# Ferry Connections - How well do they work?



'Seamless transport interchange' - Feolin Ferry, Jura

10 itineraries undertaken in the Summer of 2008. What worked well … and the uncertainties.

Bob Barnes-Watts on behalf of HITRANS

Tourist route to Kintyre via Brodick and Lochranza
Due to exceptional tides, the Ardrossan to Brodick sailings were delayed this day.

**(Glasgow) - Kintyre via Ardrossan, Brodick, Lochranza & Claonaig**



Claonaig

| | Service No. | Sched dep. | On Time? | From | To | Sched arr. | On time? | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | As the 1415 train from Glasgow Central is not due at Ardrossan Harbour until 1509, one would presume that it is not a booked connection into the 1515 sailing. 45 foot passengers alighted from the train for the ferry. CalMac staff at Ardrossan assured me that it is a connection despite the 'be on board 10 minutes before departure' rule. |
| 🛥 | *'Caledonian Isles'* | *1350* | *?* | *Brodick* | *Ardrossan* | *1445* | *40L* | 125 foot passengers alighted. Unable to say if the 1528 train was held |
| | | | | | | | | CalMac staff telephoned Brodick office to advise them of passengers for the 1620 bus to Lochranza. Also that I was intending to get the 1715 ferry from Lochranza to Claonaig thence the 1749 bus to Tarbert. <span style="background-color:red">I was told that the Lochranza ferry probably would not be held.</span> |
| 🛥 | 'Caledonian Isles' | 1515 | 35L | Ardrossan | Brodick | 1610 | 36L | Off ferry at 1649. |
| 🚌 | Stagecoach 324 | 1620 | 33L | Brodick | Lochranza | 1700 | 33L | Full and standing. About 25 passengers from the delayed ferry. |
| 🛥 | 'Loch Tarbert' | 1825 | 3L | Lochranza | Claonaig | 1855 | 4L | <span style="background-color:red">West Coast Motors apologised but the bus would not be held at Claonaig.</span> I was able to get a lift to Tarbert from a car driver off the ferry! |

Bus timetables at both Lochranza and Claonaig.
It would be helpful if bus times for the opposite terminal are displayed as well as those for the local area.

**Summer 2008 - Weekday during school holidays.**

**Tarbert - Tayinloan - Gigha and return**

| | Service No. | Sched dep. | On Time? | From | To | Sched arr. | On time? | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 🚌 | WCM 449 | 0925 | 1L | Tarbert (Harbour Street) | Tayinloan Ferry Terminal | 0955 | 1L | Traveline shows this bus connecting into the **1100** sailing as, due to the 2 minute walk from the bus to the ferry, the connectional margin is 'sub-5 minutes'. |
| ⛴ | 'Loch Ranza' | 1000 | 1L | Tayinloan | Gigha | 1020 | 1L | Crew members bemoaning the fact that the Citylink coach does not come down to the ferry terminal at Tayinloan. |
| ⛴ | 'Loch Ranza' | 1030 | RT | Gigha | Tayinloan | 1050 | RT | Passengers have to carry their luggage from the village.(12 mins walk) The usual comment that "we're not allowed to wait" if the coach is late;also they wonder why there is no procedure laid down for Citylink to advise CalMac in the event of late running? |
| Walk | - | - | - | Tayinloan Ferry Terminal | Tayinloan Village | - | - | |
| 🚌 | Citylink 926 | 1149 | RT | Tayinloan Village | Tarbert (Turning Circle) | 1226 | RT | Bus arrived Tayinloan Village 1144 (5E). |

Tayinloan Ferry Terminal bus stop

**Summer 2008 - Weekday during school holidays.**

A superb journey encompassing beautiful seascapes and stunning views of the Kyles of Bute from the bus.

**Kintyre - Cowall - Bute - Glasgow**

| | Service No. | Sched dep. | On Time? | From | To | Sched arr. | On time? | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 🚢 | 'Isle of Cumbrae' | 1415 | RT | Tarbert (Loch Fyne) | Portavadie | 1440 | RT | No bus timetables or stop pole at Tarbert Ferry Terminal |
| 🚌 | WCM 478 | 1500 | RT | Portavadie | Kames Post Office | 1510 | 1E | 478 from Dunoon arrived Portavadie 1439 (1E). 1 person for ferry. Bus shelter and timetables, including for buses from Tarbert! |
| 🚌 | WCM 477 | 1510 | RT | Kames Post Office [via Colintraive (1537) - Rhubodach (1546) ferry] | Rothesay | 1606 | 3E | |
| 🚢 | 'Argyle' | 1645 | RT | Rothesay | Wemyss Bay | 1720 | 1L | Notice at Rothesay stating boarding would cease **3** minutes before departure. Timetable gives a 10 minute deadline. |

Portavadie





NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS

Customers are advised that to enable us to maintain the published timetable it is necessary to close boarding THREE MINUTES prior to departure.

