



Scottish Association for Public Transport

SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

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SAPT Transport Meeting

Inverness Thursday November 2nd 2023 13.45-15.45

Spectrum Centre, 1B Margaret Street, Inverness IV1 1LS

(Beside bus station, near railway station)

Coffee/tea available from 13.15

- **Passenger experiences on public transport**
Neil Wallace, SAPT
- **Highland Bus Partnership Fund Project and Bus Service Improvement Plan**
Julie Cromarty, Team Leader – Sustainable Transport, Highland Council
- **Highland Rail Development**
Highland Main Line, West Highland, Kyle and Far North Lines, Inverness-Aberdeen line
Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, HITRANS

SAPT Membership

If you are not a member of SAPT and are interested in joining, please contact us at sapt@btinternet.com to request membership and arrange to pay the subscription at the relevant rate:

Membership rates: Individuals £15; Family Rate £20; Pensioners, students, unwaged £8; Voluntary Organisations £18; Commercial Organisations £30; Local Authorities £100; Transport organisations £200.

Send a cheque (made out to SAPT) to: Robin McGregor, SAPT, 19 Whittingehame Drive, Glasgow G12 0XT or pay by bank transfer to: 83-07-06 / 00258248 / The Scottish Association for Public Transport.

Please use your name or organisation name as reference on bank transfers.

1 Levenmouth Re-opening and Fife Timetable Consultation

The Levenmouth line is expected to open in late spring 2024. Transport minister Fiona Hyslop installed the final ceremonial golden pandrol clip at Leven on 25th August 2023. Fife Council has granted planning permission for the new station at Leven, and traffic orders were approved for 51 additional car parking spaces there. Cameron Bridge station will be unmanned (photo on right) but a train crew depot for 10 drivers and 10 conductors will be based at Levenmouth. It is expected that three trains will be stabled overnight, initially consisting of Class 158 or Class 170 diesel units. Barrhead workings were shortformed over several days for Stirling-based driver training on Class 156s over the Maryhill route to release 158s for the Levenmouth route



Photo of Cameron Bridge: Network Rail

ScotRail plan to introduce services in two phases as trains and crew become available.

The Planned Timetable, which would be introduced in 2025, includes the following daytime weekday services:

- One local train per hour from Edinburgh to Leven via Kirkcaldy.
- One local train per hour from Edinburgh to Leven via Dunfermline and Cowdenbeath
- One local train per hour from Edinburgh to Perth via Kirkcaldy (as at present).
- One local train per hour from Edinburgh to Cowdenbeath via Dunfermline (as at present).
- One semi-fast train per hour from Edinburgh to Dundee via Kirkcaldy.
- Two ScotRail intercity trains every 3 hours between Edinburgh and Aberdeen (as at present)
- Additional peak local services between Edinburgh and Fife (as at present)

The initial timetable to be introduced in late spring 2024 will provide either two trains per hour to Levenmouth via Dunfermline, or one train per hour via the faster Kirkcaldy route and a semi-fast hourly Edinburgh-Dundee train.



Above: Diagrammatic map issued by ScotRail for new timetable showing Cameron Bridge and Leven.

Network Rail has requested planning permission to build a footbridge over both the Leven railway and the heritage railway along the Mountfleurie to Kirkland Path. A 31 August closure date was announced for five level crossings on the Levenmouth rail link, which it was claimed by some would leave a bitter legacy: Ramblers Scotland called for a court order to stop the Doubledykes closure.

ScotRail are holding a consultation on the proposed Leven timetables. In our response to the consultation, SAPT welcomes the twice-hourly pattern alternately via Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline, but we advocate the train journey times from Edinburgh via Kirkcaldy cut to one hour if possible.

2

The Sunak Axe slashes HS2

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's decision to axe HS2 north of Birmingham is widely viewed as a pre-election short-term gamble for votes by promising, instead, dozens of local road and rail schemes mostly in England. Most of the mooted schemes are concepts rather than deliverable projects.

