



Caledonian MacBrayne's former Oban pier manager Duncan MacInnes



Changing times

Former port manager Duncan MacInnes looks back with an eye over a rapidly changing

AT THE height of a summer season nearly a thousand people and around 70 vehicles can cram aboard the *MV Isle of Mull* and set sail from bonnie Oban Bay bound for Craignure.

Hundreds of thousands of visitors pass through Oban annually to link with ferries to the islands of Mull, Coll, Tiree and Barra and, with work on Oban's second linkspan well underway, the town is undoubtedly set to become even busier.

But Caledonian MacBrayne's former Oban port manager recalls an bygone era when the *MV Lochearn* would carry around 300 foot passengers and only six cars to Mull - and it's not so many years ago.

Duncan MacInnes spent most of his working life at sea. From 1977 to 2005 he was in charge of the Oban pier - its offices and ferries - and all the passengers and the cargo that entailed.

Unsurprisingly Duncan was a busy man in a busy harbour.

Duncan recalls: 'The cars would be swung onto the deck of the boat by crane, while all the cargo had to go 'loose'.