This is to allow removal and safe stowage of ramps and gangways, to carry out safety checks and have staff in place by departure time.

Thank you for your co-operation.

**Summer 2008 - Weekday during school terms.**

| | Service No. | Sched dep. | On Time? | From | To | Sched arr. | On time? | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ⛴ | 'Hebridean Isles' | 1530 | RT | Oban | Port Askaig | 1915 | 4E | Gangway up 1526. 1221 train from GLQ arrived 1527. |
| | | | | [via Colonsay 1806/1817 (21L/12L)] | | | | |
| ⛴ | 'Eilean Dhuira' | 1930 | 4L | Port Askaig | Feolin Ferry | 1935 | 4L | Easy connection from CalMac to the Jura ferry. |
| | | | | | | | | Onboard ticket machine erroneously locked away by previous shift. |
| 🚌 | C MacLean 456 | 1935 | 5L | Feolin Ferry | Craighouse | 1955 | 5L | Minibus arrived as ferry berthed. |
| | | | | | | | | Knowledgeable bus driver who 'talked up' the RIB to Tayvallich. |
| | | | | | | | | Unable to check for timetables etc. at Feolin. |
| | | | | | | | | No timetable displays at Craighouse. |

The fastest way from Jura to the mainland - a venture supported by the Isle of Jura Initiative at the Edge & Argyll and Bute council

**Craighouse (Jura) - Tayvallich - Lochgilphead**

| | Service No. | Sched dep. | On Time? | From | To | Sched arr. | On time? | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ⛴ | 'Shannick of Islay' RIB | 0845 | RT | Craighouse | Tayvallich | 0945 | 15E | Fast, comfortable and efficient |
| 🚐 | Anderson 425 | 0954 | RT | Tayvallich | Lochgilphead | 1026 | 2E | Driver said that a large number of passengers use the services on day trips from the mainland. Timetable display on pole at Tayvallich |
| 🚐 | WCM 423 | 1310 | 1L | Lochgilphead | Oban | 1430 | 2L | |

**Summer 2008 - Weekday during school holidays.**

Useful and scenic route connecting Mull with Lochaber but connections are too unreliable to promote with certainty for visitors, although it features in the Mull timetable.

**Tobermory - Fishnish - Lochaline - Corran Ferry - Fort William**

| | Service | Sched dep. | On Time? | From | To | Sched arr. | On time? | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 🚌 | Bowmans 495 | 0730 | 1L | Tobermory | Fishnish Slip | 0807 | RT | No direction signs<br>Driver enquired whether we were "hoping to get the first ferry" and that "he would try to get us there on time"<br>Bus went to ferry ramp for easy interchange. |
| ⛴ | 'Loch Fyne' | 0810 | RT | Fishnish Slip | Lochaline | 0825 | 2L | I remarked to the crew member who was issuing tickets that the connection was a bit tight at Fishnish and said that presumably the ferry would wait. "Oh no, we're not allowed to wait" was the reply.<br>The next ferry does not arrive at Lochaline until 0925 and the only bus to Fort William departs at 0900. |
| 🚌 | Shiel 507 | 0900 | RT | Lochaline | Fort William | 1022 | 2L | Café at Lochaline opens at 0900<br>No bus timetable display at Lochaline.<br>Via Corran Ferry (on time) |

Lochaline

## Inverness - Kyle - Broadford - Armadale - Mallaig - Lochailort - Kilchoan - Tobermory

A journey through stunningly beautiful country, especially the route through Ardnamurchan to Kilchoan. Much potential to attract visitors.

| | Service | Sched dep. | On Time? | From | To | Sched arr. | On time? | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ⛟ | - | 0853 | 2L | Inverness | Kyle | 1120 | RT | 4 minutes walk from the station to the Slipway bus stop. No direction signs |
| 🚌 | HCB 50 | 1230 | RT | Kyle | Broadford | 1252 | 1.5"E | |
| 🚌 | HCB 52 | 1255 | 5L | Broadford P.O | Armadale Pier | 1324 | 8L | Roadworks on A851. Same stop interchange as the 50 takes you across the road to the Armadale-bound stop. Armadale to Portree bus 52 departed on time at 1255. All connections maintained. |
| ⛴ | 'Coruisk' | 1425 | RT | Armadale Pier | Mallaig | 1455 | 4E | Passenger gangway up at 1421 which is the scheduled arrival time of the 1315 52C from Portree and is shown as a connection. That bus was seen approaching the pier at 1429. |
| 🚌 | Shiel 500 | 1520 | 20L | Mallaig RBS | Lochailort (A861) | 1600 | 14L | Out-of-date timetable on stop at RBS. Only showing a 1540 School Terms departure for Acharacle. Although it was a non-school day, the driver said the bus went at 1540 'whatever day', even though school holiday schedule showed a 1520 departure. Somewhat concerned as the non-school day 'connection' at Lochailort departs 1610. The driver stated "we sometimes don't connect"! The driver also was not aware that he could issue a through ticket to Kilchoan. Fortunately his boss telephoned on an unrelated matter but did not seem to find it unusual that the bus was still at Mallaig. 'The boss' informed the driver of the ticket price and said he would contact the driver of the 502 from Fort William to ensure the connection was maintained and the 'by request' section from Acharacle to Kilchoan was covered. The bus turned on to the A861 and waited there until the 502 arrived, much to the consternation of two passengers who seemed anxious to get to Fort William on time. The bus left at 1630, 30 minutes late. |
| 🚌 | Shiel 502 | 1610 | 20L | Lochailort (A861) | Kilchoan Slip | 1825r | 15E* | *No passengers on board for Kilmory hence early arrival at Kilchoan Slip. This was a full size coach, relatively full of passengers returning after a Loch Shiel cruise. Bus arrived Acharacle 1713 and the driver went to check if the bus was on the way from Kilchoan to pick us up, which it did at Salen, arr 1720 (25L), changed buses, departing 1725 (30L). |
| ⛴ | 'Loch Linnhe' | 1840 | RT | Kilchoan Slip | Tobermory | 1915 | RT | Waiting shelter with door. |

