

Transport News Notes 10 June to 3 Sept. 2014

This review has been compiled by Tom Hart summarising the news items of greatest interest during the above period. No checks have been made on the accuracy of the statements reported in the media. However by recording these news items there is a historical record of what was being discussed in Scottish Transport.

TRANSPORT the ECONOMY & WELL-BEING

While the UK is now seeing stronger recovery than the rest of Europe, the prevailing view is that no strong revival of public spending funded from general taxation and borrowing is likely in the coming decade. Increased public spending could damage, rather than assist, economic recovery in the coming decade. Even during recession, targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions have been missed both in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK. The Scottish Government has appointed a taskforce to get to grips with Scottish greenhouse gas reduction targets being missed for a third successive year.

Writing in the Scotsman on 23 July, Derek Halden, past Chair of the Scottish branch of CILT and STSG Chair, sees vital issues as being a review of the structure of public spending plus innovative opportunities for other sources of funding building on the work of the Scottish Futures Trust and linked with an infrastructure commission charged with identifying strategic priorities for 25 to 30 years ahead and bringing the greater certainty needed to attract additional funding for stable programmes. The finalised National Planning Framework for Scotland published in June had failed in this respect. 'As soon as the current round of elections is over, the Scottish Government should look again as the case for an independent infrastructure commission' with a focus on how to provide smart connected places.

In Rail (Issue 756, 3 Sept), a feature article reviewed the possible impact of Scottish Independence on rail policies and Scotland. Derek Halden is quoted as saying that any impact could be relatively small given the substantial existing devolution of rail funding to Scotland. However, the scale of current recurrent annual support could lead to increased pressure for cutbacks in revenue support for rail though with part of this diverted to support transport capital spend. Present Scottish Government preferences were for accelerated dualling of trunk roads linking Inverness with the Central Belt and with Aberdeen.

The Labour Party may support a partial revival of rail public ownership by allowing not for profit firms to operate rail passenger services in coming arrangements for franchises and open access to track. Stagecoach Chairman Sir Brian Souter, is more concerned about the threat of British rail renationalisation than the Scottish referendum. Infrastructure owner, Network Rail, formally came within the public sector at the start of September with borrowing now being via the state. Writing in the Herald on 24 July, Prof. Andrew Cumbers of the Adam Smith Business School at Glasgow University, urged that a future Scotland 'could go much further in delivering both more effective forms of new public ownership and management whilst reinvigorating local democracy'. Such action can also be seen in the growth of steps to devolve larger elements of transport and other decision-taking in England and Wales away from a centralised UK government. However, recent UK government action in announcing funding for city projects in the north of England plus £500m for Glasgow over the next 20 years has been attacked as having more to do with politics than with a surrender of central powers (H 4 July). Others argue that government action favours south-east England and the area around Edinburgh in Scotland (H 9 June). Big politically attractive projects run the risk of drawing attention and funding away from smaller schemes offering good value for funders, local residents and businesses.

AVIATION

Heathrow Airport Holdings is to sell Glasgow, Aberdeen and Southampton airports, allowing it to concentrate on London Heathrow. Herald editorial gives a qualified welcome, expecting benefits from increased competition between Glasgow and Edinburgh airports plus greater investment at Glasgow.

SCDI has argued that airport expansion around London must be seen to offer benefits for Scotland. It supports further expansion of long-haul routes from Scotland, aided by cuts in long-haul Passenger Duty.

Edinburgh has become the first Scottish airport to exceed 10m passengers a year despite the highest aviation taxes in Europe. Total usage in June was 994th, up 3.8% overall and international users up 5.5%. Ryanair is switching more routes from Prestwick to Edinburgh, including 3 flights a day to London Stansted. Edinburgh is also expanding routes to more North American destinations and will have direct flights to Abu Dhabi from June 2015 in addition to the flights to Doha started in May 2014. Direct flights help to reduce Air Passenger Duty as duty on flights to London airport hubs is avoided. Edinburgh will complete a £150m investment programme in the coming five years.