The surviving part of HS2 phase 1 will join the West Coast Main Line at Handsacre, east of Stafford. At the southern end, work was stopped on the Old Oak Common to Euston section earlier this year, leaving trains to stop six miles short of London in a station with poor onward links to the London Underground network (other than the Elizabeth line). The Prime Minister's announcement on 4th October said that the line would now continue to Euston.

But now officials have admitted HS2 will not reach Euston unless private sector investment can be secured. A Euston Development Corporation will be set up to develop housing and offices at Euston, a plan reported to have been rejected by Sunak in 2020! But only 6 platforms will be provided for HS2 trains from Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow instead of 11 specified originally.

HS2 History

SAPT supported the concept of High Speed Rail since our "**FastTrack North**" conference in 2005. A 3-hour target for Glasgow/Edinburgh-London rail journey times to rival air travel was based on speeds achieved in France since 1984 with TGVs. Many other countries including Germany, Spain, Italy, Japan and China have developed extensive high speed networks.

We believe HS2 Ltd has been mismanaged from its creation in 2009. It was decided to build new dead-end terminal stations in Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, ruling out future through running. A train speed of 225 mph was specified, compared with 186 mph for TGVs, increasing track and train construction costs. 65 miles of tunnels are being built on the 140-mile route, mostly to avoid disturbing voters in the Chilterns. HS2 Ltd specified a continental loading gauge, so tunnels and bridges are higher and more expensive than needed for UK trains, though there will be no link to the continent. Costs have spiralled to as much as 10 times higher per mile than in other countries. The original HS2 plan for London-Glasgow/Edinburgh trains was to for combined portions for Glasgow and Edinburgh transferring from HS2 near Wigan to the West Coast Main Line (WCML). Train portions would have split and joined at Carstairs, increasing journey times and unreliability.

What Now?

Plans need to be rewritten and a new long-term strategy for Anglo-Scottish rail travel developed.

In the immediate future, Avanti should re-organise service and stopping patterns on the WCML to restore a 4 hr 10 min Glasgow-London journey time (compared with today's 4 hours 30 minutes).

Perhaps HS2 will eventually be completed from Handsacre near Stafford to London Euston (by 2035?). Trains from Glasgow Central to London could transfer to the new line at that time. There seems little point in trains from Glasgow or Edinburgh running to the intermediate terminus at Old Oak Common in the London suburbs before HS2 reaches Euston. (Edinburgh-London journeys are likely to continue to be almost as fast via the East Coast route even after HS2 is open to Euston.)

However, HS2 trains will run slower than Pendolinos between Stafford and Glasgow as HS2 trains will not have the tilt mechanism of Pendolinos which allow curves to be taken more quickly. The maximum speed for non-tilt trains on the WCML is 110 mph. This will add more than 15 minutes to journey times between Stafford and Glasgow, losing some of the benefit of running at up to 225 mph south of Handsacre.

Network Rail should be funded from some of the "saved" HS2 money to identify sections of the WCML where speed limits can be raised for non-tilt trains. Track realignments and upgrades to raise speeds at locations such as Carlisle and Law Junction are needed if zero-carbon electric trains are to compete more strongly with polluting air travel.

But "FastTrack North" will undoubtedly re-appear on the future transport agenda.

3

Autonomous Buses go public

by Neil Wallace

Claiming to be the world's first full size, self driving autonomous bus service, the new 14 mile route AB1 commenced public service in May between Edinburgh Park interchange and Ferrytoll park and ride in Fife.

The project, named CAVForth is one of the most ambitious and complex autonomous bus trials worldwide. The project is led by Fusion Processing Ltd in cooperation with project partners Stagecoach, Transport Scotland, Alexander Dennis, Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) and Bristol Robotics Laboratory. It is co-funded by the UK Government's Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV), delivered in partnership with Innovate UK.

