



## Scottish Association for Public Transport

# SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

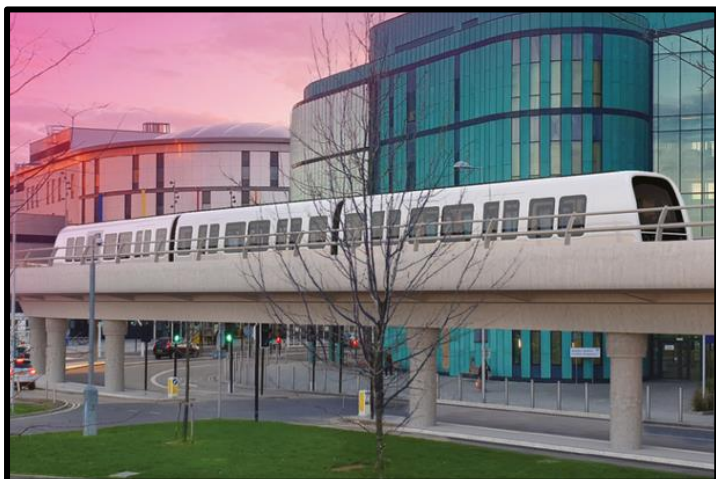
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### 2022 SAPT November Members' Meeting

A **Glasgow** meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November** starting at **17.00** in the Mercure Hotel, Ingram Street (near Queen St station). All SAPT members welcome.

Topics will include the latest on **ClydeMetro** (picture below), the need for better interconnecting ScotRail services across Scotland, progress with hydrogen trains, and the new SPT Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland.



*ClydeMetro is a major project in the Scottish Government's STPR2 review and the flagship transport scheme in STP's Regional Transport Strategy.*

*Routes issues and technology will be discussed at the SAPT meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November, giving members an opportunity to influence development of this transformational project.*

**Subscription renewal reminder:** Any members who have not renewed subscriptions are reminded to send a cheque (made out to SAPT) to: Robin McGregor, SAPT, 19 Whittinghame Drive, Glasgow G12 0XT or pay by bank transfer to: 83-07-06 / 00258248 / The Scottish Association for Public Transport. Please use your membership number or name as reference.

**Rates are:** Individual £15, unwaged £8, family £20, voluntary organisation £18

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# 1 The Impact of the Pandemic on ScotRail

Scott Prentice

Head of Business Development at ScotRail

*Summary of Presentation to SAPT AGM June 10<sup>th</sup> 2022*

**Rail Use:** Scott started by showing graphs of the weekly ScotRail peak and off-peak journeys from January 2020 to May 2022. Peak travel of over one million journeys per week, with off-peak around 800,000, dropped dramatically over the lockdown. Off-peak had almost recovered by May 2022, but peak journeys are still less than half of pre-covid levels.

A survey of what customers value shows reliability and punctuality are top priorities, followed in descending order by price of tickets, availability of seats, service frequency, information about delays, train cleanliness, and accurate and timely information at stations and on trains. Clean toilets on trains, less engineering disruption, good connections with other trains and buses, and reduced journey times are further priorities.

**Rail Costs:** Detailed bar charts of passengers per carriage, revenue and costs per route, and overall costs showed the high cost of ScotRail. The rail budget in 2022/23 is £1,397m which is 32% of the total Net Zero, Energy and Transport portfolio. In 2019/20 rail accounted for 19% of all public transport journeys, 6% of all travel to work trips, and 2.6% of all journeys. Between 2015 and 2019 passenger journeys increased from 95.7m to 99.1m (4% increase) with the number of seats provided each weekday rising from 505k to 645k (+28%).

**Decarbonisation:** More than 75% of passengers already travel on a decarbonised (electric) train. All ScotRail InterCity and rural trains and half of the suburban train fleet will be life expired by the 2030s. New electric and battery electric trains are faster, greener and cheaper to operate than the trains they will replace.

Operating cost (£ per vehicle mile)	Diesel	Battery-electric	Electric
Fuel/energy	0.47	0.35	0.32
V track access charge	0.11	0.11	0.09
Maintenance	1.36	0.97	0.80
Total	1.94	1.43	1.21

The order size is large enough to allow trains which meet the needs of Scotland's suburban, intercity and rural markets to be specified. This will transform the customer offer in terms of comfort, information and accessibility.

