

First Steel Cut for New Stornoway-Ullapool Ferry

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The first piece of steel was cut yesterday (16 September 2013) for the MV LOCH SEAFORTH, the replacement ferry on the Stornoway-Ullapool route, marking the start of construction on the new vessel.

The first steel-cutting ceremony took place at Flensburger Schiffbau-Gesellschaft MBH and Co KG shipyard in Flensburg, Germany, where the ship is being built. Andy Robertson and Nick Johnson from Lloyd's Banking Group, joined Guy Platten, CEO of Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) and Andrew Duncan, Director of Vessels at CMAL to push the button to start the steel cutting machine. The ship is being financed by Lloyds Banking Group and will be leased to CMAL.

The new 116m, roll on roll off vehicle passenger ferry will be capable of operating 24 hours a day and will have capacity for up to 700 passengers and 143 cars or 20 commercial vehicles. It will be owned by CMAL and operated by the current operator of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services, CalMac Ferries.

Guy Platten commented: "Today's steel cutting marks an exciting stage of the ferry building process as work gets underway on construction of the vessel.

"The new ferry will provide a lifeline ferry service for communities between the Western Isles and the mainland. We look forward to seeing the ferry going into service in 2014."

The steel cut today is from block A03, which will form part of the ship's hull near to the stern. It is anticipated that the new MV LOCH SEAFORTH will launch in February 2014 and enter service by summer 2014.

MV LOCH SEAFORTH was named by the public in a competition in April 2013, with the name winning 40 per cent of the votes. The winning vote, picked at random from almost 2,000 people was Mary Davidson from the Isle of Lewis who will attend the launch as a special guest.

Loch Seaforth is a sea loch between Lewis and Harris. The previous MV Loch Seaforth was the name of the MacBrayne mailboat that linked Stornoway with Mallaig and Kyle of Lochalsh from 1947 until 1972. On 22 March 1973 she ran aground on Cleit Rock in the Sound of Gunna and was subsequently scrapped.

Notes to Editors

1. CMAL own property at piers and harbours at more than 24 locations throughout Scotland and is embarking on a programme of investment and improvements, which will create better facilities.
2. In addition to its pier and harbour facilities, CMAL own 30 ferries, which are leased to CalMac Ferries Ltd for use on ferry services on the Clyde and Hebrides.
3. CMAL is a publicly owned company with Scottish Ministers as the sole shareholder.
4. For more information about CMAL visit: www.cmassets.co.uk
5. Media enquiries: Christina Kelly / Alix Laidlaw on 0141 204 7800 / 0131 220 8787