

RYANAIR HOLDINGS PLC
Form 6-K
November 07, 2016

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 6-K

Report of Foreign Private Issuer

Pursuant to Rule 13a-16 or 15d-16
of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

For the month of November 2016

RYANAIR HOLDINGS PLC
(Translation of registrant's name into English)

c/o Ryanair Ltd Corporate Head Office
Dublin Airport
County Dublin Ireland
(Address of principal executive offices)

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant files or will file annual reports under cover Form 20-F or Form 40-F.

Form 20-F..X.. Form 40-F.....

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant by furnishing the information contained in this Form is also thereby furnishing the information to the Commission pursuant to Rule 12g3-2(b) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Yes No ..X..

If "Yes" is marked, indicate below the file number assigned to the registrant in connection with Rule 12g3-2(b): 82- _____

**RYANAIR H1 PROFITS RISE 7% TO €1,168m (on 10% lower fares)
€550M SHARE BUYBACK APPROVED BY AIRLINE BOARD**

Ryanair, Europe's No. 1 airline, today (Nov 7) reported a 7% increase in H1 profits to €1,168m as AGB and lower fares delivered 12% traffic growth to 65m customers and a 2% jump in load factor to 95%. Ave. fares fell 10% to €50, however H1 unit costs also fell by 10% (ex-fuel down 5%).

H1 Results (IFRS)	Sept 30, 2015	Sept 30, 2016	% Change
Customers (m)	58.1	64.8	+12%
Revenue (m)	€4,040	€4,132	+2%
Profit after Tax (m)*	€1,088	€1,168	+7%
Net Margin*	27%	28%	+1pt
Basic EPS*	€0.80	€0.92	+15%

*excludes exceptional accounting gain of €317.5m on sale of Aer Lingus shareholding in Sept16.

Ryanair's CEO, Michael O'Leary, said:

"We are pleased to report this 7% increase in H1 profits, which was a creditable performance in difficult market conditions due to repeated ATC strikes, terror events, and the adverse economic impact of the Brexit vote in June which saw Sterling weaken materially over the peak summer period. We responded by accelerating our Always Getting Better ("AGB") customer experience programme, and using our lower costs base to stimulate stronger forward bookings with lower fares. Notable highlights of the half year include:

- Traffic grew 12% to 65m (LF up 2% to 95%)
- Ave. fares fell 10% to €50
- Unit costs cut 10%
- 73 new routes and 6 bases opened
- 21 new B737-800s delivered
- 7th Share Buyback (€886m) completed in June
- Ryanair.com became the world's No. 1 airline website

Traffic Growth, New Routes and Bases:

Our unique combination of AGB and lower fares helped to stimulate stronger forward bookings, higher load factors and 12% traffic growth to 65m customers. This growth was spread widely across Europe as we opened 73 new routes and 6 new bases. This winter we take delivery of 31 new B737-800s and will open 6 more bases in Bucharest, Bournemouth, Hamburg, Nuremberg, Prague and Vilnius. Our base in Berlin (SXF) will grow from 5 to 9 aircraft, while Luxemburg will become our 33rd served country in November. Our S17 schedule (which was launched 2 weeks earlier than last year) will see us add over 80 new routes and a new 2 aircraft base at Frankfurt am Main airport (opens in late March) as we respond to growing demand in Germany from business and leisure customers for Ryanair's low fares and AGB services.

During H1, we've observed a growing trend of competitors closing bases and routes where they are unable to compete with Ryanair's lower fares and we expect this trend to continue, especially in markets such as Germany, Italy, Spain and Belgium where significant restructuring of loss making operators (even at lower oil prices) continues. This trend is encouraging more primary airports to incentivise Ryanair to grow while their incumbents are cutting. The shift in Ryanair's growth from secondary to primary airports continues, and at the end of 2016 for the first time Ryanair will operate to a majority of primary (105) rather than secondary (95) airports.