Though nearly half of winter flights from Prestwick will end this winter with summer routes reduced from 24 to 16 in 2015, Ryanair say they have no plans to withdraw all Prestwick services. A Scottish Government paper on a vision for Prestwick has again been delayed. £5.5m has already spent on the newly acquired airport. Ryanair will start 7 routes from Glasgow in October but may restore some Prestwick routes if Air Passenger Duty is scrapped in Scotland

Flybe will take over the BA Aberdeen- London City service due to end in October. Flybe will also introduce a new daily service from Inverness to Dublin this autumn. Virgin Atlantic will start direct flights from Glasgow to Las Vegas in September, 2015

FERRIES & SHIPPING

SEStran is seeking to enhance freight flows between the Forth and Europe in partnership with EU-funded WEASTflows. Sea and rail transport can reduce costs compared to through lorry use.

Passenger usage of CalMac and Northlink ferries rose 8% compared to January-June 2013. CalMac is taking stronger steps to prevent overloaded vans on ferries. The new German-built £42m ferry for the Ullapool-Lewis route is now expected to enter service in October rather than September. Vy operating freight services overnight, it will displace the present two vessels serving the route.

No companies have expressed interest in operating an integrated passenger and vehicle ferry between Gourock and Dunoon unless the Scottish Government bore the revenue risk for a vehicle service. Transport Scotland would prefer an integrated services but it conflicts with EU rules.

Local community organisations and Glasgow Life have combined to restore a passenger ferry between Govan and the Riverside Museum between July and September. In Edinburgh, city planners have approved a scheme allowing a return of the passenger ferry between Cramond and the Dalmeny Estate. It is hoped that a chain ferry for up to 12 people will be operating from summer 2015, avoiding a 3 mile detour for walkers and cyclists wishing to go from Cramond along the Forth to and from South Queensferry. However, the funding of £300,000 for new jetties has still to be secured.

RAIL

Chancellor George Osborne has announced plans for a £7bn HS3 linking Manchester with Leeds so that 'travelling between England's northern cities felt like travelling within one big city'. These vague plans have been seen as a sop to northern England prior to the 2015 general Election with much more work needed to define an appropriate network for the north. The Scottish Government has called for greater priority for

firm plans to extend HS2 services north from Lancashire to Glasgow and Edinburgh giving times to London cut to 3 hours or less and facilitating improved links between Scotland and other English cities. HS2 critics have also called for better integration of both HS2 and HS3 with other inter-regional and city Metro services aided by through stations rather than the HS2 termini proposed for Birmingham and Leeds.

A new Scottish business group N-56 based at 112 George St, Edinburgh, has called for HS2 construction to start simultaneously within Scotland and in the south as part of plans also improving rail capacity into, and between, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The Virgin/Stagecoach West Coast Main Line franchise has been extended to March 2017. Conditions include increased passenger capacity through conversions of some First Class coaches to standard seating, the introduction on trains of superfast 4G wi-fi, improved station facilities and a minimum of £430m paid to the UK government over the 33 months of the franchise extension.

Public bodies and access groups have complained that Network Rail plans for Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Queen St have over-stressed retailing potential at the expense of a high-quality experience for passengers within stations and on access routes to major stations.

With no major Scottish rail schemes in Scotland scheduled after Borders Rail reopening in 2015, a Scotsman feature on 23 July by David Spaven has called for a switch from continued high spend on trunk roads to an extended rail network offering both passenger and freight prospects. He sees the best prospects in a reopened branch to Levenmouth in Fife but also mentions reopening to Fraserburgh, Peterhead, St Andrews and Hawick. SPT has stressed the urgent need for expanded rolling stock for both existing and reopened routes plus more attention to high-quality interchange and additional halts at suitable locations. SPT and Glasgow City Council see good prospects for early provision of a station for the Robroyston Development Zone but other councils are also developing bids and seeking enlarged funding from the Scottish Government's interchange and new station fund. SPT has suggested an early study of optimum sites for an SECC station on the line between Glasgow Queen St and Partick.

Cynicism has accompanied the UK Government announcement of £500m towards Glasgow area transport and employment projects over the next 20 years. The largest single scheme is £144m towards a Paisley-Glasgow Airport Rail link. This is supported by the Chamber of Commerce but there are concerns that costs could be considerably higher while other rail projects in the Glasgow conurbation may deserve greater priority. It appears that no detailed work has been done on proposals for a tramtrain link from the Airport into Glasgow. An overall strategy for transport in the city and region remains a neglected priority.

