positions, including his most recent work overseeing—among other divisions—restaurants, hotels and vacation rentals.

11 January 2017, Source TravelMole

Hayes & Jarvis predicts hot destinations for 2017

New York remains the top selling destination for long-haul operator Hayes & Jarvis, followed by Thailand and the Maldives. Las Vegas and Mauritius make up the rest of the top five destinations, according to the operator's latest Trends Report. However, it predicted Kenya would also sell well this year, having seen a whopping 103% rise in customers planning trips to the East Africa destination. Malaysia is coming back into favour too, said Hayes & Jarvis, which has seen a 37% year-on-year increase in bookings to the southeast Asia country, and it is seeing a 24% rise in bookings to Sri Lanka, which has recently opened up more of the east coast to tourism. Brazil is benefiting from hosting the Olympic Games, which has led to a 54% rise in bookings for 2017. The operator said that while the most popular duration for long-haul holidays was still 11 to 15 nights, it had seen a 6% rise in longer durations, a trend it is expecting to continue.

11 January 2017, Source Travelbiz

Cheap flights 2017: Virgin SLASHES prices to Dubai to LESS than £300 return

CHEAP flights 2017: Virgin Atlantic has slashed the prices of fares to Dubai as well as major cities in America, Asia and Africa in its winter sale. As January ticks over and the grey skies show no signs of letting up, tropical sunny climates have never been more appealing. Virgin Atlantic has launched its winter sale to cure those seasonal blues. Book your 2017 holiday by February 7 and you can score more than 50 per cent off your flights. Dubai - which is currently sweltering under 27 degree heat - can be booked for as little as £299 return from Heathrow this year. That's a saving of 52 per cent on full fares with Virgin. Dubai is a holidaymaker's playground, from visiting the world's highest building; shopping at its grandest mall; dining out at fine restaurants; enjoying desert landscapes; skiing; to just lazing by a beautiful blue sea. It's not the only city on sale. New York flights are available from £399 and Los Angeles is on offer for as little as £499 return economy. Fly to Miami for more than 40 per cent off at £419 return, or test out one of 2017's most tipped destinations, with Boston on sale for just £429. If it's the Caribbean sun you prefer, fly from Gatwick to Antigua for £479 return. Or you can visit San Francisco from Manchester from just £409. Virgin has picked the perfect time to launch its winter sale, with January the most ideal month to book holidays for the rest of the year.

13 January 2017, Source Travelbiz

Ryanair linking up with Aer Lingus and Norwegian for baggage transfer

Ryanair is finalising deals with two long-haul carriers to create a “seamless” transfer experience, the budget airline has announced. The partnerships will allow passengers taking Ryanair flights which connect with Aer Lingus and Norwegian services to book their whole trip with the long-haul airlines and have their baggage automatically moved between planes. David O’Brien, Ryanair’s chief operating officer, gave an example of passengers travelling from Belfast to Gatwick with Ryanair and then continuing their journey with Norwegian, which serves a number of destinations in the US. He said holidaymakers would have a much lower chance of luggage going missing when they change planes. “Given that we don’t lose bags, your chances of bags being lost on long-haul connections is halved at least.” Mr O’Brien said Ryanair was “working on the technical elements” of the deals with Aer Lingus and Norwegian, and is also having “tentative” discussions with other carriers. “The initiatives are largely coming from those airlines who recognise that they will never be able to build a European network such as Ryanair’s,” he said. “Instant hubs could be available right across Europe.” He told a press conference in central London that Ryanair hopes to use partnerships to “disrupt” the status quo at several airports. “This seems like a useful opportunity, at the very least, to disrupt cosy transfer discount schemes in existence at several European airports, which is a secret method of subsidising a flag carrier,” he said. “Take somewhere like Rome, where Alitalia enjoys about €110m worth of rebates between airport rebates and tax rebates for its transfer passengers. “We’d just love to get into the middle of that.” He said there was no timescale for when the partnerships will be launched.

13 January 2017, Source Travolution

Hotels.com launches Apple TV app

Hotels.com has launched its Apple TV app, which showcases 600 different activities across hundreds of destinations. The content will be available to download onto smart televisions fitted with Apple TV boxes and is designed to inspire travellers for their next stay. Adventures, shopping destinations, spa retreats and cultural hotspots are featured having been hand-picked by Hotels.com travellers. Each activity features a mini travel guide, high definition images and recommendations on where to stay. Destination videos are due to be released soon. Travelers are also offered tips on the best time of year to travel to each destination and can save favourite places or hotels. It is not possible to book on the channel, with customers asked to visit the Hotels.com website or mobile app to do so. “We want travelers to use the app for inspiration, to give them new ideas on destinations to visit and activities to try,” said Daniel Craig, senior director of mobile at Hotels.com. “It’s also perfect for group bookings, as friends and family can gather around the TV to choose their holiday together. “There is so much information available to today’s travellers that we wanted our app to offer bitesize travel guides, be punchy, informative and visually engaging. We want to be with our customers every step of their travel journey, from helping them decide where to go, through to booking and in-stay support.”

