

Dundee's RRS Discovery awarded £1.4million for urgent repair work

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World's first polar research ship safeguarded thanks to the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

RRS Discovery, the world's first ship to be designed specifically for scientific research and the sole survivor from the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration, has been safeguarded from critical deterioration thanks to £1,409,000 funding from the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

RRS Discovery is the pride of Dundee and the jewel in the crown of our historic waterfront, which is now a major tourist destination attracting visitors from around the globe

Urgent repair work to secure the ship's future

The 123-year-old ship's aging wooden structure is beginning to decay. A programme of major works to RRS Discovery will include vital restoration to various areas of the ship.

Initially, priority will be given to the deck and supporting the stern. Work will commence in the internal hull, bow and propeller shaft including decay in the stern timbers.

Work to the portside bulwarks will be addressed in a later phase. The works are estimated to continue throughout 2024 and into 2025.

The pride of Dundee

RRS Discovery was built in Dundee in 1901 for Captain Robert Falcon Scott's first Antarctic expedition. The ground-breaking science carried out on this, and a number of later expeditions, produced critical benchmark data and technological innovations that are still used by climate and environmental scientists today.

RRS Discovery is one of the last wooden three-masted sailing ships to be built in Britain and the only example of the type to survive. The vessel was built in Dundee because of the city's expertise in constructing strong whaling ships and was designed to withstand the ice-packed areas of the Antarctic.

The historic ship returned to the city in 1986, greeted by thousands of people lining the docks and remains a much-loved, iconic presence on Dundee's waterfront. It is officially recognised as one of the country's most important historic ships as well as being the only polar research vessel in the UK's [National Historic Fleet](#).

Emma Halford-Forbes, Heritage & Exhibitions Director at Dundee Heritage Trust said: "These funds from the National Heritage Memorial Fund are crucial in efforts to save the ship for future generations.

"The ability to bring forward these urgent works will be pivotal in securing the ship's future, while we work on plans for further conservation works in the coming years. We can't thank NHMF enough for this critical funding."

Dr Simon Thurley, Chair, National Heritage Memorial Fund, said: "We are delighted to support this essential preservation work to RRS Discovery, a ship of national importance in Scotland and the UK.

The National Heritage Memorial Fund exists to safeguard some of our finest heritage at risk of loss.

"The National Heritage Memorial Fund exists to safeguard some of our finest heritage at risk of loss, and thanks to our support of £1.4m, RRS Discovery will continue to be an important draw to visitors to Dundee's historic waterfront.

"The ship joins the many hundreds of important and much-loved treasures that can be seen and enjoyed across the UK thanks to the National Heritage Memorial Fund."