Despite restricted rolling stock availability and complaints about long queues at Glasgow Central and Queen St, rail services in the Glasgow area appeared to perform well over the Commonwealth Games period with favoured access to all events being by public transport, cycling or walking. However, there was irritation over shorter trains for some regular commuters in Glasgow and stronger complaints about overcrowding due to the temporary move of electric Edinburgh-North Berwick trains for use in Glasgow. The North Berwick line was left with shorter diesel trains, heavily overloaded at commuting peaks.

Tourists and locals continue to complain about the complexity of Scottish rail fares. One example was a £74.50 single fare from Carlisle to Perth while fares, if rebooked in Glasgow, were £39. Overall, however, Scottish fares are considerably lower than in England. From January, average Scottish rail fares will rise by only 1.9% with off-peak fares again frozen at 2013 prices. The UK Government has cut back a planned 5.5% rise in peak fares in England.

BUS, TRAM & TAXI

Full analysis of the outcome of Commonwealth Games transport plans has still to be published but there was considerable extra use of the Glasgow Subway and of local buses divided between normal services and shuttles from the city centre and temporary park and ride sites. Some of these sites experienced long

delays at peaks but with action to add extra buses at short notice. Defects in advance publicity attracted some criticism but problems also arose from car owners delaying booking park and ride tickets until close to actual events.

Work continues on the reserved bus lanes and other infrastructure works associated with the first Glasgow Bus Fastlink from the city centre to the new Glasgow South Hospital opening in 2015 with later extensions to Braehead and Renfrew. This large hospital will require increased use of public transport for visitors and staff but doubts have been expressed about weaknesses in overall transport plans for the site. While the Fastlink route will help, this serves a limited part of the city with further action required to improve access for other bus routes. Glasgow Taxis Ltd have raised objections to some Fastlink bus lanes being reserved entirely for buses rather than also permitting taxis, private hire and cycles. The Glasgow area transport projects announced in June include plans for extended smart ticketing, more Fastlink corridors and a possible new £78m Clyde road crossing between Renfrew and Yoker offering opportunities for an improved west Glasgow road network. Proposals also include an orbital Lanarkshire Transport Corridor assisting an improved bus network while also raising capacity for car use.

Also included in the June transport package for Glasgow is £199m for public realm improvements in the city centre which, as well as boosting walking and cycling, will also assist redesigned and less intrusive bus networks in the city centre offering shorter trip times than at present despite plans to enforce 20mph maximum speeds for all road traffic in the centre. Congestion will be reduced.

500,000 have used Edinburgh trams in the first month of operation yet some of this reflects an initial rush of users plus considerable numbers of city pensioner residents taking advantage of the free tram travel available to the Airport and the city centre but requiring compensation from Edinburgh taxpayers. Income received from farepaying passengers has still to be revealed. Many trams are used well below capacity outwith special events at Murrayfield and elsewhere. Recent data shows that trams are on target to reach 4.5/5m passengers in the first year with little evidence that this is having any adverse impact on bus use within the city. The public transport share of movement has risen.

City Council borrowing to fund the higher than expected capital spend on the initial tram route is costing £5.8m a year. Further borrowing and grant-aid towards extensions is expected to improve operating outcomes and total city benefits. The City Council continues to seek government compensation for the funding of free tram travel for all those holding Scottish-wide free bus travel concession cards. On the whole, public reaction to the tram service has been favourable but operating results are likely to improve if the tram route is extended to Leith and aided by bus/tram co-ordination and further development adjacent to the tram corridor, especially on green space at the western end of the route. The City Council is in discussions on funding for a Leith extension.

The half-hourly express bus service from Glasgow Buchanan Bus station to Edinburgh Airport is proving popular while impressive growth is reported on coach travel between central Edinburgh and Glasgow. First Scotland East is cutting the cost of bus travel from Kirkliston and Newbridge into Edinburgh by almost one-third. First Glasgow also reports that recent ticketing and service changes have reversed a decline in bus use in Glasgow. Income is again rising faster than costs.