**Future Targets:** The old timetable was expensive, delivered poor performance and didn't meet all customer needs. The 2022 *Fit for the Future Timetable* is a new starting point which tries to balance efficiency whilst meeting the needs of communities.

Rail has a large fixed asset covering most of the country. There is no financially sustainable route to net zero if we use it less. ScotRail must reduce costs and support light rail. Government needs to direct people to rail for some journeys. The markets ScotRail serves are evolving and customers will make more complex journeys. This needs to be supported.

Decarbonisation makes the future for rail very positive: doubling patronage to 200m journeys per annum is possible BUT ONLY IF SCOTRAIL CAN GET COSTS UNDER CONTROL.

For full information see: [www.scotrail.co.uk/about-scotrail/fit-future/detailed-assessment](http://www.scotrail.co.uk/about-scotrail/fit-future/detailed-assessment)

## 2 SAPT Inverness Meeting Notes (8 September 2022)

Many of us were unfortunately unable to reach the SAPT Inverness meeting due to flooding of the railway at Perth. The meeting went ahead with Highland area members in the Mercure Hotel. Thanks are due to SAPT committee member **Neil Wallace** for the following summary.

**Stagecoach Presentation:** Davie Simpson, Chief Engineer gave an interesting update on Next Generation Electric Buses for Inverness. Topics covered:

- £9.1M new fleet partly funded by Scottish Zero Emission Bus Challenge Fund
- Inverness city routes 1 to 9 to be operated by electric buses from later this year
- Video shown of build process and road testing at Yutong factory in China
- Buses to receive internal fit-out in Yorkshire before arriving in Inverness
- First of new batch expected to be available for staff training in October
- Greatly improved range from first generation, up from 50 miles to 200 miles
- Buses to be charged in their operating sequence to avoid spikes in demand
- Individual driving behaviour will be monitored similar to Green Road system

Other points included ongoing autonomous vehicle trials on Inverness campus; Inverness Bus Station problematic layout; facelift for building; the need for extended opening of toilets to suit early Citylink departures; early planned reintroduction of printed timetables.

It was noted that bus stop information displays were often unreliable in the Highlands.



*Next Generation all-electric Stagecoach buses will transform Inverness into a green transport hub.*

*Picture courtesy of Stagecoach*

**HITRANS rail update** provided by Neil Wallace based on information from Frank Roach to FoFNL:

- New Inverness Airport station - to have nearby headshunt for possible timber traffic
- Evanton - community to be updated on lengthy timescale for proposed station
- Invergordon - probable key role if Cromarty Firth becomes Green Freeport
- Inverness Station - planners supportive of major redevelopment opportunities. The current station buildings and track layout are regarded as cramped.

Comments were made on the need for timetable displays at stations to be restored.

There was a discussion on the SAPT draft paper 'Developing a World Class Transport System for Scotland' (see Section 3). It was noted that urban and rural areas may require different integrated solutions. Regarding the comparisons being made with 10 European countries, some examples were given from the Netherlands which had a similar modal share to Scotland.

### 3 Public Transport Experience from small European Countries

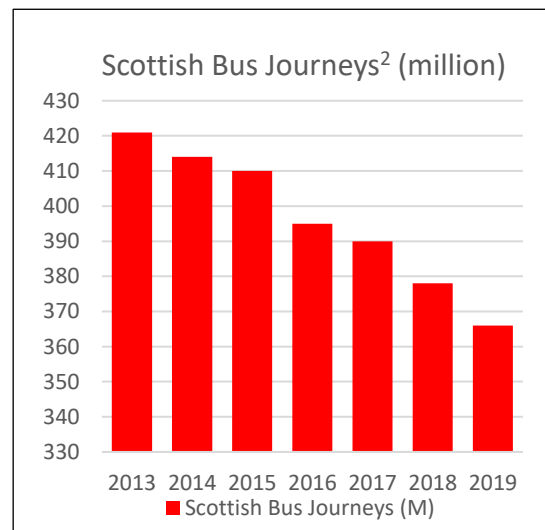
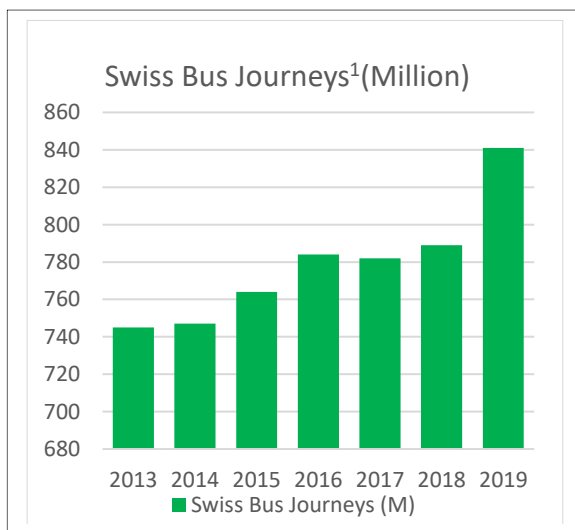
The Scottish Government is issuing a series of papers comparing economic and social indicators in the UK with performance in ten European countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

