



DUNDEE
HERITAGE
TRUST



For Release: 15th February 2024

From Dundee Heritage Trust Marketing and PR office

Royal Research Ship *Discovery* critical works thanks to National Heritage Memorial Fund support

Dundee Heritage Trust has received £1.4million from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) to help save the Royal Research Ship *Discovery*. The Trust has announced that urgent conservation works are set to begin on the Royal Research Ship in February 2024.

These urgent works come as the ship approaches its centenary of being officially designated a Royal Research Ship in 1925, and are crucial for the future of the UK's first purpose-built Antarctic research ship.

Built in Dundee in 1901, *Discovery* carries an extraordinary legacy including its famous 1901-1904 voyage to Antarctica – with Antarctic pioneers Captain Scott, Ernest Shackleton, Tom Crean and more – to oceanographic research that is now used as a benchmark for modern climate science, a history with the sea scouts in London, and its return to its home of Dundee in 1986. Since being moored at Discovery Point, the ship has seen millions of visitors climb aboard its decks, with more than 300,000 visitors in the last five years alone.

The ship's wooden structure is beginning to decay. Undertaken by JPS Restoration, the programme of major works to *Discovery* will include vital restoration to various areas of the ship's ageing wooden structure. 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.

Dundee Heritage Trust was successful in acquiring two antique teak logs from Robbins Timber, enabling the best quality wood to be used for the deck of the ship. The logs were salvaged from the SS Pegu and give the Trust a unique opportunity to use high quality wood without damaging the priceless resource of teak forests.

Dundee Heritage Trust are custodians of the Royal Research Ship *Discovery*, alongside Verdant Works Museum and the associated polar and jute collections, both Recognised as being of National Significance. An independent charity, the Trust generates 98% of its income through admissions, hospitality and fundraising to enable the care of its remarkable collections and to operate its two award-winning visitor attractions.

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.*"



DUNDEE
HERITAGE
TRUST



Jim Mitchell, Conservation Engineer at Industrial Heritage Consulting Limited said: *“JPS Restoration Ltd and Industrial Heritage Consulting have worked on many projects together over a number of years and in many locations, but we feel particularly proud and honoured to be given the opportunity to carry out this significant piece of restoration work on such an iconic vessel.*

“It is an opportunity to demonstrate that such work can be carried out in Scotland by Scottish companies and we will be

harvesting a broad swathe of skills to confirm this. We hope to work with Dundee Heritage Trust to build in an element of training and skills sharing, and we are already speaking to the Scottish Maritime Museum’s pioneering Boatbuilding school about being involved. The ship will remain open to visitors throughout - we look forward to talking to the visitors about this amazing project.”

Dr Simon Thurley CBE, Chair of the 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, 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.”

The public can follow updates of the works and this important piece of Discovery’s ongoing story online and on social media.

The Royal Research Ship *Discovery* has been a key part of Dundee’s history since its launch in 1901 and its subsequent return to the city skyline in the 1980s. It is hoped that these crucial works will ensure that this incredible ship will continue to be part of the City of Discovery’s and the nations legacy for many generations to come.

ENDS

The venue address is Discovery Point, Discovery Quay, Dundee, DD1 4XA.

To arrange for interview, please email Julie Cumming, Marketing Manager on:
julie.cumming@dundeeheritage.co.uk.

Find out more about Discovery Point: www.rrsdiscovery.co.uk

Notes to editors:

Social media channels:

<https://www.facebook.com/DiscoveryPointandRRSDiscovery>

<https://www.instagram.com/discoverydundee/>

<https://twitter.com/DiscoveryDundee>

Dundee Heritage Trust and its operating company Dundee Industrial Heritage Limited, are both registered charities formed in 1985 to preserve and interpret Dundee's industrial past. As well as the internationally significant Royal Research Ship *Discovery*, Dundee Heritage Trust has responsibility for Discovery Point, home of RRS *Discovery* and Verdant Works, one of the nation's most important textile



museums. Both sites are accredited museums, 5-star rated attractions with Visit Scotland and have won numerous awards.

Discovery Point is a world class visitor attraction and home to the RRS Discovery, telling the story of Dundee's connections to Antarctic explorations and the inspiring story of Captain Scott's 1901 expedition.

The National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) was set up in 1980 to save the most outstanding parts of our national heritage, in memory of those who have given their lives for the UK. NHMF receives annual grant-in-aid of £5million from the UK government to help save some of our most-loved treasures such as paintings, natural heritage, maritime and industrial vessels, and historic houses, from being lost forever. Any funds remaining from NHMF's annual allocation at the end of the financial year remain available to NHMF to award grants to

exceptional heritage treasures such as the Portrait of Mai (Omai), The Artist Rooms, Titian's Diana and Acteon, the Honresfield Library, Tyntesfield Estate and Wentworth Woodhouse.

www.nhmf.org.uk / @NationalHeritageMemorialFund / #NationalHeritageMemorialFund

The National Heritage Memorial Fund awarded £409,000 in 2021 to Dundee Heritage Trust to save RRS Discovery and an additional £1m in 2023.

Burmese Teak is considered amongst the best, but is not the easiest timber to get hold of. Timber harvest in Burma, or Myanmar as it is now called, is very strictly controlled. The SS Pegu - from which this timber was salvaged - was a steam cargo ship of the Henderson Shipping Company that was torpedoed by a German U-boat (U57) under the command of Carl-Siegfried Ritter von Georg off Kinsale, Ireland, on 8th July 1917. The Pegu had been carrying a supply of Burmese Teak from Rangoon to Liverpool to be used in the fortification of heavy gun emplacements in France and Belgium. One member of the crew of the Pegu died. In 2011, around 80 tonnes of this teak was lifted from the Pegu – much of it reported to be in perfect condition due to it being submerged in the silt, 80 metres below the surface. Part of the recovered load was subsequently used in the post-2007 fire restoration of the Cutty Sark. *Discovery* will be in good company, and put rare timber with a fascinating history to good use.