

UK Office May 2020 TDC Report

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UK Director

Tour Operators

- **If Only** - We received an email from Calum Findlater, Product Manager, advising that he and Caroline Waters, product executive were being placed on furlough as of the 1st May until at least the 1st June. He provided contacts for whilst they will be out and reconfirmed the business is still operating a normal service but with a smaller team whilst reduced demand continues. Additionally, Calum advised March was a struggle and new business was non-existent for the last two weeks of that month as well as the first week of April. They have since started to see some green shoots of recovery with primarily Q1 2021 travel being booked (Caribbean and USA – West Coast & NYC). The impact on the USA has been significant due to the various different travel restrictions out there but thankfully they have managed to retain a large chunk of their business by amending their travel to 2021 or late 2020. They are still seeing some people looking at travel in late August/September this year but this has been very rare as the feedback from agents is that 2020 is a write off so they are advising against it to many clients in case restrictions are extended. Their hopes are that the recent positive signs regarding new bookings (more bookings in the past 10 days than in the 3-4 weeks before) continues and they start to get some volume on the books, especially for the USA where they were on course to smash last years' total travel by the end of Q1 of this year (prior to the pandemic taking hold). From a marketing perspective they are still sending out e-shots weekly to their database but they have had to cut back on the volume of included promotions due to the lack of output from some hotels/regions during the shut-down of services. The medium-term aim is to have various “recovery” campaigns later in the year once they know what limitations on travel remain – this will be targeted at all their partners to ensure they cover off as much as possible.
- **Travelopia** - We received an email from and also spoke to Jessica Jackson, Regional Destination Manager for the USA & Canada, who advised at the moment they are offering vouchers in place of refunds and which, so far, have been well received by approximately 90% of customers. The only bookings they are seeing right now are amendments into 2021 (from 2020). Sadly, no new business is coming through at the moment. Since we spoke to Jessica last week, we have received the sad news that Travelopia have decided to consolidate their UK Tailormade brands, which means Hayes & Jarvis is being rebranded to Hayes & Jarvis by Enchanting Travels and will no longer be selling the USA & Canada. Going forward, they are focusing their USA and Canada product through American Holidays (Ireland) and My Planet. Dee Burdock will be our primary contact for UK/Ireland and Anne Kathrine Knudsen for Scandinavia. Their UK Sales and Operations team will continue to manage all existing H&J bookings. We were gratefully thanked for all of our support over the years.
- **Ocean Holidays** - We spoke with Anna-Maria Janssen, Product Manager at Ocean Holidays. Anna advised that the past 6-7 weeks had been trying times with their staff that had not been furloughed dealing with bookings that had been made up to 30th June and

that 70% of their customers had switched their bookings to much later in 2020 and into 2021 and that cancellations were minimal. They were very pleased they had managed to transfer their customers. What they have also been doing is building their portfolio for their customers to be able to book and travel all the way through to 2023 which is phenomenal. Anna advised that their initial forecast for trading for the next 3 months was at -80%, they were very happy to have finished at -28% year on year and that the first 4 days of May has them currently trading at +4% year on year. In April they have made a total of 280 new Florida bookings which equated to 1,200 passengers. She was happy to advise that as they had started to get busy again, they have now brought back 35 sales staff that had been furloughed back to the work place (all working from home remotely) to cover the unexpected demand they are seeing. Anna advised that they have made the decision not to make any new bookings for 2020 as they feel it is too uncertain to not have to then transfer bookings again if travel is still suspended and they do not want to have to shift bookings again. As such 70% of new bookings that have been made are for 2021, 20% are for 2022 and 10% are for 2023. Ocean Holidays/Ocean Florida are continuing with their own scheduled marketing – social media campaigns, website marketing and email marketing and as you will be aware, we had paused our co-op marketing campaign that was due to run in May/June 2020 and agreed to revisit how things are looking at the end of May.

- **THG Holidays** - We received an update from Stam Tzafos, Product Manager USA at THG Holidays based in Wales and have been advised that as far as business is concerned for them, it's all up in the air currently. They think all travel agents and Tour Operators are currently in the same predicament. They have a lot of staff furloughed and the rest of the team still working are on reduced hours. They are still dealing with cancellations and the percentage of clients deferring their holidays are minimal. They are currently working through their May departures and still haven't started on June departures as yet. What stops people rebooking is the uncertainty and the higher future prices. The process is very slow as they have to wait for their suppliers to refund them first before proceeding with the refund to the customer. Reduced staff levels don't help. They are not advertising any holidays yet as they don't think there is a market out there at the moment and the holiday enquiries they are getting for 2021 are minimal. All of their product team are working hard behind the scenes to update and add a lot of new content and offers to their new website so when the market bounces back they can be ready for it. They do believe that travelling patterns will be changing and will be simple; single centre holidays with direct flights will be in demand. They will start advertising as soon as they know exactly what options are out there, which countries will allow incoming travel and what are the quarantine procedures for the brave ones. Stam personally believes that they need to wipe out 2020 holidays and start looking for summer 2021 but in order to do that, both airlines and hotels have to work hard and be more proactive with their future deals. Having said that, hotels have been more proactive so far. They cannot sell any scheduled flights passed April 2021.
- **Swanson's Sweden** - Swanson's tour operations sent us an update and advised that in Mid-February they were voted best tour operator in Sweden for the 14th time and then on February 29th they had a very successful America Travel Day that we participated in. Tommy Swanson said February seems so far away. A week later everything changed and now most travel is at a complete stop. In Sweden travel outside the country has been stopped until June 15th. They expect some bans will be lifted but don't really see any travel for long haul in the summer. So far, they have cancelled approx. 1/3 of their yearly

sales. During April only, a handful of bookings had been made. Spring and summer is gone but they hope there will be some sales for fall and winter and then 2021. He said he must point out that he is really impressed by American companies, hotels, Amtrak, car rentals, sightseeing companies and others. They have been able to cancel all group contracts some just a week out without penalties, FIT's more or less from same day arrival and onwards. He also said he has heard that this is not the case from colleagues who work with European hotels. Unfortunately, most airlines completely fall out of line. Most European airlines refuse to refund refundable tickets even when they cancel flights. Still these airlines are in many cases owned by states and also getting very big help from their governments. As a tour operator they of course follow the law and refund all clients.

