

Aviation: Aviation Quickies.

Today's short stories from the air travel industry.

Air France is to charge fat people almost double: if you can't fit in single economy seat and want to reserve the one next to you, it'll cost you 75% of the ex-tax fare. But you'll get a refund if the extra charge if the flight isn't full.

British Airways cabin crew's union, Unite, failed to spoil Christmas so now they are aiming for Easter. BA fought off the 12 days of Christmas strike in the Courts because the Union included non-eligible members in its ballot. The Union says the court "denied [our members their] voice. But, once more, it is to target one of the few times in the year that BA might be reasonably assured of filling its planes and not making a whacking loss.

Japan Airlines has not yet succumbed to its injuries. Rather it is intensive care in a form of administration rather than outright liquidation. Allowing the company to keep flying, the administrators have said that they expect that some 16,000 jobs will be lost. Lenders are being asked to forego some USD5,000 million in debt that the company has no hope of repaying: its total liabilities are still unknown but reckoned to be somewhere between USD15,000 million and 16,000 million. The companies shares, which have fallen almost 100% in the past few months, are to be de-listed and shareholders will lose their entire investment.

As part of its recovery plan, JAL is to dump its entire B747 fleet. With 37 of the ageing jumbos, it is one of the largest 747 fleets in the world. It will also get rid of its 16 MD-90 planes. It will source 50 smaller and cheaper to run jets.

JAL's stock fell to reach a low market capitalisation of JPR13,500 million. That's what it will own Boeing for a Dreamliner when its turn to get one turns up. So maybe the ideal solution to JAL's problems would be for Boeing to swap the company for one plane and become its own customer. Or maybe not.

FlyGlobespan's demise (when its parent company collapsed) in December 2009 left slots at Glasgow. Small airline Kiss Flights (we kid you not) will take over slots for flights to Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Turkey. The flights will be operated by Viking Airlines, a Swedish Airline, using a Boeing 737.

Accountants investigating the collapse of Globespan say that GBP35 million was withheld from the company by e-Clear, the company that managed its on-line sales operations. That, it says, was a major factor in the collapse of the company that owned several travel businesses including FlyGlobespan, and airline that was grounded when its parent collapsed.