First Group is investing £20m in new buses for Glasgow in 2014 while Edinburgh City Council has allocated £225,000 to boost community buses offering special value to the elderly. Debate has resurfaced on the merits of free bus and coach travel in Scotland for those over 60 and the disabled. Given public spending restrictions, it has been suggested that the time has come to review present arrangements for free travel, allowing public funding to be diverted to other needy areas including the NHS. But others see free bus travel as a substantial boost to the health and quality of life of pensioners.

A claim has been made that buses are the main cause of congestion in central Edinburgh with recent rises in off-peak frequency increasing off-peak congestion with most city centre buses less than half full. This

has been countered by replies that the way forward in cities such as Edinburgh is to continue to encourage shifts from car to low-emission bus use in conjunction with action to improve load factors on the bus network. Fewer but better loaded buses could carry more people with many being former car users.

Lothian Country Buses has introduced a new 104 bus service from Haddington to Edinburgh via Tranent and Wallyford and then by the A1 and Regent Road to avoid congestion. The service runs seven days a week with a half-hourly frequency at busy times.

ROADS & PARKING

The Connect Roads Consortium has won the £745m contract for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road. The three members of the consortium will each commit £20m as part of the deal and will share one-third of the construction revenue from the project. Work is expected to start later this year with the project being the largest procured through the Scottish Government's non-profit distributing model. Opening should be in 2018 with the consortium then managing the project for a further 30 years.

There have been celebrations for 50 years of the Forth Road Bridge while Telford's innovative Craigellachie bridge over the Spey has reached 200. The new Forth road bridge is also likely to be completed on time and within budget. Savings on bridge cost estimates have already allowed funds to be transferred to speed-up design work on Perth to Inverness A9 dualling.

The new UK Government package for transport in Glasgow includes a new Clyde road crossing from Renfrew to Yoker (£78M), a Cathkin Bypass (£22m) and various road improvements in Lanarkshire

The Federation of Small Businesses is calling on the Scottish Government to earmark more cash for potholed road repairs following Chancellor Osborne's creation of a £200m emergency fund for road repairs across the UK. FSB also want more town and city centre parking – it sees Edinburgh City Council as being anti-car and more interested in raising income from fines.

On the A83 artery to Kintyre, the total costs of dealing with landslips and other climate change impacts since 2005 are now approaching £46m. Transport Minister Keith Brown tells a taskforce that problems are not confined to the Rest and be Thankful section. This route also raises wider issues of the need for funding to safeguard road and rail transport against adverse climate change impacts.

The number of drivers and passengers killed in car crashes in Scotland has risen for the first time in seven years. Provisional figures show 89 car users killed in 2013 compared to 72 in 2012. Cyclist and motorcycling deaths are also up. Institute of Advanced Motorists sees this as disappointing and partly attributed to changes in driver behaviour and weaker police enforcement. Police Scotland report a 40% rise in prosecutions for speeding drivers but this may have been influenced by roads being an easy way to meet targets for prosecutions rather than a special effort to tackle severe speeding offences.

A survey by UK charity Brake has found that 3% of UK motorists admit to driving under the influence of drugs with 11% saying that they may have been driven by drivers affected by drugs.

A survey by the A9 Safety Group finds that 1 in 5 drivers admit to driving at 15mph over the speed limit. However, safety on the A9 has improved since the start of installation of continuous speed monitoring even though this will not be in full operation until the autumn. In a Scotsman feature on 25 July, Alastair Dalton attacks the myth that the A9 is a 'killer road'. The existing safety record is better than on several other Scottish roads and will improve with speed cameras in full operation. This had already been shown on the A77 and it was hard to understand why leading politicians like Danny Alexander MP were spearheading the campaign against average speed cameras.

A Scottish Government team led by architect Malcolm Fraser has suggested that road tolls and 20mph zones should be considered as a means of reviving city centres but tolls have been swiftly rejected by Edinburgh City Council. Opportunities remain for traffic management and traffic calming measures along with wider use of 20mph limits and reviews of parking charges. Glasgow City Council is also considering a 20mph limit across the city centre while Edinburgh is consulting (www.edinburgh.gov.uk/20mph) on extending a South Edinburgh 20mph pilot zone to include the city centre, shopping areas and other residential neighbourhoods. These plans are considered to have a 'limited' impact on bus services.