We welcome the Italian Government's decision to reverse the €2.50 Municipal Tax increase from Oct 2016, which enabled us to reverse base closures and capacity cuts in Italy. Ryanair responded by adding 3m seat capacity into the Italian market for 2017. Sadly the recent Brexit vote will result in pivoting some of our planned 2017 growth away from the UK, due to weaker Sterling, expected slower GDP growth and market uncertainty. We will reduce our planned UK growth from 12% to approx. 5% in 2017.

"AGB" Customer Experience:

Our AGB program continues to win millions of new customers to Ryanair. In July we became the first airline ever to carry over 11m international customers in a calendar month. Our customers are enjoying even lower fares and flying from more primary airports on our brand new aircraft, with new Boeing Sky Interiors, offering more leg room and super comfortable seats. The uptake of our Business Plus and Leisure Plus products is rising. We soft launched Ryanair Rooms in Oct and continue to improve both the mobile app and "My Ryanair" membership which allows customers to make faster bookings and obtain more benefits.

In Q3 we will make membership of "My Ryanair" automatic for all customer bookings so that we can tailor services and improve offers for each customer. Over the coming months our customers can look forward to new features including automatic check in and a wider choice of accommodation on the Ryanair Rooms platform in addition to greater fare savings.

After a poor start in Q1 (due to adverse weather and a succession of unjustified ATC strikes) our industry leading on-time performance improved in Q2 to almost 90%. We continue our campaign to persuade the European Commission to take action to ameliorate the effects of national ATC strikes by keeping Europe's skies open even when national ATC providers are on strike.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Ave
FY16	90%	92%	91%	90%	90%	92%	91%
FY17	91%	89%	81%	85%	90%	91%	88%

Lower Costs & Hedging:

Ryanair delivered a unit cost saving of 10% in H1. Despite a 12% jump in traffic, our fuel bill fell by 8% (a 17% unit saving) due to the hedges we put in place 12 months ago. Ex-fuel unit costs fell 5% as we took delivery of new lower cost aircraft (due to our currency hedges), cheaper financing, more competitive growth incentives from airports, and we also benefited from weaker Sterling and higher load factors.

Since the June Brexit vote, Sterling has fallen 18% against the euro. This was primarily responsible for the recent €75m reduction in FY guidance from a midpoint of €1.4bn to €1.325bn. We have put Sterling hedges in place to end March 2017 to protect our yields from any further Sterling weakness.

For H2 our fuel is 95% hedged at approx. \$59bbl. We have also increased our FY18 fuel hedge cover to 85% at approx. \$49bbl which (allowing for volume growth) will deliver further fuel savings of c. €140m in FY18.

Brexit:

The uncertainty over Brexit, and the final outcome of the UK's departure negotiations with the European Union, will continue to overhang our business for FY18. We expect to see weaker Sterling and slower economic growth in both

the UK (approx. 26% of our revenues) and Europe. We have responded by reducing our planned UK growth in 2017 from 12% to approx. 5%, and switched this capacity to accelerate growth in markets such as Italy (where the Govt have cut taxes), Germany (where incumbent carriers continue to restructure) and other markets such as Belgium, where competitors are closing routes and bases. We hope that the UK will remain a member of Europe's "Open Skies" system, but until the final outcome of Brexit has been determined, we will continue to adapt to changing circumstances in the best interests of our customers, our people and our shareholders.

Ryanair Labs & Ancillaries

We continue to invest heavily in Ryanair Labs which is transforming our digital platform to make it easier for customers to interact with Ryanair and book our lowest fares and ancillary services. Ryanair.com has recently overtaken Southwest Airlines to become the world's largest airline website. Our mobile app was the 8th largest UK travel app (by usage) in Sept 2016, well ahead of our UK airline competitors easyJet (No. 20) and BA (No. 37). 93% of all customers are now booking directly on Ryanair.com and we expect membership of "My Ryanair" will significantly increase from 15m in Sept to over 25m by end-2017.