In a submission being made to the Scottish Government (***Developing a World Class Transport System for Scotland***) SAPT focuses on comparing public transport in these European countries (except Iceland) with Scotland. Evidence from other countries shows that Scottish public transport should be performing better.

Scottish bus and rail services face a post-covid crisis of falling use and rising costs at a time of increased pressure on public finances. Yet urban transport in main cities in Switzerland and Austria (and Germany) has prospered through public transport collaborations incorporating rail, bus and tram operators (*Verkehrsverbunde*). Metros have boosted city travel in several cities.

In rural areas in some countries, coordination of local buses with the national rail network is a key factor in increasing passenger numbers and bus revenue. Leisure trips by public transport can cut road congestion and pollution at tourist hotspots. The graph below shows a dramatic contrast in bus usage trends comparing Scotland and Switzerland over 7 years (2013 to 2019).

#### Trends in Bus Journeys in Switzerland and Scotland 2013 - 2019



One factor affecting bus decline in Scotland is road congestion delaying buses, though this also occurs elsewhere. But evidence shows that other countries with integrated public transport perform much better than Scotland where the transport framework is still largely based on the competitive approach of the Westminster 1985 Transport Act which deregulated buses.

Changes to Scottish public transport organisation and funding must now be considered.

Environmental and transport policy should exploit the potential of bus and rail together to meet the challenges of achieving net zero, reduced car and energy use and improved public transport connectivity. Transport is the biggest (36%) and fastest growing contributor to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Scotland. A better public transport network will be a key factor in tackling climate change and improving connectivity. Electric trains and low-carbon buses and active travel can cut emissions and energy use **but only if car owners can be attracted to switch to public transport.**

References 1 Eurostat (<https://ec.europa.eu>).

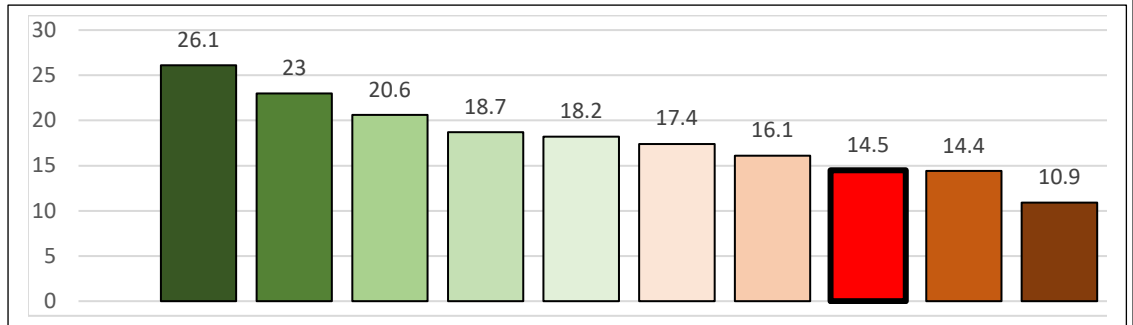
2 Scottish Transport Statistics <https://www.transport.gov.scot>



The table and chart below compare transport modal share (%) statistics for public transport and car in Scotland (2019 pre-covid) with other small northern European countries.

**Public Transport Modal Share (%) for ten small European countries (2019)**

Country:	Switzerland	Austria	Sweden	Belgium	Ireland	Denmark	Finland	Scotland	Netherlands	Norway
Public Transport (bus+rail)	26.1	23.0	20.6	18.7	18.2	17.4	16.1	<b>14.5</b>	14.4	10.9
Car	73.9	77.0	79.5	81.3	85.6	82.7	83.9	<b>85.7</b>	85.6	89.1



Country: Switzerland Austria Sweden Belgium Ireland Denmark Finland **Scotland** Netherlnd Norway

**In Scotland, public transport modal share is lower** than in the other countries other than Norway, and the Netherlands (where cycling, not included in these statistics, is high). Population densities and other geographical factors vary between countries and this affects transport usage patterns.

But statistics show that **Scottish bus usage was falling** pre-covid while growing in most other comparator countries. **Between 2014 and 2019 Scottish bus use fell by 12%**, despite bus travel being free for half of Scots. Over the same period Irish bus use grew by 24% and in Norway by 22%.

Rail travel growth in Scotland also compares badly with most other small European countries. ScotRail showed the lowest overall growth over 5 years to 2019 (4%) after Denmark (-1%). Finland rail travel grew by 36%, Ireland by 30%, and Sweden by 28%. The five-year period was mostly covered by the Abellio ScotRail franchise.

Successful features of public transport systems in other comparator countries if adopted in Scotland would help reverse the downward trend of bus use, boosting prospects of bus and rail growth. Most successful countries have integrated transport combining bus and train and, in urban areas, tram and metro to provide a high-quality transport network competitive with car travel for many journeys.

In many continental countries, **local buses** operate as part of the national public transport network. Timetables are co-ordinated to connect with other bus routes and trains.

In Scotland's biggest city **Glasgow** and surrounding areas bus travel has **dropped by 31%** in 10 years from 234M (2008/9) to 161M (2018/19) journeys. Bus travel in other Scottish regions has also fallen though by less, caused partly by long bus journey times due to road congestion. This compares with Zurich, a Swiss city of comparable size to Glasgow but with higher car ownership, where overall public transport use **increased by 61% over 15 years** from 1990 to 2015. This was achieved by co-ordination between rail, bus and tram and investment in a cross-city S-bahn tunnel for local trains.

Many continental countries have **multi-modal fares systems** offering relatively cheap tickets valid on bus or rail, particularly in cities. Introducing integrated ticket systems in Scotland would need co-operation between all transport operators. A further issue would be concessionary travel which is funded in Scotland by the state to provide free bus travel for those eligible, but doesn't include Edinburgh Tram, Glasgow Subway or the state-owned ScotRail. Transport integration with a multi-modal fare system in Scotland needs this inconsistency to be resolved, at least for local travel.

**A world class integrated public transport system for Scotland** will boost inclusive connectivity, cut road congestion, emissions and energy use, and increase bus and rail revenue and efficiency. The Scottish Government should put in hand re-organisation of transport authorities and bus service provision, co-ordination with rail services, and reform of the fares system to develop an efficient interlinked bus and rail route network. SAPT have sent a full report to the Transport Minister.

## 4 Minutes of SAPT AGM held in Perth on June 10<sup>th</sup> 2022

### 4.1 SAPT Annual Report 2021/22

Green transport featured in COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021. SAPT was invited to presentations and demonstration runs of the Hydroflex hydrogen/ electric train and Vivarail battery train from Glasgow Central.

Transport Scotland published the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 in March 2022. SAPT was pleased that our “ClydeMetro” concept was developed into a substantially extended network proposal in STPR2. SAPT Chair John McCormick had a meeting with Glasgow City Council to explore the proposals in greater detail. There will clearly be a lengthy period of discussion, analysis and appraisal of options, and public consultations, before the project gets underway. SAPT will continue to be involved. However SAPT expressed disappointment to Transport Scotland that upgrading the Inverness-Aberdeen line was not included in STPR2, and that HS2 extension to Scotland was given low priority.

The ScotRail consultation for changes to train services to align with post-covid usage led to a new timetable introduced in May 2022. SAPT were concerned about some aspects of this, particularly the loss of the Fife and Cathcart Circle services, though changes on other routes were considered to be acceptable. However the new timetables were overtaken by driver overtime bans leading to an emergency timetable with much reduced services. The SAPT committee is concerned about the disappearance of paper timetables, both as booklets and at stations. We will raise this with ScotRail and Transport Scotland once rail services stabilise.

SAPT responded to ScotRail’s consultation on reducing ticket office opening hours. Increasing use of m-tickets and smartcards make it inevitable that sale of paper tickets will continue to decline.

SAPT committee member Neil Wallace progressed discussions on bus services with HITRANS and bus operators. The Transport Scotland announcement in April 2022 of a Network Support Grant to replace Bus Service Operators Grant was welcomed as it should help to focus government funding on supporting socially necessary services rather than profitable commercial routes.

The SAPT committee held our first in-person meeting in Glasgow in March 2022 but are continuing to use zoom for some meetings as this enables more committee members to participate easily from around the country.

A new laptop computer was acquired for production of newsletters and handling SAPT communications, replacing an increasingly slow computer. SAPT funds are healthy following a bequest from a former member.

Thanks are due to John Wilson and John Yellowlees for contributing news items for Scottish Transport Matters. Thanks are also due to Scott Simpson for maintaining membership records and postal distribution of newsletters, Robin McGregor for looking after the accounts, David Brown for checking them, and to SAPT Vice-Chair David Giles for continuing to enhance the website, arranging SAPT Zoom committee meetings and summarising minutes from zoom.

### 4.2 Election of Officebearers

A proposal to appoint Tom Hart as Honorary Vice-President was unanimously passed. Arthur Homan-Elsy resigned as Minutes Secretary. The office-bearers and committee were confirmed as:

President:	Stewart Stevenson		
Vice Presidents:	Tom Harris, Dr.Malcolm Reed, Tom Hart, Lawrence Marshall		
Chair:	Dr.John McCormick	Vice-Chairs:	Prof David Murray-Smith, David Giles
Treasurer:	Robin McGregor	Membership Secretary:	Scott Simpson
Strathclyde:	David Brown, Stewart Leighton		
Lothian:	Paul Tetlaw, Graham Atkins		
Fife:	Laurie Naumann	Borders:	Prof Chris Harvie
Highlands & Islands:	Dr.John Logie, Rolf Schmidt		
Central & Tayside:	Arthur Homan-Elsy		
Elected Members:	Dr.Ann Glen MBE, Neil Wallace		

Collated by John McCormick with contributions from John Wilson and John Yellowlees

*S Scotsman*    *EN Evening News*    *T Times*    *H Herald*

## Rail

After the Queen's death at Balmoral on 6<sup>th</sup> September, and the following lying in state in St.Giles, the E&G ran all night on 12 September and every 15 minutes during the following day, and Edinburgh Trams also ran overnight. The extra trains were not advertised at the insistence of the Scottish Government. Alex Hynes told RAIL that Waverley had 101,489 people on 12 September, compared to 64,000 on the same day a week before, a 55% rise. Over a thousand customers passed through the station between midnight and 0500. The 0030 had 140 people, and even at 0200, 0300 and 0400 they had been 500 and 100 passengers.

Network Rail has installed lift-shafts for the £15M new East Linton Station. The Campaign for North East Rail was set to receive a grant from the Scottish Government's Just Transition Fund towards a study into reopening of lines to Buchan.

Caledonian Sleeper has closed their Guest Lounge at Stirling, and is unable to accommodate daytime travellers who had previously used the early-morning train from Dalwhinnie to Inverness withdrawn by ScotRail in May. 25 ScotRail HSTs are now able to carry up to six cycles.

On 20 September it was revealed that RMT conductors on ScotRail had voted 1199-364 for strike action and 1336-228 for action short of a walkout on a 69% turnout, but the union sought an immediate meeting with management before announcing any stoppages. Announcing a strike by ScotRail conductors on 5 October during the SNP conference, RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said: "ScotRail knows this offer is not good enough and needs to take into account the escalating cost-of-living crisis. Our members refuse to be made poorer and will exercise their industrial strength to let ScotRail know that they will not rest until they are paid what they deserve." On 30 September RMT announced an instruction to its ScotRail members not to work any overtime or work on a rest day from 0001 on Friday 14 October until further notice. The union had advised management that it remained available for meaningful talks in order to resolve this dispute. A Scottish Government spokesperson said, "There can be no increase on the current pay offer".

Network Rail members of the RMT trade union are taking part in 24-hour strike action on Saturday, 5 November, Monday, 7 November, and Wednesday, 9 November. This industrial action is taking place across the Great Britain railway network, including ScotRail services, resulting from a pay dispute with Network Rail. This dispute does not involve ScotRail staff, however it has a major knock-on effect on the train operator's ability to provide services as the RMT planned action will involve Network Rail staff in Scotland. ScotRail plan to run limited services on eleven Central Belt routes from 07.30 until 18.30

Rail industry bosses have reacted with indignation to one of Liz Truss's last acts as prime minister: the shelving of a transport bill to reform the sector with the creation of Great British Railways. The reorganisation into, effectively, a British Rail MkII needed a new Transport Act to explain how it would all work. The plan, however, was dropped by Anne-Marie Trevelyan, the transient UK transport secretary (as at mid-October), who said the UK government had more important things to fix (T). Mark Harper has been appointed as Secretary of State for Transport.