Edinburgh Airport is being accused of profiteering over tripling the drop-off charge for the airport from £1 to £3 for 10 minutes. Taxi drivers are very concerned and see drop-off charges, first introduced four years ago, as 'outrageous'. Congestion is worsening on the immediate approach to the airport with the operator seeking early action on road widening as well as a direct link to the M8. Others argue that problems could be eased by measures to accelerate shifts from car and taxi use to access by public transport. Plans for two large 24 hour car parks at Ratho Station and Newbridge with a minibus shuttle to the Edinburgh Airport have been attacked as increasing traffic on both local and trunk roads.

Police Scotland had admitted a 32% rise in traffic tickets, leading the Institute of Advanced Motorists to argue that it could live with an increase in tickets if this was clearly linked to a reduction in road deaths and injuries. Deaths have been edging up after a long period of reductions.

Edinburgh City Council has renewed licences for pedicab/rickshaw taxis in Edinburgh despite claims that these were dangerous. The Council has also introduced a trial to limit bus lanes to morning and evening peaks while also allowing their use by motor cycles.

Business leaders in Glasgow have complained that the £1.5m in fines collected from motorists failing to observe the new bus gate at Nelson Mandela Place is driving shoppers and other visitors away from the city centre. Hard evidence is sought that the bus gate has encouraged shifts to public transport, walking and cycling without a fall in city centre business. Herald editorial on 30 August concludes 'it could well be that the bus gate has delivered a net increase of people into this area of the city while also cutting congestion' but supports the call for better evidence. Glasgow City Council says the fact that the level of fines is now falling shows that it is delivering on stated aims. Signing may be enhanced so that motorists new to the area are aware of the restriction.

WALKING & CYCLING

Friends of Glasgow West and Glasgow City Council have been working on a report which may lead to a traffic-reduced or traffic-free plan to increase the attraction of the shopping and cafe area on Byres Road.

Edinburgh City Council are to add a Walking Forum to their Cycling Forum. Edinburgh cycle lobby Spokes is opposing proposals to allow motor-cycles as well as cycles and taxis in bus lanes

Using contingency funds not now required for the Queensferry Forth crossing, the Scottish Government has allocated £7m for extra investment in walking and cycling infrastructure with the balance used for electric vehicle chargers and up to 30 electric vehicles for car clubs plus a further £5m for sustainable travel in the draft 2015/16 budget. This £5m will be administered by Sustrans. All projects should be complete by spring 2015. In the Edinburgh area, they include including better lighting for the old Innocent Railway, Union Canal and Straiton paths. £45,000 is also made available for cycle scheme designs.

Free Wheel North is urging more radical steps to encourage cycling and related health benefits. Aims include car-free city & town centres, car-free space at schools and cafe boulevards for cycling and walking.

Campaigns continue for stricter measures to reduce accidents to cyclists involving lorries or other motor vehicles though there is also need for cyclists to follow an appropriate code of conduct specially where pedestrians are also present. Scotland Office Minister David Mundell has backed the campaign to make motorists fully liable for accidents to cyclists and pedestrians unless they can prove otherwise.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has granted initial support of £3.3m to the Loch Lomond/Trossachs and Cairngorm National Parks to improve the condition of paths and habitat affected by both heavy rainfall and rising public usage.

Italian-style street marquees are to become a permanent feature of George St in Edinburgh. Cars may be banned from Leith St in Edinburgh as part of plans for massive redevelopment of the St James Centre. This proposal is proving controversial due to issues over alternative routes and fears that central Edinburgh may experience further decline unless car access can be improved. Others argue the opposite – that city centres will only gain vitality if car use is reduced but other forms of access improved in conjunction with a public realm strategy .