Ryanair Labs has delivered a significant upward shift in web visits, app bookings, as well as ancillary services by boosting the sales of reserved seats, Business/Leisure Plus products and fast track services which customers can buy at discounted rates during the booking process. As a direct result of this increased customer demand for travel related services, we are raising our medium term guidance for ancillary sales from 20% to 30% of revenues, over the next 4 years to March 2020.

Balance Sheet & Shareholder Returns:

Ryanair's balance sheet remains one of the strongest in the airline industry. At the end of Sept. we had net cash of €77m despite having spent over €600m on CAPEX, €200m on debt repayments and €468m on share buybacks during the half year. We completed our 7th share buyback in June at a cost of €886m, bringing our total returns to shareholders since 2008 to over €4.2bn. We will continue to return surplus funds to shareholders subject to market conditions as long as we remain profitable, cash generative, and can fund our CAPEX and other operational requirements.

With this in mind, the Board of Ryanair have authorised a further share buyback of up to €550m over the 4 month period from Nov 2016 to Feb 2017. We expect to split this 50/50 between ADR's and ordinary shares, which will ensure we continue to comfortably exceed our 50% EU ownership requirement.

Outlook:

We remain cautious in our outlook for FY17. We have delivered a strong first half but weaker air fares and Brexit uncertainty will be the dominant features of H2. Having hedged both our fuel and Sterling exposures, we remain comfortable with our revised full year guidance of €1.30bn to €1.35bn. However, with limited Q4 visibility, and the absence of Easter from Q4, we expect fares will continue to fall (H2 fares are guided at c. -13% to -15%), so this guidance is heavily dependent upon there being no unexpected adverse declines in Q4 airfares. We expect FY unit costs will fall by approx. 3% this year (we previously guided -1%). H2 fuel will deliver significant savings as we are 95% hedged at \$59pbl but these savings will be passed on in lower fares.

We expect to carry just over 119m customers in FY17 and this stronger growth requires us to raise our long term traffic forecast by over 10% from 180m to over 200m customers p.a. by March 2024. Despite the uncertainty of Brexit, Ryanair believes that we can deliver profitable growth across Europe by controlling costs, lowering airfares, and maximising load factors in a manner that will most benefit our customers, our people and our shareholders."

ENDS.

For further information please contact: Neil Sorahan
Ryanair Holdings plc
www.ryanair.com
Tel: 353-1-9451212

Piaras Kelly
Edelman
Tel: 353-1-6789333

Ryanair is Europe's favourite airline, carrying 119m p.a. on more than 1,800 daily flights from 85 bases, connecting over 200 destinations in 33 countries on a fleet of over 360 Boeing 737 aircraft, with a further 305 Boeing 737's on order, which will enable Ryanair to lower fares and grow traffic to 200m p.a. by FY24. Ryanair has a team of more than 12,000 highly skilled aviation professionals delivering Europe's No.1 on-time performance, and an industry leading 31 year safety record.

Certain of the information included in this release is forward looking and is subject to important risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially. It is not reasonably possible to itemise all of the many factors and specific events that could affect the outlook and results of an airline operating in the European economy. Among the factors that are subject to change and could significantly impact Ryanair's expected results are the airline pricing environment, fuel costs, competition from new and existing carriers, market prices for the replacement aircraft, costs associated with environmental, safety and security measures, actions of the Irish, U.K., European Union ("EU") and other governments and their respective regulatory agencies, uncertainties surrounding Brexit, weather related disruptions, fluctuations in currency exchange rates and interest rates, airport access and charges, labour relations, the economic environment of the airline industry, the general economic environment in Ireland, the UK and Continental Europe, the general willingness of passengers to travel and other economics, social and political factors.