The buses use Fusion Processing's autonomous drive system, CAVStar, which utilises data from a suite of state-of-the-art sensors including cameras, LiDAR and radar together with artificial intelligence processing to deliver optimum efficiency throughout the journey, in all traffic conditions. CAVForth operates at the highest level of autonomous vehicle technology currently permissible on public roads, SAE Level 4, requiring the buses to retain a safety driver.



Two trained drivers were on board when I tried out the new route this Summer - when one acts as safety driver behind the steering wheel, the other acts as 'captain' moving around the bus to take fares and answer passenger's queries; such as: When is the bus driving itself? Answer - listen for the 'beep'!

On that day, only the motorway sections of the route were autonomous. The bus was limited to the nearside lane at a maximum speed of 50mph. It would adjust speed and/or stop for obstructions ahead, but required safety driver intervention to go round them. Safety driver intervention was also required for other roads, roundabouts and traffic lights etc. The photo (right) shows a safety driver in control across the Forth Road Bridge, where the layout of traffic cones was beyond the current capabilities of the autonomous system.



When returning to Edinburgh Park, a Napier University researcher with clipboard was waiting to ask passengers if they wished to fill in a 4 page survey - the other passengers all declined but I was happy to answer and give my comments.

A few weeks later, I was invited by ENU's Transport Research Institute to take part in one of their online focus groups with 10 or so other members of the public who had travelled on the new service. This explored individual attitudes and perceptions towards autonomous buses, and actual experiences during their recent journeys.

Looking towards the future, some other participants were keen to see further stages of the autonomous project, including the proposed route extension to Dunfermline.

I adopted a more cautious position, not yet convinced that a bus in autonomous mode could cope with various obstructions and keep to a schedule in busy traffic situations. However, the trial should help to establish whether it will be possible and safe for the bus to drive itself on the whole route without manual intervention.

It will be interesting to see how the technology adapts - similar trials are ongoing in England where an electric minibus trial in a business park has expanded to connect with a railway station and now using a full size electric bus - more routes to follow!

The focus on green issues has accelerated since the COP26 in Glasgow in 2021. Transport Scotland issued the Scottish HLOS & SOFA covering the period 2024-2029. SPT released a Regional Transport Strategy following consultations. Steering groups have been set up for ClydeMetro. ScotRail electrification of the Barrhead and East Kilbride lines is progressing. The Scottish hydrogen train pilot project involving SAPT Vice-Chair Professor David Murray-Smith was completed in March 2023.

SAPT issued two major papers during the year. "Developing a World-class Transport System for Scotland: Experience from small European Countries" (November 2022) compared Scottish public transport somewhat unfavourably with the systems in nine small European countries. The second paper was "Go Anywhere, Anyhour" (April 2023) which continued the argument for improving rail connections. John McCormick, David Murray-Smith and David Giles had a constructive meeting with ScotRail to discuss these proposals. We intend to develop the concept further.

SAPT chairman John McCormick was invited to join the Scottish High Speed Rail Group Task Force chaired by Alex Neil to put together a report on actions needed in Scotland in preparation for the (eventual) arrival of HS2 services to Scotland. A number of meetings have been held, with the final report agreed in March 2023. Official release has been held up awaiting an appropriate political opportunity.

John McCormick wrote an article on ferry emissions for Transform Scotland, assessing the impact of CalMac ferry replacement plans on cutting ferry emissions.

SAPT committee member Neil Wallace has continued to monitor progress with bus services and attended the CPT national UK bus conference in March representing SAPT. Progress has been made with introducing zero emission battery buses by a number of operators.

SAPT attended two Scottish rail conferences in Glasgow in March 2023.

We have had some discussions about what new trains for scenic lines should be like.

SAPT was invited to join CRAG members on a tram trip to Newhaven two days before the official opening, and look forward to discussions on further extensions.

The SAPT committee held a mixture of zoom and in-person meetings during the year. Two members' meetings were in Glasgow and Inverness but unfortunately the railway was flooded at Perth on the day of the Inverness meeting.

David Murray-Smith organised a transport session with the Glasgow University Engineering Society. Follow-up from students was disappointing but there may be interest in a project to study university travel requirements.

Discussions on a new membership package system for SAPT are taking place, with a view to reducing work involved in maintaining the existing bespoke system.

We were sad to learn of the death of former SAPT Treasurer John Ferris in May 2023. John McCormick and Laurie Naumann attended his funeral in Burntisland.

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, to SAPT Vice-Chair David Giles for continuing to enhance the website, arranging SAPT Zoom committee meetings and summarising minutes from the zoom recording, and to SAPT Vice-Chair David Murray-Smith for organising the AGM.

John McCormick

June 2023

The AGM was introduced by SAPT Honorary President Stewart Stevenson at the Perth AK Bell Library on Friday 16th June 2023. There were three excellent presentations by invited guests.

5.1 Ferry History

Bruce Peter, Professor of Design History at The Glasgow School of Art, gave an illustrated talk on ferries through the ages, from the first train ferry, or “Floating Railway”, from Granton to Burntisland in 1848, to modern day catamaran ferries. Design of the car decks and engines to provide sufficient power while maintaining low enough freeboard is a challenge.



Over the years, Scotland has developed unique designs to suit conditions, from the turntable and lift ABC ferries (1953) on the Clyde to the Columba, Clansman and Hebrides (1964) in the Macbrayne fleet, and to smaller landing craft-type for short routes. Drive-through roll on/roll off operation requiring new linkspans at piers was introduced initially in 1970 by the new Scottish Transport Group using the Caledonia (ex-Stena Baltica) on the Arran route (pictured on left).

Ferries are optimised to transport the maximum payload within constricted length/breadth/draft dimensions. The geography and weather of the west coast of Scotland is particularly challenging. Since the 1990s, the ferry industry has faced a whirlwind of challenging legislation and the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention. Increasing efficiency is specified by the Energy Efficiency Design Index. Alternative fuels now include methanol, ammonia, and LNG (liquefied natural gas). Battery technology is progressing for short routes.

The recent procurement of ferries for CalMac was complicated by artificial political deadlines, loss of in-house shipyard expertise at Fergusons, and construction being started before the design had been fully developed. The older CalMac ferries are becoming increasingly unreliable but there are reliable older ferries in other countries. Maintenance may be an issue here.

5.2 Transport Scotland

Raymond Conville, Senior Policy Officer, Transport Scotland Rail Directorate, gave an update on rail progress.

ScotRail revenue is still below pre-pandemic levels, with a third of businesses still having employees working from home on one or two days a week. Scotland has 2834 route km of railway (11% of the GB total), with 2150 passenger services daily from May 2023. Priorities are passenger and freight growth, decarbonisation, and meeting the net cost reduction challenge.

The High Level Output Statement (HLOS) and Statement of Funds available (SoFA) were issued by Scottish Ministers in February 2023. These lay out what railway activities have to achieve during the next control period, and how much funding is available.

Network Rail (NR) Scotland issued its Strategic Business Plan in July 2023. The rail regulator ORR is due to issue its final determination in October 2023, with a final NR Delivery Plan due by March 2024 covering Control Period 7 (April 2024-2029).



Carstairs Junction was completely rebuilt in 2023 by Network Rail. Photo: NR

5.3 Bus and Coach Presentation

Paul White, Director of CPT Scotland (Confederation for Public Transport), described the challenges facing the bus sector: Covid, Congestion and Cost of Living Crisis. Bus accounts for 75% of all public trips, with 3,700 vehicles travelling 5.5M kilometres. There are 12,000 direct employees. Bus travel contributes £64billion of gross value to the UK economy.

Two thirds of bus users earn under £25K. A quarter of a million people rely on bus to get to work. People are worried that travel to work or education will become more difficult and expensive if local buses are cut. 1 in 4 Scots use the bus every week.

Covid, Brexit and Ukraine have adversely affected patronage, driver availability and costs. Congestion has increased bus journey times by almost half over 50 years. A 10% reduction in bus speeds is estimated to lose between 9.6 and 14% patronage and increase costs.

The Network Support Grant has been removed in Scotland. But the Bus Partnership Fund provides £500M to enable bus operator to work in partnership with local authorities to deliver bus priority measures. Guidance on BSIPS and franchising are delayed until Q424.

Buses are key to decarbonising road transport through technology and modal shift. The Fair Fares Review, Bus Partnership Fund and National Transport Strategy need to support bus travel.

5.4 SAPT AGM Business Meeting

Go Anywhere, Anyhour: John McCormick outlined proposals for integrating ScotRail timetables to make it easy to travel anywhere across the network (see Scottish Transport Matters 2023/2)

Annual Report: John McCormick presented the Annual Report (page 5)

Membership Secretary Report:

Scott Simpson suggested setting up a working group to investigate a new membership computer system with the objective of developing a proposal for the 2024 AGM.

Treasurer's Report

SAPT Treasurer Robin McGregor reported that subscription income is stable and covers annual expenditure. There are no immediate plans to spend the legacy money. A higher interest account has been set up to hold part of this money.

Committee re-election

Tom Hart retired as committee member for south-west Scotland and was nominated as Honorary Vice-President to mark his long and distinguished service with SAPT. Arthur Homan-Elsy resigned from the committee due to ill health and was thanked for his service to the association. The rest of the committee was re-elected en bloc. The 2023/24 committee is:

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

There were no other items of business raised and the meeting closed at 13.45

6

News around Scotland

Contributions from John Wilson and John Yellowlees collated by John McCormick with excerpts from the Scotsman, Evening Standard, Herald, Press & Journal, Courier, Times and other press releases.

Fiona Hyslop has now replaced Kevin Stewart as Scottish transport minister (29th March-6th June 2023), who in turn replaced Jenny Gilruth (24th January 2022 - 29th March 2023), who was preceded by Graeme Dey (19th May 2021-24th January 2022).

Rail

Peak-hour rail fares have been reduced to off-peak levels on ScotRail services for a six-month period from 2nd October 2023 to 31st March 2024 in a move to reduce car travel. The Scottish Government has budgeted £15 million for the six-month pilot project, though this depends on higher ridership generating new revenue. ScotRail estimate peak fares currently generate £60 million of revenue. Peak fares will drop, for instance a Glasgow-Edinburgh return will be cut from £28.90 to £14.90 and Inverness-Elgin will fall from £22.00 to £14.40. Trains are expected to be busier. ScotRail will be using every available carriage and will be monitoring services daily. This follows the 4.8% fares rise in July.

A new station at Winchburgh on the Glasgow-Edinburgh line could result in 1658 fewer daily car journeys, according to a report by Systra for Winchburgh Developments. Transport Scotland is supportive of a station but says delivery and funding would be a matter for the developer. It is understood that planning permission for housing did not include a condition to fund the station.

Delays in ordering the £2 billion train fleet for HS2 risk thousands of jobs at Alstom's Derby works. The start of train manufacturing has been pushed back to late 2026.

Avanti has been awarded a three year contract for the West Coast Main Line by the DfT following a dramatic improvement in performance. Avanti is a joint venture between First Group (70%) and Trenitalia. The CrossCountry franchise has also been extended.

ScotRail drivers voted to accept the latest pay offer. ASLEF's Kevin Lindsay said that this resounding vote of 75% in favour showed the value of positive industrial relations. ASLEF reached one hundred women members in Scotland for the first time in its 143-year history.

Claiming that there were many in the rail industry who were not disappointed to see in disarray the booking-office closure programme which had emanated directly from the DfT, RAIL editor Nigel Harris suggested that the extended deadline was to remove one of the grounds for judicial review. More than 460,000 objections were received to the ticket office closure proposal, on which further dire warnings were made about the implications for disabled travellers.

ScotRail issued "love and support" to the families of the three men killed in the Carmont rail tragedy, three years on from the fatal accident. Calling for them to be implemented in full, RMT said that most Carmont recommendations remained open. Safety campaigner Gareth Dennis said the HSTs had been the wrong choice in the first place since procuring modern trains such as Stadler's could have provided level boarding for just 30% more and would have lasted longer.

ScotRail ran an additional 0607 Glasgow-Fort William and 1836 return and called all trains at Dalmarnock during the 3-5 August UCI World Cycling Championship. An additional 12.48 Fort William-Mallaig and 14.37 return also operated. During the 4-28 August Edinburgh Festivals ScotRail ran two additional late-night trains from Edinburgh to Glasgow plus an additional train on Fridays and/or Saturdays to Glenrothes, Dundee, Bathgate or North Berwick with the returning empty stock advertised as a late-night train during Fringe by the Sea. ScotRail passenger numbers for the weekend of 5/6 August were up 33% on those in July owing to rugby against France at Murrayfield, the UCI World Cycling Championships, start of the football season and the Edinburgh Festivals.

A new crossover at Dunblane comes into use next year, allowing Dunblane trains to depart southbound from Platform 3 using this crossover instead of having to shunt north and reverse over the crossover on the main Glasgow-Aberdeen line to depart from platform 1.

A double-deck container wagon has been trialled for Tesco

From 14 August people could use the new ScotRail Inspiration Hub, an “exciting new online resource with hundreds of ideas for things to do, upcoming events, discounts, and offers all within easy reach of more than 300 stations across Scotland. Whether people are looking for an outdoors adventure, a new dog walk, some history and culture, or a way to entertain the kids, the ScotRail Inspiration Hub can help to make it happen. Jam-packed with hundreds of ideas, all showing the nearest train station, details on train tickets, and other information, the Hub aims to make it as easy as possible to help plan an exciting day trip or short break in Scotland. The national advertising campaign, which centres around a TV advert, aims to provide inspiration by giving a taste of the wide range of destinations and attractions that can be easily accessed by rail.”

Jacobite services resumed after ORR said in a statement: "Following an inspection of West Coast Railway Company Limited's (WCRCL) proposed safety arrangements for the Jacobite service on 8 August, ORR has granted it a new exemption certificate which will allow the Jacobite to recommence operation. This exemption certificate is required for all train operators who want to use hinged door carriages without central door locking fitted. WCRCL's exemption certificate is granted for a timebound period from 8 August to 30 November to enable it to honour its bookings and reflects the interests of its employees whilst its claim for judicial review is determined."

The SRPS magazine Blastpipe contained in the Chairman's report a reminder that since 31 March 2023 ORR had prohibited the operation of carriages on the mainline that were not fitted with central door locking. SRPS had no such carriages, and the cost of fitting a rake was around £300k. In the absence of a business case, the Board had decided to curtail the Mk1 carriage restoration programme at the number required to provide a reliable service on the Bo'ness & Kinniel Railway. Until a business case had been prepared, investment would be targeted at addressing the maintenance backlog and in progressing the longstanding restoration of a number of items of rolling stock. The SRPS Board had appointed a senior and experienced financial professional to help Railtours identify and prepare a business case for the fitting of central door locking. Once this business case had been prepared, the SRPS Board would be in an informed position to review its investment priorities.

Ferries

The MV Glen Sannox, due to be delivered to CMAL in 2018, will be further delayed as it needs extra staircases and wider doors to comply with Maritime and Coastguard Agency safety regulations. It means Glen Sannox may not be available on the Arran route for the start of the summer 2024 timetable. Also the MCA has imposed a limit of 852 passengers instead of the planned 1000 capacity. The second ferry being built at Fergusons, now to be named “Glen Rosa”, will also be further delayed beyond the end of 2024.