20 January 2017, Source Travelbiz

More Brits travelling abroad

UK residents made 24.1 million visits abroad in July to September last year, a rise of 7.4% over the same quarter in 2015. Despite the drop in value of the pound against the euro, visits to Europe saw the largest increase, of 8.6% to 20 million. Visits to 'other countries' also increased, by 6.1%, but visits to North America fell by 5.8% year-on-year. The latest ONS figures showed holiday visits accounted for 17 million of the total, a jump of 7.4%. Visits to friends or relatives showed the largest increase, up 11.7% in this quarter, while miscellaneous visits increased by 5.6%. But business visits fell 4.1% during this quarter. UK residents spent 282.5 million nights abroad, an increase of 5.1%. The fall in visits to North America is reflected in the decrease in nights spent there by UK residents, which decreased by 7.5%. Meanwhile the number of nights spent in Europe saw an increase of 8.6% compared with 2015. Spend figures showed UK residents spent £15.9 billion during visits abroad, 10.2% up. Expenditure in Europe rose by 10% while spending in North America fell by 2%, reflecting the decrease in visits to this region.

25 January 2017, Source Travelbiz

Demand for flights to US PLUNGE after Trump's inauguration

DONALD TRUMP'S inauguration into the White House on Friday saw demand for flights to the US fall by more than a third, new research has revealed. KAYAK.co.uk analysed data on flight searches during and shortly after Donald Trump's inauguration. The travel search engine found that, as the republican became the official US president, demand for flights to the US plummeted. Figures showed the demand for flights from the UK to the US fell by 39 per cent compared to searches during the rest of January. In the days after, the number of British traveller interested in travelling to the US fell by 24 per cent. According to KAYAK.co.uk, the US is one of the most searched for destinations amongst Brit. Therefore, the drop in the number of travellers considering heading across the Atlantic is significant. And it was not just the UK, which saw interest in travelling to the US take a dip. It was the same for across Europe. There was an overall fall by 37 per cent in searches for flights to the US from across Europe on the day of Trump's inauguration. This is not the first time that Donald Trump has had an impact on the number of people considering a visit to the US. In November, when it was announced that Trump would be the next US president, searches for flights to the US from around the world fell by a third (30 per cent). The figures are a complete contrast to when Barak Obama was retained presidency of the US in 2012. KAYAK.co.uk found at the time that demand for flights increased by seven per cent. Travel expert at KAYAK.co.uk, Suzanne Perry, said: "At KAYAK we love analysing our travel data to see if it is demonstrative of wider trends and that certainly seems to be the case here, with demand for flights dipping hugely on the day of and day after Trump's inauguration. "Considering that 1.5 billion searches are conducted on KAYAK websites annually, we can clearly see the impact that the election and inauguration of the new president in the US is having on the country's popularity as a holiday destination."

27 January 2017, Source Travelbiz

Virgin offers passengers chance to queue jump at US airport security

Virgin Atlantic is the first UK airline to participate in the United States' TSA Precheck programme. From today, Virgin passengers who have enrolled in TSA Pre can skip security queues when leaving US airports. The airline said the average customer with TSA Pre spends less than five minutes when travelling through US airports such as JFK. "With TSA Pre, there's no need to remove shoes, light jackets, or belts. Laptops and compliant liquids can also remain in hand luggage, making the trip through security at the airport a breeze," said Virgin in a statement. Qualifying customers who enter a valid Known Traveller Number or Customs and Border Protection-issued PASSID in their Virgin Atlantic reservations and are pre-approved will then see the TSA Pre indicator on their mobile or printed boarding passes. Eligible customers will then be led to TSA Pre lanes within an airport's security screen area to proceed through an accelerated screening process. "We're thrilled to be the first UK airline to offer our customers the ability to expedite their security screening process in the US using TSA Pre," said Mark Anderson, executive vice president, customer, Virgin Atlantic. UK customers must join the US Global Entry Service, which costs \$100 plus a £42 fee to the Home Office, to be eligible to use TSA Pre.