Ryanair Holdings plc and Subsidiaries

Condensed Consolidated Interim Balance Sheet as at September 30, 2016 (unaudited)

		At Sep 30, 2016	At Mar 31, 2016
	Note	€M	€M
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	10	6,613.0	6,261.5
Intangible assets		46.8	46.8
Derivative financial instruments		63.6	88.5
Total non-current assets		6,723.4	6,396.8
Current assets			
Inventories		3.0	3.3
Other assets		159.3	148.5
Trade receivables		57.1	66.1
Derivative financial instruments		236.0	269.1
Restricted cash		12.4	13.0
Financial assets: cash > 3 months		2,927.7	3,062.3
Cash and cash equivalents		964.8	1,259.2
Total current assets		4,360.3	4,821.5
Total assets		11,083.7	11,218.3
Current liabilities			
Trade payables		318.0	230.6
Accrued expenses and other liabilities		1,396.1	2,112.7
Current maturities of debt		386.6	449.9
Derivative financial instruments		168.0	555.4
Current tax		83.8	20.9

Edgar Filing: RYANAIR HOLDINGS PLC - Form 6-K

Total current liabilities		2,352.5	3,369.5
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions		145.6	149.3
Derivative financial instruments		13.8	111.6
Deferred tax		440.8	385.5
Other creditors		21.1	32.5
Non-current maturities of debt		3,441.2	3,573.1
Total non-current liabilities		4,062.5	4,252.0
Shareholders' equity			
Issued share capital	12	7.5	7.7
Share premium account		719.4	719.4
Other undenominated capital	12	2.5	2.3
Retained earnings	12	3,858.6	3,166.1
Other reserves		80.7	(298.7)
Shareholders' equity		4,668.7	3,596.8
Total liabilities and shareholders' equity		11,083.7	11,218.3

Ryanair Holdings plc and Subsidiaries

Condensed Consolidated Interim Income Statement for the half-year ended September 30, 2016 (unaudited)

	Note	Change* %	IFRS Half-Year Ended Sep 30, 2016 €M	Pre- Exceptional Results Sep 30, 2015 €M	Exceptional Items Sep 30, 2015 €M	IFRS Half-Year Ended Sep 30, 2015 €M
Operating revenues						
Scheduled revenues		-	3,242.6	3,240.0	-	3,240.0
Ancillary revenues		+11%	888.9	800.1	-	800.1
Total operating revenues - continuing operations		+2%	4,131.5	4,040.1	-	4,040.1
Operating expenses						
Fuel and oil		-8%	1,068.3	1,157.0	-	1,157.0
Airport and handling charges		+3%	485.1	469.6	-	469.6
Route charges		+4%	362.9	349.4	-	349.4
Staff costs		+8%	329.2	305.7	-	305.7
Depreciation		+17%	251.9	215.1	-	215.1
Marketing, distribution and other		+16%	172.3	149.0	-	149.0
Maintenance, materials and repairs		-10%	69.0	62.8	-	62.8
Aircraft rentals		-38%	44.3	71.0	-	71.0
Total operating expenses		-	2,783.0	2,779.6	-	2,779.6
Operating profit - continuing operations		+7%	1,348.5	1,260.5	-	1,260.5
Other (expense)/income						
Gain on disposal of available for sale financial asset		-	-	-	317.5	317.5

Edgar Filing: RYANAIR HOLDINGS PLC - Form 6-K

Finance expense		+15%	(39.9)	(34.8)	-	(34.8)
Finance income		-82%	2.5	14.0	-	14.0
Foreign exchange (loss)		+214%	(2.2)	(0.7)	-	(0.7)
Total other (expense)/income		+84%	(39.6)	(21.5)	317.5	296.0
Profit before tax		+6%	1,308.9	1,239.0	317.5	1,556.5
Tax expense on profit on ordinary activities	4	-6%	(141.3)	(150.8)	-	(150.8)
Profit for the half-year – all attributable to equity holders of parent		+7%	1,167.6	1,088.2	317.5	1,405.7
Earnings per ordinary share (in € cent)						
Basic	9	+15%	92.26	79.90		103.21
Diluted	9	+15%	91.76	79.47		102.66
Weighted average no. of ordinary shares (in Ms)						
Basic	9		1,265.5	1,362.0		1,362.0
Diluted	9		1,272.5	1,369.3		1,369.3

