

# A passport trap for ~~young~~ old players

Chris Bonnor

This is about the mistakes that we travelers can make. Apart from donating cash to a Bangkok orphanage in 1974 I have rarely been conned. The \$30 I somehow lost to a fake cab driver in the Big Apple one time ... I see as a donation to the needy.

No, my biggest mistake was an online booking. It was New Year's Day and the extended family was visiting, complete with a parade of ankle-biters....so I retreated to the study to complete some travel bookings, including a return flight from Aberdeen to Madrid using Iberia Airlines (code shared with British Airways).

Fast forward three months and we checked in at Aberdeen airport, only to discover that I had entered my wife's maiden name, a name which, unsurprisingly, couldn't be found anywhere on her passport. Don't know why, maybe I was thinking of the extended family when I made the booking on New Year's Day. A couple of red wines might not have helped.

If I had booked with British Airways the booking might have been accepted. The counter staff made many calls to Iberia (well, they sat on the phone while I melted into the carpet) – to no avail. Then the inevitable: I had to buy another return ticket. The original was US\$250 so they told me the new one would be 450.

"Gosh, 450 dollars, that's an expensive mistake."

"No sir, that's 450 pounds." (This was 2015)

So, I gathered myself together and boarded the \$A1800 (original plus new tickets) return journey to Madrid. No wonder, even three weeks later, I told the dodgy street touter in Tangier to go forth and multiply.

But look at the bright side: I have made new friends at the local Flight Centre. And, in my defence, by being an independent (AKA stingy) traveler I'm still well ahead.

## Contributor details

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Chris was Principal of Asquith Boys High (1991-2000) and Davidson High (2002-2005), as well as NSWSPC Futures Principal in Bridge Street in 2001. He was President of the NSWSPC from 2002-2006. He is now a writer and advocate, in part for the Centre for Policy Development. Chris is a NSWSPC Life Member and was awarded his AM in 2007.