

# Coach touring season extending?

**A**utumnal coach tour bookings for some have increased, with bookings for the colder months coming in. The Coach Tourism Association (CTA) claim this extension will go right through to next year. However, not all operators are seeing this expanding coach tourism season.

Bus and Coach Buyer has been in touch with the industry, investigating whether anecdotal reports of an extended coach touring season is happening.

Robert Shaw, CTA chair, said: "In response to demand many operators are adding tours to their programmes this year. Hotel availability tends to be easier in these months and rates more competitive.

"The extension will go on right through until spring 2022. Hopefully by attracting new customers to the market it will not be an anomaly but stretch into future years."

Grand UK Holidays has always operated holidays throughout the autumn, including into November and beyond. The tour operator's Marketing Manager, Sally Hubble-Button, told Bus and Coach Buyer: "This year, we have certainly noticed an increase in demand for autumnal staycations and we do have perhaps a slightly larger programme than we would normally offer.

"There's been a lot of interest in UK coach holidays this year. With most of our travel plans from 2020 being cancelled



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or postponed, and with the general public perhaps not having the confidence to venture abroad quite yet, UK touring breaks have proven to be very popular. We have been operating holidays since we were able to from 17 May, luckily with no interruption. What we have noticed is that a slight change in booking trends, with people booking later than normal. Historically, the majority of our holiday makers tended to book within

a three-month period of when their holiday departs, we are finding now that we are getting a larger number of late bookings within a six-week period of departure."

Crusader Holidays, the coach holidays sister-business of Motts Travel, is looking forward to a better year in 2022. On whether the staycation market has boosted coach tours, MD of Crusader Holidays, Val Mott, highlighted there are still some difficulties in place that mean

a full return to coach touring has not yet been seen. She said: "When you do get a tour away, you end up with problems at the hotel. There are meal time restrictions, etc; it's not the same experience that people are looking for."

Val said the business will be planning UK tours rather than overseas tours for next year.

Some operators are unaffected. Director of Phillips Travel International, Allen Phillips, said: "We have quite a few tours set to go out over the next few weeks. We have always done tours throughout the year, throughout our 40 years. We've never really called it a season. On some instances, we have carried more in the winter than we have on some summer tours."

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**Bus and Coach Buyer's digital reach in the industry is growing.**

Our current Google analytics show user numbers have increased 12.8% on our [www.busandcoachbuyer.com](http://www.busandcoachbuyer.com) website in August. Over on our online vehicle sales section ([classifieds.busandcoachbuyer.com](http://classifieds.busandcoachbuyer.com)), user numbers have risen 5.7% on the previous month. What's more, you can now keep up to date with the latest industry news from *Bus and Coach Buyer* on the Apple News app.

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Despite our success in the digital realm, Bus and Coach Buyer is still on a mission to bring you quality content in print, currently on a fortnightly basis.