The UK government has awarded £15M funding for two environmentally friendly electric ferries for Orkney routes. A 12-metre ferry, due to be delivered in March 2024, will operate a year-round service around the inner North Isles. A 24-metre ferry for passengers and light cargo will link Eday, Stronsay, Sanday and Westray. James Stockan, leader of Orkney council, views this as a pilot to see how electric vessels might be upscaled in future to decarbonise the Orkney fleet.

Meanwhile, Shetland Islands council is exploring construction of tunnels to replace ferries from Shetland mainland to Yell, Whalsay and Bressay. The cost has been estimated (optimistically?) at £500 million. The 12 ferries are on average over 30 years old and make 70,000 crossings annually.

Buses, Trams and Roads

The Edinburgh Tram inquiry has found a litany of avoidable failures caused the tram project to go significantly late and over-budget. Lord Hardie, chair of the inquiry, found the failure was due to Transport Initiatives Edinburgh (TIE) mismanagement and failure to implement the strategy. He also condemned the Scottish ministers' decision to withdraw the co-operation of Transport Scotland officials. Edinburgh council officials gave councillors misleading reports on costs. Lord Hardie's inquiry took almost a decade, cost £13 million, and sifted through six million emails.

Edinburgh Trams has been fined £240,000 after bus driver Carlos Palacio was struck by a tram.

Air pollution has increased since the Glasgow low-emission zone was introduced at the start of the 2023 summer. Over the three-month period from June 2023, nitrogen dioxide and particulates rose by around 10% in Hope Street compared with the same period in 2022. Thousands of buses use Hope Street each day, with car traffic excluded by a bus gate.

A white Peugeot blocking the track at The Shore led to Edinburgh trams terminating at Balfour Street on the evening of 16 August. 22 journeys had been delayed by vehicles illegally parked mostly in Leith between 7 June and 31 July.

SPT Subway director Antony Smith told RAIL that they were currently in the fault-free running testing-phase of the new Subway trains.

The number of electric cars in Edinburgh rose by more than 50% in 2022. But progress with public charge points is slow.

Analysis by the National Union of Students suggests that 55% of students are ineligible for the Scottish Government's free bus travel scheme for under-22s, leading to cost-of-living hardship.

After First Glasgow threatened to withdraw nine night bus routes in Glasgow from the end of July, four routes have been reintroduced by First, with McGills taking on five.

There have been calls for free bus passes to be removed from teenage louts causing chaos on buses. On some routes buses are becoming "gang huts" with rowdy youths travelling far and wide.

Aviation

Easyjet's revenue per passenger has soared above £100 for the first time. Record profitability is down to better network utilisation and cutting loss-making routes, notably in Germany. New flights have been introduced from Edinburgh to Catania in Sicily and Antalya in Turkey.

Easyjet has formed the Hydrogen in Aviation (HIA) alliance alongside Rolls-Royce, Airbus, Orsted, GKN Aerospace and Bristol Airport. HIA believes that hydrogen could provide a revolutionary solution for short-haul flight that could complement long-haul aircraft powered by sustainable aviation fuel. Demand for air travel has rebounded strongly since Covid-19 restrictions were eased, and is expected to increase by nearly three times by 2040.

Flying taxis powered by batteries are predicted by the chairman of the CAA to have widespread adoption in future. The first commercial flight in an electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft (eVTOL) is due at the 2024 Paris Olympics. It will have a 20-mile range and 70mph speed.

Monarch Airlines is poised to take to the skies six years after it collapsed, after investment from firms in Britain and the EU. It plans to re-emerge as a premium alternative to low-cost leisure travellers, acquiring 15 A320 short-haul Airbus aircraft.

Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary expects Ryanair to fly 15% more passengers this year than in the summer months of 2019. Only 4% of seats were empty over July and August. However, forward bookings are 8% below the same levels in 2019 and could be far lower if there is unforeseen disruption, caused by adverse Ukraine or Covid developments. New Ryanair flights from Edinburgh to Albania will be introduced from the end of October.

One in ten flights from UK airports are now by private jet.