*Comparison refers to adjusted figures prior to inclusion of the exceptional item

Ryanair Holdings plc and Subsidiaries

Condensed Consolidated Interim Income Statement for the quarter ended September 30, 2016 (unaudited)

	Note	Change* %	IFRS Quarter Ended Sep 30, 2016 €M	Pre- Exceptional Results Sep 30, 2015 €M	Exceptional Items Sep 30, 2015 €M	IFRS Quarter Ended Sep 30, 2015 €M
Operating revenues						
Scheduled revenues		-	1,998.6	1,991.9	-	1,991.9
Ancillary revenues		+13%	445.5	395.5	-	395.5
Total operating revenues - continuing operations		+2%	2,444.1	2,387.4	-	2,387.4
Operating expenses						
Fuel and oil		-8%	549.9	597.0	-	597.0
Airport and handling charges		+2%	243.7	237.9	-	237.9
Route charges		+4%	185.0	177.5	-	177.5
Staff costs		+6%	163.4	153.9	-	153.9
Depreciation		+16%	126.3	108.9	-	108.9
Marketing, distribution and other		+14%	84.7	74.0	-	74.0
Maintenance, materials and repairs		-11%	27.7	31.1	-	31.1
Aircraft rentals		-38%	21.7	35.0	-	35.0
Total operating expenses		-1%	1,402.4	1,415.3	-	1,415.3
Operating profit - continuing operations		+7%	1,041.7	972.1	-	972.1
Other (expense)/income						
Gain on disposal of available for sale financial asset		-	-	-	317.5	317.5

Edgar Filing: RYANAIR HOLDINGS PLC - Form 6-K

Finance expense		+8%	(18.9)	(17.5)	-	(17.5)
Finance income		-65%	1.2	3.4	-	3.4
Foreign exchange (loss)/gain		-150%	(1.6)	3.2	-	3.2
Total other (expense)/income		+77%	(19.3)	(10.9)	317.5	306.6
Profit before tax		+6%	1,022.4	961.2	317.5	1,278.7
Tax expense on profit on ordinary activities		-7%	(110.3)	(118.1)	-	(118.1)
Profit for the quarter – all attributable to equity holders of parent		+8%	912.1	843.1	317.5	1,160.6
Earnings per ordinary share (in € cent)						
Basic	9	+17%	72.72	62.22		85.65
Diluted	9	+17%	72.34	61.86		85.16
Weighted average no. of ordinary shares (in Ms)						
Basic	9		1,254.3	1,355.1		1,355.1
Diluted	9		1,260.9	1,362.9		1,362.9

*Comparison refers to adjusted figures prior to inclusion of the exceptional item

Ryanair Holdings plc and Subsidiaries

Condensed Consolidated Interim Statement of Comprehensive Income for the half-year ended September 30, 2016 (unaudited)

	Half-Year Ended Sep 30, 2016	Half-Year Ended Sep 30, 2015
	€M	€M
Profit for the half-year	1,167.6	1,405.7
Other comprehensive income:		
Items that are or may be reclassified to profit or loss:		
Cash flow hedge reserve movements:		
Net movement in cash flow hedge reserve	369.1	(336.3)
Available for sale financial asset:		
Disposal of available for sale financial asset-reclassified to profit or loss	-	(291.4)
Other comprehensive income/(loss) for the half-year, net of income tax	369.1	(627.7)
Total comprehensive income for the half-year – all attributable to equity holders of parent	1,536.7	778.0

Condensed Consolidated Interim Statement of Comprehensive Income for the quarter ended September 30, 2016 (unaudited)

Quarter Quarter

Edgar Filing: RYANAIR HOLDINGS PLC - Form 6-K

	Ended Sep 30, 2016 €M	Ended Sep 30, 2015 €M
--	--------------------------------	--------------------------------

Profit for the quarter	912.1	1,160.6
------------------------	-------	---------

Other comprehensive income: