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Friday, July 10, 2009 **Out Of Office** 17

HY mini personal wind turbine
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for emission control

What can you do?

Patricia Barnett of Tourism Concern:



'Green and holidays is not easy. We have to recognise that unless we travel by bike or train, there is no way we can be seriously purist about this. Holidays and going 'ethical' is much easier. You could fly (but not often and not for long weekends), have a great time and not have a guilt trip.

'Climate change makes being a green holidaymaker tough, as does knowing whether your hotel is green. Will you know whether staff are getting the local minimum wage? Are local people being deprived of water for your benefit?'

'It's much simpler to make your own ethical decisions. You can eat locally, hire guides and taxis outside the hotel and get to know the locals. This way money goes back into local pockets. Too often even the 'greenest' of major operators use their power to keep prices as low as possible.

'Think seriously about whether to leave a tip. In Europe, staff often don't earn the minimum wage. Tourism Concern has challenged operators on this and we hope they'll change their ways but, meanwhile, a tip is important to people's basic well-being.

For more on *Tourism Concern* and the *Ethical Travel Guide*, see www.tourismconcern.org.uk



Small world: But is the global tourism industry capable of reducing carbon emissions and benefiting local communities?

› Dermot Blastland, Thomson and First Choice



Can travel ever be green?

'Around 50 of the world's least developed countries rely on tourism for development. Recent studies suggest in these countries a significant proportion of tourist spending reaches the poor. The answer is not to stop travelling but to make sure tourism minimises its environmental impact and respects the culture and people of destinations.'

What are you doing to be greener? We have an award-winning sustainability programme that covers all areas of our business. Our airline, Thomson Airways, is one of the most fuel-efficient around and last year saved 34,000 tons of CO₂ – the equivalent of taking nearly 10,000 family-sized cars off the road for a year. We also ask all our customers to donate £1 to our World Care Fund when they book their holiday. We match their donation and the money goes to sustainable tourism projects in our destinations.

› Keith Richards, Abta – the travel association



Can travel ever be green?

'The industry now thinks more about responsible and sustainable travel as a whole, rather than purely in terms of the environment. Tourism can be beneficial in providing income for local people, preserving heritage sites and protecting wildlife.'

What are you doing to be greener? 'We have two main projects: firstly, there's the Travelife

Sustainability System, a management system for hotels that will help them reduce negative impacts. We are also launching a Travelife Directory, which will help travellers choose tour operators and hotels that are taking positive steps to reduce emissions. The other is Reduce My Footprint, a carbon-offsetting scheme that encourages you to look at your whole lifestyle and reduce or offset emissions where possible.'

› For more industry views, see over

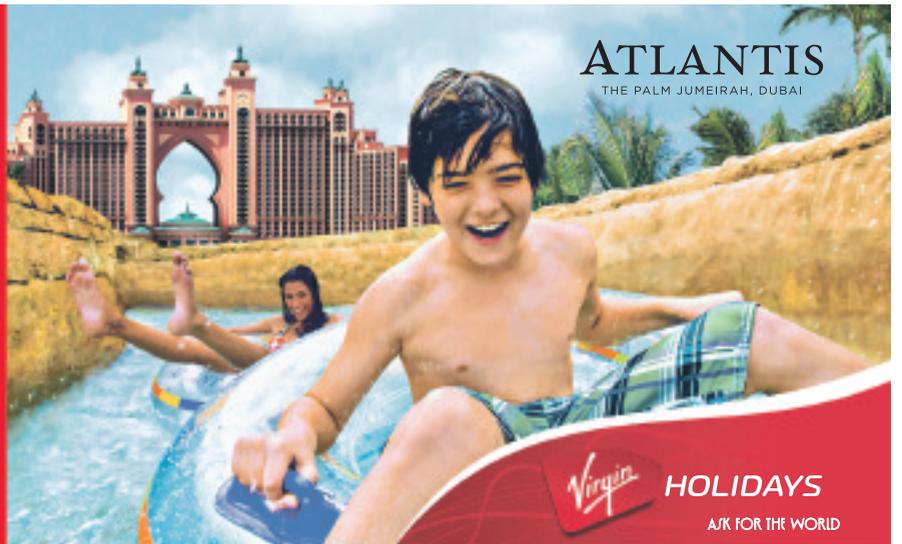
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