- **British Airways Holidays** - We emailed Kate Bigger Destination Manager for Florida at British Airways Holidays and received an update advising us that BA Holidays have been busy cancelling all global bookings for travel up to and including 14 June. They anticipate extending this to 30 June, but are awaiting a final decision from the airline. Sales have been slow for 2020 but they are starting to see more and more interest for bookings into 2021. With Easter in range they have definitely seen a spike over the last couple of weeks for increased demand. Kate has requested a list of which hotels are open in our area and as such we have directed her to the Covid-19 destination related updates page on our website.
- **Virgin Holidays** - We spoke with James Killick, Destination Manager for Florida at Virgin Holidays and discussed the current market status. James confirmed the team are still working remotely from home and are working with skeletal staff for the foreseeable future and at least until flights resume and country borders start to open again. The impact of Covid-19 is phenomenal and of course he advised again of the wider announcement that the Virgin Group will be reshaping and resizing due to the down turn of travel. James is keeping an eye on local news and everything that is happening in the state so that as and when Florida reopens to international visitors, they will be ready to respond to hopefully increased demand for people who wish to travel again. James advised that Virgin Holidays can currently book customers up until April 2022 and that they have seen a shift of late from customers who were initially looking at rebooking late in 2020 moving ahead further into rebooking for 2021. We touched based with regards to any information James might have had on retail branches briefly and were advised that their intent was to open some of their key branches at weekends from June but that this is now highly unlikely and will move forward into July as they are reevaluating when this is going to be possible due to the current lockdown restrictions. James has advised he would keep us updated once any further news has been confirmed. We shared the Covid-19 destination related updates page link on our website so that James will be able to keep up to date with what is happening in our resort area.
- **Ocean Holidays** - We had another conversation with Anna-Maria Janssen, Product Manager at Ocean Holidays after our call earlier this month. Anna advised that all office staff apart from sales agents/reservations agents and a handful of the management team have been put on extended furlough until 31st July 2020 after the UK government's extension to the programme. She has advised that sales are doing relatively well and that the month of May up to 26th May is only running on -8% down YOY which is so much better than what they were predicting and they are hoping that by 31st May they will have pulled this up slightly to be only -5% YOY for this month. The sales/reservations staff are still changing any holidays that had been booked for June/July 2020 and moving these

forward to the same dates in 2021 for their customers. They continue to run their own marketing and have started running PPC advertising as well as communicating with their database via social and e-newsletters. We discussed holding fire again on our joint co-op marketing campaign and will re visit our discussions towards the end of June.

- **American Sky** - We had a phone discussion with Kathryn Glover who advised the business is still in the thick of rebooking and rearranging bookings. They are almost 100% finished with June reservations and they have made a good start on July and August bookings as well. The majority of customers are happy to receive credit notes and/or make amendments to 2021, however, there are a handful of customers that are being very difficult and are adamant about receiving refunds. Kathryn advised they are receiving new enquiries for 2021 but the majority are for beach destinations, the Caribbean, Mauritius and Maldives specifically. However, it is still difficult to convert these into confirmed reservations. They have pretty much written off 2020 for the USA and they are hoping that 2021 will begin to pick-up over the coming months as our own lockdown lifts and there is more positivity in the market. They are not spending any money on marketing at the moment, but they are set to switch on digital spend when they feel the demand will justify the budget. Right now, they are sending a weekly email to their customer database, the last of which focused on Florida twin-centre holidays. We advised that we can be contacted at any time for any support they might need and also reminded Kathryn of the regular email updates and Brighter Days Ahead collateral, in case they wish to use for their social channels.

Meetings/Training/Events

- **Virgin Holidays June Training** – We received an email notification from Fiona Lewry advising the Florida training day scheduled for June 25th has been cancelled. At this stage they are unlikely to offer any alternative opportunities or revised dates for the remainder of 2020, however, they will keep us informed if this position changes.
- **Visit USA Association Ireland** – We attended the online Q2 committee meeting to receive an update on the current status of the Irish market. We were advised that visitor numbers to the US from Ireland were down -48% in Q1. Of the 21 US routes that existed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, 3 routes are still operating mostly for repatriations and key workers. Ireland has a 5-stage plan for reopening with the goal being to fully ‘open’ by the 10th August. There is a strong sense that a return to international travel will happen and that people will want to escape once the Irish lockdown is fully lifted, buoyed by confidence in the Irish economy which means Irish consumers should have the money to spend on travel they desire to take. Tour operators are beginning to actively promote trips to the US for Q4 2020 and 2021; the chair of the ITAA has said they expect a ‘big avalanche’ of people rebooking for 2021. Traffic to the Visit USA Ireland website has been down -30% but they are actively pushing the virtual experiences that are being supplied by its members. All Visit USA Ireland events for 2020 have been postponed or cancelled until further notice; they are hoping to reschedule the Cork and Dublin Roadshows for Q4 2020, but this is TBC. We provided an update on what actions we have been taking including the regular newsletters and operator liaison, our participation in Brand USA’s Travel Advisor Training and that we will be producing virtual fam trip videos, which will be sent out soon.

- **Visit Florida UK/Ireland Office** – We had a general catch up with Gill Standeven, Account Director Travel Trade UK & Ireland and Gill advised us that she didn't have anything major to update us on other than that Visit Florida are working on a post-Covid recovery plan, and that a first draft was presented to the executive board the middle of May. At this point the top level three stage plan is: 1. Support and encourage Floridians to travel in state to jumpstart the economy 2. Focus on the drive market domestically and in Canada 3. Welcome international travellers to Florida once again. There are no timescales to this, but they are working on the domestic campaign at the moment. In terms of international the brand team are working on a "trade tool kit" which they can share with any trade partners that will include lots of content, boilerplate ads, creative etc. that they will be able to drop their own logos onto, so that they can use them for their ad campaigns if they don't have resource for creative development. Gill advised that she is planning to co-ordinate a zoom call for all the Florida partner offices in the next couple of weeks and that she will let us know when this has been arranged.
- **Travel Centres Ireland** - We received a brief update from Dominic Burke from Travel Centres in Ireland to say that Judging by political commentary in Ireland, they can say goodbye to any outbound tourism for 2020 so it's all about companies going into hibernation mode and surviving until things pick up again. They are doing all they can to stem the tide.
- **Brand USA UK** – We had a call with Ava Mehta, Account Director UK office for Brand USA regarding the USA Discovery Training Programme. We discussed the possibility of us promoting this directly with our trade partners and including our own internal incentive to complete the training which Ava said was absolutely fine for us to promote directly. Ava also kindly provided us with our badge artwork so that we can also include this in any communication that we wish to send.
- **Travelzoo** - We received an email update from Travelzoo that advised of the following: Travelzoo, an Internet media company that publishes exclusive offers and experiences for members, is seeing increasingly strong activity from its members in planning future vacations and making purchases of flexible travel deals. From May 1 to 13, sales of flexible hotel vouchers for future travel, which Travelzoo offers on behalf of its hotel partners, increased by 165% year-over-year. Purchases are strong across all markets. For example, in the first 13 days of May, hotel voucher sales in the U.S. are up 210%, in Germany 180%, and in the UK 35%. As early as the first week of April, 92% of Travelzoo members indicated in an online survey they were interested in receiving travel deals (specifically, vacation packages, flights and hotel offers) if the offers were flexible, meaning changeable without fee, and fully refundable if needed. The findings prompted Travelzoo to focus its weekly Top 20[®], which for the past 20 years has been the definitive list of the week's best travel deals on the Internet, on flexible and worry-free offers. Travel dates of most offers are extended to late summer, fall or even into 2021. All refund and change policies are clearly outlined by Travelzoo's editorial team. Travelzoo is working tirelessly with long-standing and new partners to add more new deals that are fully refundable or can be changed without penalty. "Travelzoo members are ready to go—as soon as travel restrictions begin to lift," said Lara Barlow, General Manager, U.S. for Travelzoo. "There is clearly pent-up demand, and we are happy to turn this into real demand for our hotel and other travel partners." In most cases, members do not even need to choose travel dates yet; they can buy now to lock in savings and choose when

they want to go later. During the last two weeks, Travelzoo members have purchased for future travel:

