

Weather

- Further snowfall causes travel disruption in parts of the UK during late January

Transport news

- Global demand for air travel fell 3.5% in 2009 according to IATA, the sharpest post-war decline on record
- The Civil Aviation Authority report that in November UK airports handled 1.3% fewer passengers than a year earlier
- Highland Airways temporarily stopped taking bookings during January due to financial difficulties but has continued to operate flights and has now resumed taking bookings for the next few weeks
- Aer Lingus (with flights operated by Aer Arann) plan to launch daily flights (excluding Tuesdays) from Cork to Glasgow
- From end March Air Baltic will operate four flights per week from Vilnius to Gatwick – the new service will commence as Aer Lingus withdraws from the route
- Continental Airlines will add a fourth daily flight from New York Newark to Heathrow from end March and a fifth daily flight from end October
- SeaFrance services disrupted over the last weekend of January due to industrial action
- In the final three months of 2009 Eurostar carried 9% more passengers than a year earlier, but this is largely due to disruption in the autumn of 2008 following a fire in the Channel Tunnel

Domestic Economic News

- Preliminary figures show that the UK economy grew by 0.1% in the final quarter of the year (a weaker performance than forecast), but contracted by 4.8% overall during 2009
- The IMF forecast that the UK economy will grow by 1.3% in 2010
- UK consumer price inflation increased at an annual rate of 2.9% in December, up from 1.9% the previous month
- UK unemployment fell by 7,000 in the three months to November 2009
- In January UK consumer confidence improved to its healthiest level since the end of 2007

European Economic News

- The IMF forecast that the Eurozone economy will grow by 1.0% in 2010
- The Greek government announces a new raft of austerity measures in order to tackle its national debt
- The Russian economy contracted by 7.9% in 2009, an outcome slightly better than anticipated
- Eurozone consumer confidence picked up fractionally during January

US Economic News

- The IMF forecast that in 2010 the US economy will grow by 2.7%
- The US Federal Reserve continues to hold base rates at between 0% and 0.25%
- US consumer confidence improved marginally during January

Global Economic News

- The IMF now forecast that the global economy will expand by 3.9% in 2010, up from the prediction it made in October of 3.1% growth
- According to the International Labour Organisation 27 million people lost their jobs during 2009
- China's economy grew by 8.7% in 2009 meaning that it has potentially overtaken Japan to become the world's second largest economy

Tourism News

- In the year to 30 September 2009 11.9 million first-time or renewal passports were issued in the USA and Donald N Martin & Company estimate that 94.5 million US citizens (33%) now own a passport
- According to PKF hotel occupancy in London in December stood at 76.7%, up from 72.8% a year ago, while in the UK regions occupancy was at 59.1% compared to 59.0% in December 2008. Room rates in London increased by 1.9% in the year to December, whereas rates in regional hotels declined by 6.3%
- Global Refund report that in December sales to overseas visitors to Britain able to reclaim tax increased by 9% thanks to a 2% increase in the volume of transactions and 7% increase in average spend per transaction

Factors contributing to tourism trends in Britain, February 2010

