

Economy air travel is like steerage used to be on emigrant ships.

By William Corden

Believe it or not, way back in colonial days a naval architect was given an award in Liverpool for designing a new storage system in the prow of slave ships. This design allowed the traders to pack in more slaves in unspeakable misery on their cargo voyages from places like Liverpool and Bristol to the United States. Because of the culture of the times, the shipping community took pride in the design and held a dinner in appreciation/celebration of his efforts.. Lives lost in the voyages were referred to as "shrinkage"

Fast forward to present day and you have descendants of that same design culture now working for Airlines like Cathay Pacific, or WestJet .They are determined (or have to, because of current flight economics) to wring every last dollar out of every flight they make, no matter what misery that entails for the passengers.

They ought to be ASHAMED of themselves for the way they jam in the economy class seats!

A recent flight was only one step away from them pitchforking us into the cabin.

I'm a male of average height and weight (5'9")and I can tell you that you could barely get a cigarette paper between my knees and the seat back in front of me. When the seat in front eased back, you wouldn't have been able get a sheet of graphene in the space and graphene is only one atom thick.

The incredible shrinking airlines: can anyone actually be comfortable in a 17-inch seat?



Higher fares don't necessarily mean more space. Photograph: gchutka/Getty Images (Posed by models)

You would think, wouldn't you, that with the newer bigger jets being more efficient on fuel and more cabin space inside that they would cut the passengers some slack?

But no, it's a full court press from the moment you get on and you can hardly turn around in the aisleways.

One of the most uncomfortable and degrading trips I have EVER made, and this from Cathay Pacific who at one stage held the blue riband for service.

Shame on them for dropping the torch, it will be a long long time before I consider travelling with them again, get yourself some more enlightened seating design layout staff.

Photograph from the [Guardian](#)