- 1,050 room nights at a luxury, 5-star London hotel on the banks of the River Thames
- 4,400 room nights at an adult-only spa resort in Phuket, Thailand
- 850 room nights at a 4-star downtown San Antonio hotel near top sites like the Alamo
- 1,950 room nights at a tranquil beach resort near Belize's world-famous barrier reef
- 800 room nights at a 4-star design hotel in the center of Trier, Germany's oldest city with ancient Roman ruins near the scenic Mosel valley
- Over 500 room nights each at 5-star retreats in Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Bermuda, and the Riviera Maya

Demand is accelerating, up 30% last week compared to two weeks prior. Continued polling of Travelzoo members indicates the acceleration will continue in the foreseeable future. The number of U.S. members who said they would book a domestic hotel in May for a future stay skyrocketed by 84% from last week. Similarly, those who had previously indicated they would not book until late summer, are now ready to book. 32% would consider booking an international trip in Q2 2020 if the offer is flexible, up 35% over the previous four weeks.

TRADE LIAISON

- **Travelbiz Ireland** – Don Shearer, Publisher and Managing Director advised he would include details of the Virtual Fam Series via their online portal and their weekly e-newsletter that is shared with the Irish travel trade after we had sent them details regarding these.
- **British Airways Holidays** – We received a request from Kate Bigger, Destination Manager for a list of hotels in the area that were open and provided our Covid-19 Website update page link for her to peruse.
- **UK Office Weekly Updates (Trade & Consumer)** – We have continued with the collection of trade and consumer feedback from both our trade partners as well as collation of trade & consumer media articles (received from Rooster PR) and sending these back to VSPC on a weekly basis.
- **UK Office Weekly Newsletters** – We have continued to send bi-weekly email updates to our travel trade partners and trade press contacts promoting things such as the Virtual Fam Video series, The Dali Museum virtual tours, how to make your very own Frenchy's Cajun grouper sandwich etc. and to continue to offer our assistance to these partners if needed. We have been advised that these are being very well received by our trade partners with some tour operator partners advising they will be using some of this information to promote our destination on their social media platforms etc.
- **Virgin Holidays** – We assisted James Killick with details of hotel protocols that are being listed on our Covid-19 Tips for visiting responsibly VSPC website pages.

- **Amerikaspesialisten Nordmanns-Reiser** – We assisted and provided Line Støber Taraldsen, Online Marketing, Social Media & Web Manager with mp4 versions of our Virtual Fam Series videos with assistance from the team in VSPC.
- **Gold Medal Travel** – We have received an email from Allison Cockburn, Senior Partnerships Manager to advise that Gold Medal will be starting to work on the creative for our forthcoming national retail in-store promotion that is due to launch at the end of August and so we have forwarded new updated imagery, copy etc. for them to utilise on the creative.
- **Charitable Travel** – We provided Melissa Tilling, CEO of Charitable Travel with details of our food & craft beer scene in VSPC. We provided specific copy, images, logos and video content for them to utilise on their website as part of their #TasteForTravel section.
- **Visit USA UK Newsletter** – As previously mentioned we had confirmed sponsorship of the May issue of the trade e-bulletin on behalf of VSPC. We provided all the assets including a banner ad that was provided by Marcus to Selling Long-Haul who work on the e-newsletters and this was then distributed to their trade database at the end of May. We have also tentatively held space for the September issue which is TBC at a later date.
- **Virgin Holidays** – We received an email from Fiona Lewry, Contract Manager for Florida to say that they have had to postpone our planned training at the end of June due to Covid-19 and was unsure when the trainings at VHQ will be re-instated but that she will keep us updated as and when things change.
- **Gold Medal/dnata** – We received a request from Ashley Pilkington, Assistant Product Manager to see if it would be possible for us to arrange a 30 second video with one of our team in resort filming from one of our beaches to create a message to their travel agents that they work with in the UK. Rosemarie recorded a lovely, fun video in resort and this was subsequently shared with the travel agents in questions. Allison Cockburn, Senior Partnerships Manager emailed us an update to advise that within a 3-minute window of this being shared on their social media channels they had a total of 18 views. Their aim is to encourage agents to share the video too to spread the word that our destination is ready and waiting for when we are able to travel again.

ENQUIRIES:

Telephone/website enquiries for information and/or literature: 23

MARKET INTELLIGENCE

01st May 2020, source: TTG

Ocean Holidays to raise £25k for children's hospice

The Romford-based company, which comprises Ocean Florida, Winged Boots and Ocean Beds, will donate an initial £5,000 this month to support Haven House Children's Hospice's coronavirus appeal. The hospice has been forced to reschedule a number of fundraising events and close its seven retail shops for the foreseeable future due to the current pandemic – with a dramatic drop in income as a result. Ocean Holidays has called on its partners and

customers to help Haven House by launching an online prize draw with prizes including a seven-night Orlando villa stay. The prize draw closes at midnight on 31 May. Alongside the raffle, Ocean Holidays' staff are being encouraged to raise money individually, through online quiz nights, virtual DJ sets, plank challenges and sponsored lockdown haircuts. Harry Hastings, co-chief executive of Ocean Holidays Group, said: "We were just weeks away from launching Haven House as our official charity partner over the next two years with a £25k fundraising target from 1 April, [when] coronavirus took hold. "It's important to all of us at Ocean Holidays now more than ever that we give back to our community and support those most in need by delivering on this commitment. "Tickets are just £1 each and there is no cap on the number each person can buy, so the more you donate, the more tickets you receive and the higher your chance of winning. But, most importantly, the more money we will raise for the hospice." Haven House chief executive Mike Palfreman, added: "Families tell us that we are their lifeline and we cannot let them face this alone. The impact coronavirus will have on our vulnerable children and families could be devastating. Haven House faces a serious crisis and we need the help of our community."

01st May 2020, source: TTG

Holiday sales unlikely to return to 'normal' until 2021

A survey of more than 200 delegates attending Elman Wall's Covid-19 online seminar on Thursday (30 April) found that 46% thought trading would get back to pre-crisis levels in either the first or second quarter of 2021. A further 25% said sales would not return to normal until the second half of 2021, while only 17% thought trading would bounce back in the final six months of 2020. As for the shape of any recovery, 42% said it was likely to be "U shaped" meaning a "long and bumpy decline with an equally long and bumpy recovery". Only 14% predicted a "V shaped" recovery with a sharp decline followed by a strong recovery. Deborah Potts, founding director of Summit Advisory, which is part of Elman Wall, said: "It will be a very long and bumpy recovery, and will be subject to countries opening up. There will be a recovery in domestic travel – ahead of international travel - and certain markets will be slower than others, such as older travellers and large groups. The ski industry is more hopeful of a V-shaped recovery if the ski season goes ahead. But nobody knows and there may be a lot of wishful thinking. A vaccine is determined to be what will return full confidence to the travel industry and consumers, and the recovery will be consumer-driven." A wider survey of the travel industry is also being conducted, with Potts adding the early results were "a bit more pessimistic" around the timing of a potential recovery. When it comes to corporate travel, Clive Wratten, chief executive of the Business Travel Association (BTA), said: "It's all about next year. We will see domestic travel coming back in 2020 in some slow way. It may be at least 12 months from the end of the crisis before we see a real recovery. We're thinking Q3 to Q4 of 2021 before we get back to 2019 levels." For the inbound market, Joss Croft, chief executive of UKinbound, added: "Things are looking very, very challenging. In terms of the recovery, it will start with local, regional and then more domestic travel, and will be mostly visiting friends and relatives. It won't be massive for hotels, transportation, restaurants and bars."

04th May 2020, source: TTG

Heathrow chief warns of 'kilometre long queues' at airports

"Forget social distancing – it won't work in aviation or any other form of public transport," Heathrow chief executive Holland-Kaye told *The Telegraph*. "The problem is not the plane, it is the lack of space in the airport. Just one jumbo jet would require a queue a kilometre long." Writing for the paper on Monday (4 May), Holland-Kaye reiterated his call for a "common international standard" for air travel post-coronavirus, including pre-flight health checks.

Holland-Kaye has called on the government to come to an agreement with other world leaders "within a month" to allow airports to reopen in time for summer. He warned if aviation was not up and running within the next three to five months, there would be "massive job losses" and knock-on employment effects for other sectors too. The government is expected this week to set out its plans to ease the coronavirus lockdown in the UK, and "unlock" certain parts of the economy. Holland-Kaye's comments come after Heathrow last week revealed April passenger numbers at Britain's busiest airport would likely come in down 97% on the same month last year. He has suggested a package of measures including temperature screening; reduced contact between travellers and airport staff; compulsory wearing of face masks; and increased hygiene measures such as deep cleaning and hand sanitiser stations.

04th May 2020, source: TTG

Norwegian stakeholders approve 'debt-for-equity' rescue move

Shareholders voted 95% in favour to approve plans on Monday (4 May) for lenders and aircraft leasing firms to swap Norwegian's debts for shares in the carrier. The move was a vital part of the process to allow the low-cost airline to access government support and unlock 3 billion kroner (£230 million) in aid to help it through the coronavirus crisis. Norway's government had previously stated the bailout package would be dependent on the airline making itself solvent again and wiping out its debt. It has already received 300 million kroner from the government.

05th May 2020, source: TTG

Older clients are ok for cash and keen to travel, survey finds

A poll of more than 800 older travellers by Silver Travel Advisor found 52% were not affected financially by the lockdown, with 81% keen to travel again and only 4% "hard hit" economically. Among the respondents to the survey, conducted 15-30 April, 79% were aged 60-80. One poignant finding was that 55% felt they were losing time at this stage of their lives by not being able to travel and might be unable to go on the holidays they had once hoped to experience. One respondent said: "I'm going to treasure my holidays even more now", while another added: "It makes you appreciate how lucky we are under normal circumstances." Only a third said they were being "careful" about money although 10% felt they may have to support children or grandchildren and would have a lower travel spend as a result. Roughly a third of all respondents said they were keen to book a flight, UK or overseas holiday "but are not sure when the time will be right". Ocean cruising scored the highest negative perception, with 55% saying they were "not planning" to book. However, 37% said they had not taken a river cruise before and would be keen to try one. More than 10% had experienced difficulty in obtaining travel insurance, however 55% said they had had no obstacles. In terms of destinations, Greece, Italy and Spain were the highest on the wish list, each named by 16-18% of respondents. Perhaps unsurprisingly, China was named as the country most (51%) said were not prepared to visit this year or next. The US was second in the no-go list, at 13%, with India and the Far East at 8%. Only 3% said they would not visit Italy or Spain, despite both having significant outbreaks of Covid-19. Refunds for cancelled holidays were a gripe among more than one in five of 656 comments, but encouragingly for the industry, an equal number expressed support for it and its staff, with one saying: "I don't want everyone to take a refund, as the industry would collapse."

05th May 2020, source: TTG

Virgin Atlantic to cut more than 3,000 roles in major restructure

Staff and union leaders were briefed on the proposals Tuesday lunchtime (5 May) following an update from Virgin Atlantic chief executive Shai Weiss, who said the carrier was still exploring all available options to secure additional funding from existing shareholders, as well as the government. "To emerge from this crisis, against an uncertain backdrop, the airline must radically adapt," said Virgin. "Following the pattern of previous crises, including 9/11 and the global financial crisis, capacity across the aviation industry will significantly reduce, with recovery to pre-crisis levels expected to take up to three years. Uncertainty around when flying will resume, coupled with unprecedented market conditions brought on by the pandemic, has severely reduced revenues for the global aviation industry and Virgin Atlantic. The airline has taken decisive action to reduce costs, preserve cash and protect as many jobs as possible. However, to safeguard the future of the airline so it can emerge from this crisis a sustainably profitable business, further action is required." Virgin is understood to have been one of the first major firms to approach the government for financial support, but its application was knocked back. EasyJet, meanwhile, has agreed a £600 million commercial loan from the government's Covid Corporate Financing Facility. In total, Virgin plans to reduce its workforce by 3,150 roles "across all functions"; a company-wide 45-day consultation on its proposals got under way on Tuesday, in collaboration with pilots union Balpa and the Unite union. Virgin will simplify its fleet to comprise just wide-body, twin-engine aircraft flying from Heathrow and Gatwick to its "most popular destinations". Its Gatwick flying programme, meanwhile, will relocate to Heathrow, although Virgin has signalled its intention to retain its slot portfolio at Gatwick and return to the Sussex airport "in line with customer demand". It will retire four A330-200 aircraft in early 2022 as planned and stop using all of its B747-400 aircraft with immediate effect. By 2022, Virgin's "simplifier, greener" fleet will comprise 36 twin-engine aircraft, which it says will reduce emissions by around a further 10%. Elsewhere, Virgin Holidays will be rebranded Virgin Atlantic Holidays, and will continue to focus on its Next store partnership and digital distribution platforms; 15% of the Virgin Atlantic Holidays retail network will shut this year. Virgin Atlantic Cargo will continue to support global supply chains, and ship vital medical supplies and PPE to the UK for frontline NHS use. "We have weathered many storms since our first flight 36 years ago, but none has been as devastating as Covid-19 and the associated loss of life and livelihood for so many," said Weiss. "However, to safeguard our future and emerge a sustainably profitable business, now is the time for further action to reduce our costs, preserve cash and to protect as many jobs as possible – it is crucial we return to profitability in 2021. This will mean taking steps to reshape and resize Virgin Atlantic in line with demand, while always keeping our people and customers at the heart of all we do." Weiss continued: "I wish it was not the case, but we will have to reduce the number of people we employ. The commitment of our people throughout this crisis has been nothing but amazing, and the embodiment of true Virgin spirit. As we have navigated the Covid-19 crisis, I have been humbled at every step by their solidarity. In times of adversity we must support each other so that ultimately, we can emerge a stronger and better Virgin Atlantic. After 9/11 and the global financial crisis, we took similar painful measures but fortunately many members of our team were back flying with us within a couple of years. Depending on how long the pandemic lasts and the period of time our planes are grounded for, hopefully the same will happen this time. Our vision for Virgin Atlantic remains the same – to become the most loved travel company, for our people and our customers. Once the crisis stabilises, Virgin Atlantic has an important role to play in contributing to the UK's economic recovery, providing essential connectivity and competition." Balpa has pledged its support for members working for Virgin, whom the union said would likely be "devastated" by the news and urged

government to step in to support the UK aviation sector. "There are 426 pilots at risk," said Balpa. "This is another terrible blow for the industry and is evidence of the dire situation facing UK aviation. "Without immediate action by the government, we will see the once world leading industry decimated and that will have an effect throughout the UK economy and to all the other industries that rely on aviation. Virgin applied for government support weeks ago, and Treasury is still prevaricating. It won't just be airline staff who are hit by this lack of support, it will reverberate right through to the whole UK." General Secretary Brian Strutton added: "Our members and all staff in Virgin Atlantic will be shocked by the scale of this bombshell. We will be challenging Virgin very hard to justify this. My letter to the chancellor yesterday [Monday] is all the more significant – why is the government sitting on its hands while aviation plunges further towards a death spiral? Government should call a moratorium on job losses in aviation and lead a planned recovery."

07th May 2020, source: Travel Weekly

Industry going through its 'deepest crisis' says ABTA boss

During a video message to Abta members, Tanzer said the crisis had been "compounded by the lockdown that's still in place" while thanking members for "their incredible efforts to look after customers and staff". He also warned that travel's recovery was "not going to be straightforward" with a "difficult road ahead". "It's not going to be like flicking a switch. Different destinations will open up at different rates, and there will be different arrangements in place," said Tanzer. "The recovery will come but we cannot say exactly when. But this is where travel professionals come into their own. Customers will have a lot of questions – we will make sure that members are provided with the most up-to-date information and are able to give advice and the best quality information to customers. The best way to build customer confidence coming out of the coronavirus crisis is by showing travel competence by the organisers – only by using travel agents and tour operators will you get the accurate information you need as a customer." He added Abta was talking to "mainstream" destinations to provide key information about travel restrictions and accommodation options to its members. Tanzer again emphasised the importance of refund credit notes (RCNs). He said it was "in everybody's interests that the uptake is as high as possible", while adding that customers' rights to a cash refund "absolutely have to be recognised". "We will continue to encourage the government to relax the 14-day obligation to pay cash refunds," he said. "If the government decides not to ease that window, then we will have to talk to them about other mechanisms for helping stop companies going into bankruptcy if there's a flood of cash requests and chargebacks." Tanzer said Abta was speaking to the government about creating "more flexibility" around the furlough scheme, including possible "tapering" - allowing staff to resume some of their work while still getting government support. He also called for insurance companies to "come back to the game" and resume providing travel insurance.

07th May 2020, source: TTG

BA offers up slots to resolve competition concerns over US routes

The concession comes amid a Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation into the Atlantic Joint Business Agreement (AJBA); a set of binding competition commitments agreed a decade ago with the European Commission, and which are due to expire this year. Five airlines are currently signed up to the AJBA: IAG carriers BA, Iberia and Aer Lingus, along with American Airlines and Finnair, who have together agreed not to compete on routes between the UK and the US. However, with the UK set to leave the EU, the CMA launched an investigation into the agreement in October 2018 as the European Commission would no longer have responsibility for competition on five of the six routes, finding competition concerns on all five – London-Boston, London-Chicago, London-Dallas,

London-Miami and London-Philadelphia. To alleviate these concerns, the CMA confirmed on Thursday (7 May) BA and AA were prepared to release additional slots at Heathrow or Gatwick to enable competitors to launch, or increase, direct flights from London to Boston, Dallas and Miami. The carriers also agreed measures to support competing services on London-Chicago and London-Philadelphia routes, which include "access to connecting passengers on preferential terms". The CMA is putting the measures out to consultation until 4 June while it market tests them, but has stressed it will allow additional time for responses, if required, owing to the impact of the coronavirus crisis on the aviation sector – and with airlines "emphasising the importance of certainty about the future availability of slots". It has also left scope to further review the AJBA if new competitive conditions prevail once the sector emerges from the pandemic. Ann Pope, senior director, antitrust, at the CMA, said: "The CMA launched this investigation because we were concerned, with the expiry of the current commitments, consumers might lose out since – without some kind of mitigation - the Atlantic Joint Business Agreement reduces competition on key routes between the UK and the US. On some of these routes, there are either few or no other airlines offering direct flights to passengers. We therefore welcome the offer from BA and American Airlines to find a way of addressing the CMA's concerns. Their suggested resolution has the potential to increase competition and deliver lower fares for customers, while also preserving the benefits that joint airline agreements offer passengers. We are acting now as the current commitments expire this year but can review the agreement in the future if the market does not return to its pre-Covid state.

11th May 2020, source: TTG

BA to stay at Gatwick but will consider future at London City

Willie Walsh, chief executive of British Airways parent company IAG, was asked by parliament's transport select committee if he saw a future for BA at the West Sussex airport. Walsh replied: "Yes I do. I like Gatwick; I think it is a better airport than Heathrow in many ways. I think it is better-run, the management team are more commercial, the customer base is one we would want to serve." Rival Virgin Atlantic has said it is unlikely to restart services from Gatwick once travel restrictions are lifted, although it is retaining its take-off and landing slots for possible later use. Speaking of his rival's financial difficulties, Walsh said: "I see Virgin as a badly run airline, but I don't see it as failing or a failed airline." Walsh was also asked about London City, which is served by BA's wholly owned subsidiary BA CityFlyer. Walsh said the east London airport had been most affected by the downturn as it dealt mainly with business travellers. He said the airport was "one of the greatest challenges" as the downturn had approached, with traffic being lost "ahead of pretty much every airport in Europe. It clearly points to the specific customer segment that supports London City airport. I think that airport will be challenged greatly as we go through this and indeed as we come out of this. Our future there will be something we will consider with the elected representatives of the BA CityFlyer operation."

11th May 2020, source: Travel Weekly

British Airways to reconsider July restart after quarantine blow

Willie Walsh, chief executive of BA's parent company IAG, slammed Boris Johnson's proposal of a 14-day quarantine for all air passengers arriving in the UK. Speaking to parliament's transport select committee, Walsh said: "We had been planning to resume on a pretty significant basis our flying in July, I think we will have to review that based on what the prime minister said." Walsh had earlier said the airline could run half its service from July but said this ambition could now be abandoned. "Despite the fact there had been some rumours about this quarantine period, I don't think anybody believed the UK government

would actually implement it if they were serious about getting the economy moving again. "It's a surprise, because it appears the government is not going to apply it on other means of transport. I don't understand that, but maybe the prime minister will be able to clarify the science behind that; it seems strange to me." Walsh said capacity into and out of the UK "would be pretty minimal" if quarantine were to be imposed. He predicted it would be "2023 or 2024" before the industry saw levels of demand seen in 2019. "Some are predicting it will not be before 2026," he added. Walsh said he was in favour of mandatory wearing of face masks by passengers and a "track and trace" system. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency is expected to publish draft recommendations on this later this week. "There is very little evidence of passenger to passenger contact-spreading," Walsh added. "We are working with regulators to implement what I hope will be a common system in Europe and hopefully globally. I do support mandatory wearing of face masks I support temperature monitoring of customers coming into the airport and monitoring of customers coming in off the aircraft."

12th May 2020, source: TTG

Health Secretary pours cold water on summer holiday season

Hancock told ITV's This Morning on Tuesday (12 May) it was unlikely that "big, lavish, international holidays" would be possible this summer. "Do we now all have to come to the conclusion that summer is essentially cancelled, holidays cancelled, and that it will be unlike any summer we've had since probably the Second World War?" presenter Phillip Schofield asked Hancock, to which he replied: "I think that's likely to be the case."

Hancock continued: "We haven't made a final decision on that yet, but it is clear that we will seek to reopen some hospitality from early July if we keep successfully reducing the spread of this virus. But I think social distancing of some kind is going to continue, and I think the conclusion from that is it is unlikely big, lavish, international holidays are going to be possible this summer, I just think that's a reality of life." Hancock's comments come less than a month after transport secretary Grant Shapps was roundly blasted for his comments on taking a summer holiday. Speaking to BBC Radio 4's Today programme about a possible resumption of activity after the UK lockdown, Shapps said: "I won't be booking a summer holiday at this point, let's put it that way." Abta branded his remark "thoughtless". "It would be better if the government focused on taking the necessary steps to support the sector rather than undermining confidence in it," said the association. Responding to Hancock's comment on Tuesday, a Jet2.com and Jet2holidays spokesperson said: "We note the comments made by the secretary of state for health. These are his personal opinions and are not government policy. We are continuing with our plans to recommence flights and holidays on 17 June, a decision we are keeping under constant review in line with guidance from governments and the relevant authorities."

13th May 2020, source: Travel Weekly

Tui Group announces 30% cost-cutting programme impacting up to 8,000 roles

In its half-year results announcement this morning, Tui Group said to ensure that its operational performance can continue in a globally weakened market following the pandemic, it is now implementing extensive cost-cutting measures. "This will further accelerate the transformation to a digital platform company that has already been initiated," it said. Chief executive Fritz Joussem said: "Tui should emerge from the crisis stronger. But it will be a different Tui and it will find a different market environment than before the pandemic. This will require cuts: in investments, in costs, in our size and our presence around the world. We must be leaner than before, more efficient, faster and more digital. We will implement our "asset right" strategy, which we launched in 2019, even more purposefully and quickly. We will become more digital at all levels – in particular, we will accelerate the

expansion of digital platforms in new markets and for our activities in the destinations. We are targeting to permanently reduce our overhead cost base by 30% across the entire group. This will have an impact on potentially 8,000 roles globally that will either not be recruited or reduced. In order to return to the successful development of the past years after the crisis, we must now implement the realignment quickly.” The group received a bridging loan of €1.8 billion in March to cushion the unprecedented effects of the pandemic until normal business operations can be resumed. In April, the banks providing Tui’s existing credit line of €1.75 billion also gave their approval for the contractual integration of the new credit. Tui added that the loans received are to be repaid within a short period of time “and the high level of debt is to be rapidly reduced again”.

18th May 2020, source: TTG

Heathrow to implement thermal image screening this week

The cameras will assess passengers arriving at Terminal 2 – currently being used predominantly for European flights – for signs of fever, Heathrow chief executive John Holland-Kaye told Sky News. Holland-Kaye said the trial, part of a wider effort by the airport to halt the spread of coronavirus, could be an alternative to the government’s 14-day quarantine on arrival proposal. Other measures set to be trialled by Heathrow include UV sanitation and new procedures to further reduce contact between people. Cameras could also be deployed in departures and connection areas if the trial is a success. Holland-Kaye has also backed the introduction of so-called "immunity passports" which he told the broadcaster could be issued to people who have already had Covid-19. However, he said there would need to be global cooperation on the scheme, and acceptance of the document, in order for it to be a success. He added he felt flights should restart between "low-risk" countries to boost the economy and help hard-hit sectors like tourism and aviation recover.

18th May 2020, source: TTG

UK to quarantine all arrivals from next month

Shapps told parliament the controversial scheme would include all arrivals from abroad but added it could be modified to exclude countries where the Covid-19 infection rate was below the rate of one. “The final details of the quarantine scheme will be released soon and come in early next month,” he said in response to questions in the Commons. “We should consider further improvements, for example things like ‘air bridges’ enabling people from countries that have themselves achieved lower levels of coronavirus infection to come to the country, so there are active discussions that will go beyond what will initially be a blanket situation.” Shapps was asked what he was doing to prevent “tens or even hundreds of thousands" of job losses in the airline industry. He revealed the UK aviation industry had 43,500 staff who were furloughed, together with another 2,600 airport workers. Shapps said airlines had recourse to the Bank of England loan scheme, the Business Interruption Loan Scheme support for employees and VAT deferrals. “I should point out we have a special process in place available only to the aviation sector so when they run out of those other forms of options they can come and talk to us about those.” Shapps said the scheme, known as the Birch Process, was assessing appeals for help. “A large number of aviation-orientated businesses are in that process,” he added.

20th May 2020, source: TTG

Norwegian secures vital state aid to stave off failure

The airline on Wednesday (20 May) confirmed its NOK 3 billion (£245 million) state loan had been approved. Earlier this month, Norwegian sought to convert sufficient debt to equity to unlock the highest tier of Norwegian government state aid. It says its proposed restructure

is now complete, laying a "solid foundation" for the future. However, the carrier has warned that despite its efforts and the provision of state support, "the next few months will remain challenging" with revenue limited owing to the coronavirus crisis. "Now we can access the state loan guarantee, we can continue to transform the company," said chief executive Jacob Schram. "Through this process, the belief in New Norwegian and the company's strategy have been confirmed by shareholders, the market, bondholders, leasing companies, other creditors and lenders. Nevertheless, the months ahead will remain challenging and with a high degree of uncertainty for the industry. Norwegian will still need to collaborate closely with a number of creditors as the company currently has limited revenues." Norwegian embarked on efforts to restructure the business and transition from growth to profitability in late 2018, which it said had since been expedited by the onset of Covid-19. "The company has seized this time as an opportunity to restructure and develop a new strategy and business plan – New Norwegian – for a strengthened airline to re-emerge when travel restrictions are lifted and demand returns," said the carrier. Schram added: "In addition to ensuring the company survives this crisis, our goal has been that Norwegian should have a strong position in the future airline industry, with a clear direction and strategy. This will ensure sustainable operations and a structure that will be to the benefit of both shareholders, customers and colleagues. New Norwegian will place profitability at the centre of its operations and pursue an "aggressive cost focus". It plans to return with a smaller fleet; an optimised route network; a more agile and flexible cost base with regards to crew and operation; flexible pricing and bundles; and a stronger financial footing. New Norwegian's fleet is forecast to run to 110 to 120 aircraft, although the plan for its fleet will depend on the post-Covid-19 landscape, with a strong focus on "route profitability".

20th May 2020, source: Travel Weekly

Travelzoo starts advertising again as demand picks up

The deals publisher's outdoor campaign intends to inspire Britons to keep dreaming of and planning for holidays to take after lockdown. The campaign promotes a range of international holidays for 2021, as well as fully refundable UK hotel stays for dates later in the year. In a recent Travelzoo member survey, 60% said they would book a travel deal right now if it was fully refundable or free to change. The campaign aims to encourage "booking and saving" now, and then travelling later, by showcasing that it's working with partners to provide deals with increased flexibility for travel. The activity, which features no destination-specific imagery, will go live on Friday, initially running for two weeks across digital outdoor sites in major cities including Birmingham, London and Manchester. Glyn Owen, head of marketing UK, Travelzoo, said: "The travel industry has been severely hit by the pandemic so it's not time to travel, but it is time to dream and plan for the future. "We recently returned to publishing travel deals after a break for most of March and April. Our weekly surveys of our member base provided the insight that people were ready to book travel if the offers were refundable or had extra flexibility like 'no change fees' for holidays. We used this as the basis for this campaign – emphasising the 'future' and 'refundable' aspects of our offers." Phil Rhodes, creative director at creative agency TMW Unlimited, added: "It would have been easy to go down the route of acknowledging the crisis with a 'holidays can wait' message, but we wanted to do something that was, while still sensitive to the situation, a little more unexpected and hopeful. Given the ultra-short timeframe, we sourced these images from a photographer we've worked with before – and they brought the idea to life perfectly."

21st May 2020, source TravelMole

Many agents and operators will go under, warns accountancy group

Travel agencies and tour operators are the worst hit of all major industries by the coronavirus crisis, according to a national accountancy group. UHY Hacker Young says it is likely many travel agents and tour operators will not survive the coronavirus after the lockdown ends.

"The UK's travel agents and tour operators have been hit hardest by the double whammy of the lockdown and a collapse in discretionary consumer spending," said Peter Kubik, partner at UHY Hacker Young. "The lockdown is a particularly hard blow to high street travel agencies who have been struggling for years against the shift to the internet and the huge DIY sites like Booking.com and Expedia. "There will be a rush of people booking holidays once lockdown ends but that may come too late for some in the sector. Many are likely to be effectively insolvent already and only surviving because of the help the government has put in place." UHY Hacker Young says many business will go under once the temporary support from the Government, such as the CBILS scheme, the ban on evictions and winding up petitions and business rate relief, ends. It pointed to a 56% drop in turnover for the sector, falling from £2.6 billion in March 2019 to just £1.2 billion in March 2020. UHY Hacker Young has 90 partners and more than 500 professional staff working from 22 locations around the UK.

21st May 2020, source TravelMole

EasyJet to resume flights on June 15

EasyJet is to resume flying on June 15 on a 'small and carefully planned' number of flights, mainly on domestic routes in the UK and France. The airline said further routes will be announced over the coming weeks as customer demand increases and lockdown measures across Europe are relaxed. "We will continue to refine our schedule planning and our capacity expectations for the remainder of 2020, which will be confirmed in due course, whilst also continuing our focus on minimising cash burn," it said in a statement to investors. It also outlined measures to protect the safety of crew and passengers. Customers, cabin and ground crew will be required to wear masks, there will be enhanced cleaning and disinfection of easyJet aircraft, and disinfectant wipes and hand sanitiser onboard will be available on board. There will be no in-flight food service. EasyJet said the measures have been implemented in consultation with aviation authorities ICAO and EASA, and in line with government and medical advice. "We will also continue to promote our easyJet mobile app, which avoids paper boarding passes, and work closely with our partner airports to ensure all measures recommended by local and European authorities are implemented," it said.

CEO Johan Lundgren added: "These measures will remain in place for as long as is needed to ensure customers and crew are able to fly safely as the world continues to recover from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. "We will continue to closely monitor the situation across Europe so that when more restrictions are lifted the schedule will continue to build over time to match demand, while also ensuring we are operating efficiently and on routes that our customers want." Earlier this week easyJet confirmed the travel plans and email address of nine million of its customers were stolen by hackers, who were also able to steal the credit card details of 2, 208 customers.

24th May 2020, source Travel Trade Outbound Scandinavia

Europe opening borders

In an early sign of hope for the largely shuttered travel industry, some countries are taking their first steps toward reopening to tourism. In Europe, Slovenia last week proclaimed an end to its Covid-19 outbreak and reopened its borders to regional travelers. Any non-European Union residents must quarantine for two weeks upon entry. Austria and Germany also began loosening controls over the weekend, opening border crossing points with France, Switzerland and Austria. Italy said on Friday that it would open its borders to EU residents in June. And Greece said it hopes to reopen for international tourism on July 1. Iceland said it will welcome tourists back on June 15, although travelers must agree to take a Covid-19 test on arrival or quarantine for two weeks. In the Americas, some Mexico beach destinations are planning to open in June as well. And Southwest Airlines announced it will resume flights from several U.S. cities to Cancun. Spain and Portugal have announced plans to open their beaches in June, although the countries haven't yet laid out plans for how their borders might reopen. The European Union has encouraged countries with similar rates of coronavirus infections and comparably strong healthcare systems to open borders with each other. In other parts of the world some countries are also looking to regional "travel bubbles" as a first step toward reopening to tourism. The Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania Friday opened their borders to one another last week. And Australia and New Zealand, which have both had relatively mild outbreaks, are talking about a possible "trans-Tasman bubble", where people could go between Australia and New Zealand freely, and without quarantine, according to local media reports.

25th May 2020, source Travel Trade Gazette

Fines for arrivals who break new quarantine rules

The UK's 14-day quarantine on arrival measures will come into force on 8 June, home secretary Priti Patel has confirmed. Arrivals by air, sea and rail will need to provide details of where they will complete 14 days' mandatory self-isolation. The measures will be enforced through spot checks, and transgressors could face fines of up to £1,000. Those travelling from the Common Travel Area will be exempt. The measures will be reviewed every three weeks. Patel said the rules were designed to guard against imported cases of coronavirus. She acknowledged the measures would present challenges for the country's travel and leisure sector, which she said was "already struggling through unprecedented times", and pledged to find new ways to reopen international travel and tourism in a safe way. Patel also said the government's "don't go on holiday" stance was based on Foreign Office advice, and was "absolutely not" about booking holidays. Border Force director general Paul Lincoln said the agency would work with travel firms on implementation of the new rules "in the coming days".

26th May, 2020, source TravelMole

TUI plans holidays to Spain from July 1

TUI is planning holidays for Majorca, the Spanish mainland and the Canary Islands after the Spanish Prime Minister announced the country would end its quarantine for tourists on July 1. PM Pedro Sanchez said the government would guarantee tourists would be able to return safely to Spain from that date. "I am announcing that from July, Spain will reopen for foreign tourism in conditions of safety," he said. "Foreign tourists can also start planning their holidays in our country. "Spain needs tourism, and tourism needs safety in both origin and destination. "We will guarantee that tourists will not run any risks, nor will they bring any risk to our country." Sanchez said that the central and regional governments had been planning and coordinating the return to tourism for weeks. "We're sending everyone a

message today: Spain will be waiting for you from July," he added. TUI CEO Fritz Jousen welcomed the announcement, saying: "Now we can plan holidays for Majorca, the Spanish mainland and the Canary Islands and make our customers an offer. "Millions of holidaymakers have the certainty that summer holidays in Spain are possible during school holidays. This is a good signal for many families, but also for TUI as a tour operator and the travel agencies that advise customers on their holiday decisions. After Greece, Cyprus, Croatia and Bulgaria, Spain has now also provided clarity for the start of the holiday season. "We have been preparing intensively for weeks, have developed higher safety and hygiene standards for TUI and our partners and are already training the staff in the hotels. In times of Corona, we want to make holidays as normal as possible and as responsible as necessary, during the flight, in the hotel and at the holiday destination." Ryanair said it will be offering 40% of its normal schedule in July, including from the UK, offering more than 1,000 daily flights in total. However, the UK Foreign Office is still advising against all non-essential travel and the UK government will introduce a mandatory 14-day quarantine for anyone returning to the country from abroad on June 8. The quarantine will be reviewed every three weeks, so could be lifted before July 1.

26th May 2020, source Ireland's Travel Trade Network

Hertz Files for Bankruptcy in USA and Canada

Hertz has filed for bankruptcy in the USA and Canada. Its main international operating regions, including Europe, Australia and New Zealand, were not included in the US Chapter 11 filing. Franchise sites, which are not owned by the company, are also not included in the Chapter 11 proceedings. "The impact of Covid-19 on travel demand was sudden and dramatic, causing an abrupt decline in the company's revenue and future bookings," a media release said. Hertz said it took "immediate action" to prioritise the health and safety of employees and customers and eliminate "all non-essential spending". "However, uncertainty remains as to when revenue will return and when the used-car market will fully re-open for sales, which necessitated today's action." Hertz had already cut 10,000 jobs in North America, or 26.3% of its global workforce, to save money after the coronavirus shutdowns paralysed travel and crippled the economy. Chapter 11 is a mechanism that allows a company that is no longer able to repay its debt to restructure itself without creditors. The Wall Street Journal reported that Hertz held debts of roughly US\$19 billion, in addition to nearly 700,000 vehicles sitting idle because of the coronavirus. "The financial reorganisation will provide Hertz a path toward a more robust financial structure that best positions the company for the future as it navigates what could be a prolonged travel and overall global economic recovery," said the Hertz statement.

27th May 2020, source TravelMole

New travel industry lobby group proposed

Travel industry bodies are looking at coming together to create a single lobby group to tackle issues affecting the industry as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Early discussions have been held between AITO and Advantage and a number of other leading travel organisations, but it is understood that ABTA has not been involved. Representatives of various organisations, including the Scottish Passenger Agents' Association and the Business Travel Association, have held a video meeting to discuss the formation of an alliance. Airlines will be represented by IATA and the Board of Airline Representatives in the UK, which also took part in the initial meeting. A source told TravelMole that a second meeting will take place in a couple of weeks.

28th May 2020, source Selling Travel

Co-operative survey reveals appetite for travel

A customer survey by agents from the homeworking division of Midcounties Co-operative has revealed that Brits are eager to take a holiday as soon as they are able but that holiday habits will change post-lockdown. Out of the 1,600 customers surveyed, 39% saying said would like to travel 'as soon as possible', 8% said they would wait at least two months after destinations re-open before taking a break, 11% said three months and 13% would wait at least six months and 29% plan to wait until 2021 to travel again. When asked where they were likely to travel to 62% selected Europe and 10% chose the UK. Of the long-haul holiday hotspots, the U.S. was the most popular with 10% of respondents choosing it, followed by Mexico and the Caribbean at nine per cent. The rest of the world shared the remaining 10%. The survey also revealed that it's the traditional beach break that holidaymakers are craving the most, with 66% choosing it as their preferred post-lockdown escape, beating city breaks (38%), UK staycations (15%), touring holidays (14%) and cruises (11%). When it came to accommodation, 40% of respondents said they would still opt for all-inclusive but an equal number said they would choose self-catering. Bed & breakfast and half-board were the least popular accommodation choices, according to the poll. Lastly, holidaying with immediate family (51%), or partner/close friend (59%), were the most popular choices for post-Coronavirus getaways. Just 3% said they would travel solo and only 9% indicated they intended to holiday in big extended family groups. "We are very encouraged to see indications that holidaymakers will be booking their post-pandemic getaways as soon as they can," said Sheena Whittle, Head of The Personal Travel Agents at Co-operative Travel. "We all know we'll emerge from this into a different travel landscape and with an altered mindset about how we travel, but the British passion for holidays will drive the travel industry revival when restrictions are lifted and solutions are found to meet the demand that's out there. Co-operative Travel has used the survey results to steer its marketing approaches and offers and has seen weekly rises in new bookings, with 53% of all bookings made by its agents in the week ending May 16 coming from fresh enquiries rather than re-bookings.

29th May 2020, source Travel Daily Media

Major British travel companies call on government to withdraw plans for 14-day quarantine

The UK's most influential travel companies have written to the UK home secretary, Priti Patel, urging for an immediate withdrawal of government plans to impose a mandatory 14-day quarantine on anyone arriving in the UK. The government announced last week that it would be introducing the quarantine measures for passengers entering the UK from 8 June 2020. In the letter, the signatories said: "The very last thing the travel industry needs is a mandatory quarantine imposed on all arriving passengers which will deter foreign visitors from coming here, deter UK visitors from travelling abroad and, most likely, cause other countries to impose reciprocal quarantine requirements on British visitors, as France has already announced." Over 70 leading CEOs and chairpersons endorsed the letter on behalf of their companies, which together employ thousands of people in the UK. The companies include Abercrombie & Kent, Rocco Forte Hotels, Der Touristik, Mr & Mrs. Smith, Red Savannah, &Beyond, Kirker Holidays, Scott Dunn, Black Tomato, The Peninsula London, Claridge's, The Berkeley, The Goring, Mandarin Oriental, Rosewood Hotels, The Savoy, The Ritz London, The Dorchester, Hotel Café Royal, Jumeirah Carlton Tower, The Landmark Hotel, Hyatt Regency London – The Churchill, Shangri-La The Shard Hotel, Original Travel, Cookson Adventures, Cazenove & Loyd and ATD Travel Services.