Buses replaced trains between Inverness and Nairn from October 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> to allow work to be undertaken on the new station near Inverness Airport. The station will have a new passing loop with enhanced track and signalling (H).

HS2 plans could be derailed in the hunt for £50bn savings. The high-speed rail line could have its budget cut as part of the governments drive to fix the "mistakes" made by Liz Truss. Spending cuts and tax rises are due to be unveiled on November 17<sup>th</sup> (T).

## Buses and Trams

Bus service cuts and fares increases affecting far more people than ScotRail's reduced timetable are threatened by the expected axing of Covid recovery funding (S).

SPT launched a consultation on its Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland 2022-2037. The consultation ended on 28<sup>th</sup> October.

Free tram fares for young people in Edinburgh risk being scrapped due to rising costs. Introduced in January, the scheme had up until August cost £109,000, but officials forecast that with the opening of the tram extension to Newhaven scheduled for spring 2023, passenger numbers would increase and the cost of providing free travel for under-22s could soar. An initial cost of about £25,000 a month could increase to £30,000 a month. The transport and environment convener of Edinburgh City Council said he was disappointed that "the SNP/Green government refuses to fund tram travel for under-22s and over-60s in the same way as it does for buses. Edinburgh is being penalised for investing in a travel mode which is key to our aspiration to tackle climate change and cut congestion."

Edinburgh Council has approved a proposal by Drum Brae/Gyle LibDem Councillor Edward Thornley to suggest to Lothian Buses "a new ticket" so passengers needing "two buses to their destination only have to pay one fare" and who says "there appeared to be an increasing number of service changes which left passengers without direct buses which they had previously had and so having to pay more for their journey" (EN).

## Ferries

The Project Neptune document by Ernst and Young, commissioned towards the end of 2020, was finally made public in September 2022. This concluded that a lack of transparency in Scotland's main ferry network led to an increased risk of overspending and inappropriate decision-making. MSPs on Holyrood's rural economy and connectivity committee found multiple failings over the £97M contract for two vessels which eventually led to the Port Glasgow Fergusons yard being nationalised in 2019. Costs have since risen hugely to above £250M. Both ferries will be over five years later than anticipated, putting added pressure on the ferry network (T). Holyrood's Public Audit Committee visited the Fergusons yard on 31<sup>st</sup> October.

Two more ferries are to be built for Scotland's Western Isles. A £115M contract to start construction could be awarded before the end of 2022, with plans for the vessels to be deployed on the Uig, Tarbert and Lochmaddy triangle. The new vessels will use the same specification as the pair now being built in a £91 million contract in Turkey for the Islay routes (T).

Meanwhile, businessman Dr Stuart Ballantyne has suggested building a fleet of catamarans as a long-term ferry replacement programme for the Scottish Government. Dr Ballantyne's Australian company, Sea Transport, which built the MV Pentalina for Pentland Ferries, could utilise the Fergusons shipyard to build the catamarans. Transport Scotland has a programme for 21 new ferries over the next decade (H).

Pentland Ferries vessel MV Alfred ran aground with 84 passengers on board on Tuesday 5th July. The bow sustained impact damage when it hit the island of Swona on the route between Gills Bay and St.Margaret's Hope in Orkney. Some passengers were transferred to St.Margaret's Hope by lifeboat before the Alfred was refloated. All sailings were cancelled until the former ferry MV Pentalina returned to service on 21<sup>st</sup> July. Northlink Ferries provided additional sailings between Stromness and Scrabster in the meantime. (John O'Groat Journal and Caithness Courier).

## Air

Ryanair boss Michael o'Leary has said that the days of cheap flights are over. Rising fuel prices mean average fares are likely to increase from €40 last year to €50 over the next 5 years. It signals the end of Ryanair's trademark €0.99 fares. Nevertheless Ryanair is launching its largest ever winter schedule from Scotland with new routes from Edinburgh to London, Grenoble, Santiago in Spain, and Verona. The airline's director of marketing said Ryanair has a tendency to do well when recessionary times hit. People tend to trade down rather than stop flying (T).