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# Jeremy's World: It's all just a little bit of history repeating

By **Jeremy Clark** on January, 9 2019 | Jeremy's World



Welcome to 2019 and a new year of travel. I wonder, as we look over the last 12 months and the many “innovations” and “improvements” touted by various airlines, airports and caterers, what exactly can we expect in the new year?

Not much probably, as some things never seem to change and history has a horrible habit of repeating itself. In January, three headlines gave me cause to think. Firstly, the BBC, in what it called a “which” survey of airline passengers, reported (surprise surprise), Ryanair topped the list as the UK’s “[worst short-haul airline.](#)” The same airline also posted record December passenger numbers, so there’s no shortage of punters willing to suffer for a cheap fare. (Good luck to them. They really shouldn’t complain – they get what they pay for.) And for Ryanair to win this accolade six years in a row and not care one way or another says it all.

However, in the same report, we see British Airways fall behind easyJet for seat comfort and food and beverage service, despite the former’s much-hailed introduction of [Marks & Spencer](#) (who?) food. The buy-on-board debacle has clearly left a sour taste in the mouths of many British Airways short-haul passengers. I wonder – indeed, hope – if it wisely invests in other cabins and changes its suppliers that we may see the return of complimentary food service as would befit a premiere legacy carrier.

Another headline that made me sit up was the news that, apparently, passengers on Frontier Airlines are being [encouraged to tip](#) the crew when being served drinks.

I make no apology for declaring an absolute abhorrence of the American preoccupation with tipping. The world written about by Charles Dickens is long gone and we have moved into an era of paying people properly for a fair day's work. I can only imagine how embarrassing it must be for the cabin crew of an airline to be put in this position.

The other noteworthy news is from Skytrax, with its results for [Best Economy Class 2018](#), and guess what? In the top 20 there are no U.S. carriers and only four European airlines, three of which are in the bottom five. In the top 10 for seat comfort, there were no U.S. or European airlines, and for catering only Turkish Airlines (a respectable 5<sup>th</sup>) and Lufthansa German Airlines (10<sup>th</sup>) are featured.

So as we look back at the various expos with their fancy new future concepts and ideas, announcements of improvements, awards, PR hype about seats, IFE, food service and passenger handling improvement, it seems that change only becomes perceived when:

- it is funded and sustained over a properly long period, and
- an airline cares enough to see it through.

Without that, we just go in cycles, and if you stay long enough you see the same successes and failures repeat themselves time after time.

The moral here from veterans (like me) is don't give up. Newbies: heed the advice of Sir Winston Churchill who said, "Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it."