Operator Nextbike, supported by Glasgow City Council, claims a flying start in May for its mass Automated Cycle Hire (Mach) scheme in Glasgow. In the first 12 days, bikes were rented 1.24 times a day, above the London average of 1.16. Average hires have been for 58 minutes compared to 17 in London. 2505 rentals were made in the first 12 days with 1600 registered to use the bikes. Smart phones are used to rent and return bikes. The Glasgow scheme now has over 400 bikes and a similar project is due to launch in Stirling. There are 31 hire sites around the city plus 6 temporary sites during the Commonwealth Games. Sites include bus, train and subway stations, Glasgow Cathedral and the Riverside Museum. Casual hire costs £1 per half-hour capped at £10 for 24 hours. Annual members paying £60 can hire free for the first 30 minutes and then £1 an hour with a £5 daily cap. A similar scheme is being considered for Edinburgh with the modification that it might use electric bikes due to more hilly conditions in the capital.

Glasgow City Council is being petitioned to commit 5% of its transport budget to cycling infrastructure. Plans to increase cycling in, and to and from, the city centre also feature strongly in the draft City Centre Transport Strategy. Walk/.cycle boulevards are also proposed

Mark Lazarowicz MP has called for much stronger measures , including better signage, to improve immediate access to Waverley station after recent changes made it impossible to drop and pick-up passengers at platform level.

RESEARCH & STATISTICS

Green energy met 46.5% of Scotland's gross electricity consumption in 2013 with this share rising in the first quarter of 2014 aided by higher rainfall boosting hydro power – but net exports of electricity from Scotland have weakened

Passengers at Edinburgh airport in May were 5.7% up on the previous year due to international growth. The rise in passengers to other UK airports was 0.9%. At Glasgow, the overall May rise was 4.3% with international passengers up 6.9%

Spending by people visiting Scotland from other countries was up 20% in 2013. Total visits were 2.44m, a 9.8% rise on 2012.

Research by easyCar Club shows a change in Scottish motoring habits. 53% of Glaswegian car owners and 48% in Edinburgh were found to have cut car-driving in the past year. More people are switching from using their own cars to greater use of public transport and car-sharing. With attitudes changing and petrol

prices again edging up, UK petrol consumption in March fell to 1.37 billion litres, the lowest figure since government records began in 1992.

Registrations of new cars in Scotland continue to rise. The first six months of 2014 are up 9.4% on 2013 – slightly lower than the UK rise of 10.6%. But car use has risen at a much lower rate with evidence of actual falls in larger cities.

The annual Scottish Household (SHS), published in August, shows 64% of trips as made by car in 2013 compared to 61% in 2012. Walking was down from 26% to 23% of trips. Trips by bus rose slightly from 8% to 8.5% while the use of rail, cycling and taxis was virtually unchanged. Small sample size leads to considerable fluctuation in annual figures with these SHS findings in conflict with other evidence of near stability in car use and stronger rises in trips by rail and by cycle

A VisitBritain report shows Scotland catering for visitors better than south of the border but criticises a bewildering range of train fares and transport operators failing to meet tourist needs. A Passenger Focus study has found that train operators serving Scotland (ScotRail, Virgin and EastCoast) are the most trusted by passengers. ScotRail was one of only 3 out of 21 operators with a positive score for punctuality/reliability, value for money and helpful staff.

A Transport Scotland two-year study of the holders of free bus-travelcards shows that 98% were happy with the scheme. Disabled users were particularly satisfied with free travel helping their mental and physical well-being. CPT welcomed the study. It did not include any assessment of the benefits of free bus travel compared to the potential benefits of alternative uses of funds presently supporting free Scotland-wide bus travel for the disabled and those over 60. Those not within easy reach of bus services gain limited benefits from the present scheme.

Driverless cars are set for their first trials on UK roads in 2015 and debate on the longer-term impacts of automated driving is increasing. The AA President, Edmund King, considers that at least 65% of motorists enjoy driving too much to ever give way to automated driving.

There is further evidence of an accelerating rise in cycling. Neustrans data shows a 37% rise in cyclists on key routes between 2008 and 2014. In Aberdeen alone, cycling between 7.30 and 9am was up 38% since April 2008 though from a low base of 600. Hardly any change was found in cycling to school with walking to school down from 60% to 50%. Public transport results showed a slight rise in bus use since 2008 but a much larger rise in rail use with Inverurie passengers up 254% since 2005 and Dyce up 182%. Passengers at Aberdeen airport have outstripped the previous 3.5m peak in 2007 and are expected to be 4.9m by 2021.