27 January 2017, Source Travelbiz

Pound to US dollar exchange rate: Sterling SOARS amid fresh concerns over Trump's policies

THE POUND has soared against the US dollar this week as fresh concerns are raised over US President Donald Trump's latest fiscal policies. Sterling has been on an upward trend against the USD this week. It started the week at \$1.22 and has since jumped to \$1.26 - the highest level seen in six weeks. The pound took a slight dip on Tuesday following the Supreme Court ruling over Brexit, but quickly recovered. This rising trend comes as the US dollar is weakened by concerns over what the latest policies, announced by Trump, will mean for global trade and markets. The strengthening of sterling is good news for budding holidaymakers, according to currency experts. Retail Director at No1 Currency Simon Phillips says now is the time to book your next trip. He explained: "Many Britons are likely to have held off booking this year, as the weak Pound has made overseas holiday bargains harder to find. "However the Pound's sudden rise this week will nudge down the cost of travelling abroad. The timing couldn't be better for anyone planning a ski break or a Valentine's getaway, as British Pounds now go a touch further. "Exchange rates have been on a rollercoaster over the past few months, and continuing uncertainty over Brexit means they're set to stay volatile – and the Pound is unlikely to remain at today's level for long. "So even if you're not planning to travel for a few weeks, it could be smart to cash in on the improved exchange rate by stocking up on some foreign currency now." Analysts at Hamilton Court told The Independent: "We think the main reason sterling is performing as it has done is the same reason other currencies are buoying against the US dollar – The Trump Factor." Kathleen Brooks, from City Index, said the uncertainty over protectionism and "what a deeply unpopular president will mean for national unity and international diplomacy over the next four years" is worrying. If the markets remain uncertain over the US dollar, sterling is likely to continue making a comeback. The USD is not the only currency the

pound has bounced back against. Yesterday saw the GBP come back strongly against the euro despite the Supreme Court ruling on Brexit and triggering Article 50.

27 January 2017, Source Travolution

Travel industry expected to focus on influencer marketing in 2017

Influencer marketing is set to be one of the big trends in travel in 2017, said experts on a panel at the Melt Content Digital Breakfast. With online channels such as Youtube on the rise and trust in traditional TV adverts reportedly falling, the panel discussed the growing trend of marketing will bloggers, industry experts or celebrities. Helena Hall, chief commercial officer at Melt Content, said: “The world is changing based on our habits. “Anybody can become an influencer if they are an expert within an industry or particular niche. I do think 2017 is going to see a big rise in influencer marketing. Brands are going to see it as an opportunity.” Hall said recent research showed that only 53% of people now trust TV advertisements. Meanwhile, she added, 70% of people trust consumer reviews and as many as 90% trust reviews from somebody that they ‘know’. “Whether it’s someone they hear on a podcast , a Youtube personality they regularly tune into, an innate trust is built. Once brands understand that they can speak to their target audience through somebody who that audience already trusts, they will position their product in front of them. “Consumers are not seeing the paid element of it. They have that element of trust already with the influencer.” Victoria Saunders, director of travel at News UK, added: “We use influencers all the time in our campaigns. On the Insider [City Guides] site, we saw a huge rise in traffic when we put Caitlin Moran in New York and put a piece of content out. If we put a piece of content out from Jeremy Clarkson it creates an interest. “It’s about marrying them up.” She said a campaign with tourist board Destination Canada and explorer and historian Dan Snow proved popular. “It’s saying we want to sell the destination, we want you to believe in it but actually this is someone who really believes in it as well.” But Andrew Shelton, managing director of Cheapflights.com, said raised doubts and said consumers are starting to see through influencers speaking on behalf of brands. “There are a number of influencers in travel who I think over-sell themselves and you can see they are jumping around from brand to brand. There are many examples. “We do it, but those influencers can be really hard work sometimes – obviously they are trying to manage their brand as well. We can deal with that, but I’m sceptical on it. You can tell that those who have over-sold themselves don’t really believe it.” Hall added: “With influencer marketing, the influencers are their brand. So to get it to work right is to take two brands and make sure that they are supporting each other and fit together.” Melt Content’s chief executive Dan Hart added that using influencers can kick-start a campaign. “We’ve seen huge demand [for influencer marketing],” he said. “There’s a natural point where you’ve created a great piece of content but you don’t know what to do with it. “Working with an influencer can drive that and bring it to life.”