Kilchoan

**Summer 2008 - Weekday during school holidays.**

**Inverness - Kyle - Broadford - Armadale - Mallaig - Lochailort - Kilchoan - Tobermory**

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Kilchoan

**Fort William circular via Camusnagaul Ferry**

| | Service No. | Sched dep. | On Time? | From | To | Sched arr. | On time? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 🚢 | 'Rive Gauche' | 1220 | 2L | Fort William | Camusnagaul | 1230 | RT |
| 🚌 | Martins | 1233 | RT | Camusnagaul | Fort William | 1325 | RT |

Comments

Times hand written on metal timetable board at both termini.
Ferryman said the ferry "sometimes links up (with the bus) but not always".

Knowledgeable driver who pointed out interesting sights.
Standard 'bus type' waiting shelter at Camusnagaul.

**Summer 2008 - Weekday during school holidays.**

The Pentland Ferries alternative to the Northlink Ferries 'lifeline' service.

**Wick - Kirkwall via Gills Bay and St Margaret's Hope**

| | Service No. | Sched dep. | On Time? | From | To | Sched arr. | On time? | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 🚌 | HCB 77A | 1243 | 6L | Wick (High St) | Gills Bay Ferry R.E. | 1325 | 2L | No bus timetable at Gills Bay<br>No bus stop pole on main road<br>5 minutes walk from the main road bus stop to the ferry terminal.<br>Pentland Ferry employee: "Sometimes the bus will come down and drop a passenger off" |
| ⛴ | 'Claymore' | 1345 | 49L | Gills Bay | St Margaret's Hope | 1500 | 49L | Not a representative day due to the varied vehicles (huge BOS mobile bank and vintage tractors)<br>being loaded for the Kirkwall Show<br>Ticket office and waiting room at both termini<br>'Caithness Connections' displayed in cabinet outside the purser's office on board the ship.<br>SMH - "Not sure if the bus comes down (to the terminal)"<br>No bus timetable at St Margaret's Hope terminal<br>No pay phone at either terminal |
| 🚌 | Orkney 10 | 1700 | RT | St Margaret's Hope | Kirkwall Travel Centre | 1730 | 3E | No bus stop or timetable in SMH village.<br>Copy of 'Orkney Bus Times' on wall in the 'Trading Post' shop |
| 🚌 | Orkney 1A | 1745 | RT | Kirkwall Travel Centre | Stromness Pier | 1815 | RT | No timetables left at the Travel Centre but displays on the wall and at all stances<br>Timetables available at the adjacent Tourist Information Office |

Northlink B&B facility on board the 'Hamnavoe' booked without problem at Arcade Travel, Wick.

## Summer 2008 - Saturday

Lifeline service operated by Northlink Ferries.

## Stromness - Thurso via Scrabster

| Service No. | Sched dep. | On Time? | From | To | Sched arr. | On time? | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ⛴ 'Hamnavoe' | 0630 | 3E | Stromness Pier | Scrabster Pier | 0800 | 9L | B&B service on board ship available Summer only. Excellent facility. |
| Taxi | - | - | (0832) | Scrabster Ferry Gangway | Thurso station | - | (0841) | 2 minutes walk to 'bus stop'. |

2 minutes walk to 'bus stop'.
No bus timetable in ferry gangway office; no bus stop pole, just a painted bus stop in the roadway.
Although there was a bus connection advertised in the First Scotrail timetable, it did not run on Summer Saturdays. The Northlink staff advised that "there should be a bus". About 15 people were waiting for the Citylink coach to Inverness and beyond.
A Dutch couple said they had been told by their travel agent not to use trains in Britain as they were unreliable!

I managed to get a taxi by asking an incoming driver to call for one. It cost £5.40 plus tip and took 9 minutes, enabling me to catch the 0842 train.