Sustrans reports a huge rise in cycling with an extra 7m trips on recognised pathways. Use of the National Cycle Network in Scotland in 2013 was 7% up on 2012. One-third of users of the National Network could have driven but chose not to. Data for cycling outwith the National Network is more limited but observations confirm a rising trend in cycle use both for leisure and for other purposes.

New counters on Middle Meadow Walk in Edinburgh have recorded over 100,000 cyclists since the end of April. Spokes survey shows that 21% of 8 to 9am citybound vehicles on Edinburgh's Lothian Road are cycles. Since counts started in 2006/07, bikes are up 34% and cars down 12%.,

Suicides on the British rail network rose from 268 in 2012 to 278 in 2013, well up on the 224 deaths in 2011. Samaritans and Network Rail are working in partnership to reduce these deaths. Network Rail is also responding to pressure to reduce deaths and injuries at level crossings.

PLANNING & PROPERTY

The finalised third National Planning Framework for Scotland has been criticised for a lack of strategic thinking and budgetary linkages between transport, land use policies and positive economic impacts. The

new Scottish Planning Policy retains maximum parking standards for retail business and cinema developments but such standards have been removed from planning guidance in England.

SCDI has called for a more co-ordinated boost for town centre regeneration and a substantial rise in proposed £2m of government funding

Hammerson will complete a £20m leisure extension of the Silverburn shopping centre in Glasgow in 2015.

Starting In January 2015, Scottish Police will transfer the West of Scotland HQ from central Glasgow to a new £24m building in Clyde Gateway. Due to the expansion of Queen St station, SPT will have to move from the present HQ in Glasgow but would prefer to remain in the city centre. Various options are being examined.

A promotional campaign and the end of tram works has seen an extra 750,000 shoppers return to central Edinburgh. Footfall in the heart of Edinburgh was up 4% in the 6 months to July,

One of the largest new office developments in Scotland is to be built by the HFD Group at Altens on the south side of Aberdeen.

The 600 space automated Sky Park in Morrison St, Edinburgh, closed since 2003 is to be converted to office space and 200 parking spaces, subject to planning permission

Peter D Stirling Ltd, the Mossend Freight railhead operator, is proposing a major new rail freight park adjacent to Eurocentral but proving the 775m sidings required for the much longer freight trains expected to have an increasing role on the routes south from central Scotland. The site has good links with the motorway network and with onward rail freight links to and from other parts of Scotland. Rail freight operating companies are showing rising interest in longer trains hauled by new designs of electric locomotives rather than the diesel designs still used even on sections of track already electrified.

BUSINESS & PERSONNEL

Ryanair reports profits on track with the company attracting passengers from other operators. EasyJet has scaled back profit forecasts due to tensions in Egypt, Israel and Russia.

Network Rail annual profits have soared to £1.04bn due to special factors and despite a fall in punctuality attributable to track and signalling deficiencies. NR debt has risen 9% to £33bn

Iain Docherty, Professor of Public Policy and Head of Management in Glasgow University Business School, has been appointed chair of Glasgow's bus statutory quality partnership board.

Stagecoach is keen to expand interests in both rail and bus. Regional bus revenue is up 4% with passenger numbers up 0.9%. In London, where Stagecoach has 1,300 buses, revenue rose 14.4% as several new contracts came into effect. In the rail sector, revenue was up 4.9% with further prospects for new or extended passenger franchises

The Transport Research Institute (TRI) at Napier University is advertising for a new Professor of Transport and Director of Research to replace the temporary appointment of Prof. Keith Dickinson

Vernon Murphy has died aged 69. He was a former Chairman of Scottish Airports and Scottish Chambers of Commerce – also an active supporter of the Scottish Transport Studies Group and, in private life, a keen enthusiast for steam railways and railway heritage. Within his BAA activities, he became Managing-Director of BAA Rail during the early period of the Express Rail Link to London Heathrow.

NEW PUBLICATION *Via Mound and Tollcross : Transport in Edinburgh 1854-2014*, Brian Patton £15
ISBN 978-0-9564288-4-4 A photographic record with text of changing public transport operating at similar locations in Edinburgh streets and on the Forth from the 19th century up to the return of trams in 2014