30 January 2017, Source TravelMole

Call for UK trade to fix damage caused by Trump travel ban

The UK travel trade needs to put out a 'co-ordinated message' that the US is welcoming and open for business. USAirtours CEO Guy Novik said the announcement at the weekend that President Donald Trump has issued an Executive Order imposing a temporary travel ban on people from seven mainly Muslim countries had caused 'unnecessary concern and confusion'. ABTA, meanwhile, is awaiting official confirmation from the Foreign Office that the travel ban does not affect British people with dual nationality. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson is due to make a statement this afternoon. Novik said: "The US having safe, secure borders is good for business. However, the way the President has enacted this, which appears to be without due planning has caused unnecessary concern and confusion. "We haven't had any response so far from concerned customers - but the information only broke over the weekend." We are concerned and feel the travel industry needs to put out a collective message that the US is welcoming and open for business. "The travel industry can't control what comes out of the White House but it can control its own message - and there needs to be a co-ordinated message. "Specialist tour operators, tourist boards and anybody else promoting the US should be going out of their way to ensure over the coming weeks and months that they put out the message that America is welcoming. We will be amending our sales and marketing to include the message that America is open for tourists and we will be actively encouraging our suppliers, tourist boards, airlines and hotel partners to do the same." Novik added: "When the news first broke, there were all sorts of issues and uncertainty. "The Foreign Office has said it doesn't affect British nationals or dual nationals. But some damage has been done and the industry must attempt to put it right." The Trump administration said the temporary ban was already a 'massive success', but there have been protests around the US and elsewhere, with protests also planned in the UK. Judges in at least five US states have blocked federal authorities from enforcing the order. A petition calling for Trump to be prevented from making a state visit to the UK has reached over a million signatures. US Travel Association president and CEO Roger Dow said: "We recognise the new administration's desire to review visa issuance protocols with respect to countries that have a heightened risk of terrorist activity or weak law enforcement cooperation with our government. "We urge the administration to conduct this review quickly, and trust that it will yield an even more secure travel security system that protects international travellers and welcomes them into our country to conduct business and to enjoy our cities, attractions, national parks and landmarks."

31 January 2017, Source Travelbiz

Drop opposition to US pre-clearance, urges airport group chair

Threat to pre-clearance undermines strategic advantage, says former Shannon chief. Suggestions of reviewing or removing United States customs pre-clearance from Irish airports should be dropped, according to former Shannon Group chief executive Neil Pakey. Politicians including Minister for Children Katherine Zappone have questioned whether US customs and immigration should continue to pre-clear travellers at Dublin and Shannon airports in light of President Donald Trump's order banning entry to citizens of seven Muslim-majority nations. Mr Pakey, who now chairs a trade association, the Regional and Business Airports Group, warned that the suggestion should be "taken off the table" immediately as it would threaten one of the Republic's strategic advantages. Clearing

customs and immigration at Dublin or Shannon allows those travelling to the US to be treated as domestic passengers at their destination airports, cutting out potentially long waits after they arrive. Mr Pakey pointed out that passengers from other European countries are increasingly seeing the advantage of travelling to the US via connections at Dublin and Shannon. He argued that this creates more demand for direct transatlantic flights from both airports, which leads to more services, which aids both tourism and business. "The US pre-clearance facility, pioneered in Shannon, has become the envy of airports and regions in the UK and across Europe" he said. "My fear is if it were removed or suspended, the US may not ever restore it, and with that goes Ireland's strategic advantage." Mr Pakey added that the Republic could tackle fears about the impact of the entry ban through diplomatic channels.

31 January 2017, Source Travelbiz

Cheapflights reports drop in US searches

Searches for flights to the US dropped 15% in the first week of Donald Trump's inauguration as US President, according to Cheapflights. Managing director Andrew Shelton said: "On the face of it, our data suggests Brits are voicing their disapproval of the President with their clicks. "Since Trump took office, we've seen a 15% drop in searches for travel to the US - and both the confusion over the weekend's announcements about travel restrictions, and media coverage of the reaction, could stoke that uncertainty further. "It's too early to point to a 'Trump Slump' - we know it takes a lot to knock Brits off their desire to travel - but they are fickle. "If this trend continues then the US tourism authorities shouldn't necessarily presume Brits will be thinking 'America First' when it comes to their holiday plans this year with quite the same certainty as they have in the past." The Cheapflights statistics were revealed as protests against Trump's travel ban escalated across the US, with thousands converging at airports. International gateways including New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Dallas Fort Worth and Minneapolis saw a second day of protests as the global backlash against the bans grew ever stronger. Trump's executive order bans travelers from Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, Sudan, Libya and Yemen for an initial 90 days and all applications for refugee status for 120 days. Airlines complained they were given very little time to comply with the new rules, offering last minute refunds and ticket waivers for affected travellers. Gulf carrier Emirates was forced to make late changes to flight crew rosters. An Emirates statement said it had made 'necessary adjustments to our crewing, to comply with the latest requirements'. Media reports estimated up to 300 people were left in limbo or detained en route to the US but there could be many more. Lee Gelernt, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Immigrants' Rights Project, said: "We just simply don't know how many people there are and where they are."