

Stabilisation of the Research LK62

Boats Club volunteers are working with museum staff to stabilise the “Research”. This large wooden boat is an important exhibit in the museum's collection being one of the few surviving examples of the Zulu class of fishing boat. Because she is on dry land she doesn't have the pressure of the water on her hull to maintain her shape. Also, she no longer has deck beams in place and as a result she requires some additional support.



Fitting steel wires across the hull



New wooden clamps to reinforce the frames

Because the hull is tending to splay outwards due to the effect of gravity, a number of steel cables are being installed across the hull at deck level. The tension in these steel cables will maintain the shape of the hull. In addition, several of the frames of the hull are being reinforced with new wooden clamps bolted on to reinforce the joints between the old futtocks which have loosened due to corrosion of the metal fastenings and shrinkage of the dry wood.



Fitting new bolts to the frames



Treating exposed metal with rust converter

The stabilisation work also involves treating her timbers with boron salts to prevent rot and attack by wood boring insects. Also, any exposed ferrous metal work is being treated with tannic acid rust converter to slow corrosion.

The *Research* was built in Banff and was initially called *Heather Bell* BF1206. She is the sole surviving large Zulu, a first class herring drifter of a type once numerous along the shores of the Moray Firth. She subsequently had a successful fishing career based in Shetland until 1968. A characteristic feature of the Zulu is the long raked stern which enabled a large overall length and deck area but a relatively short keel giving good manoeuvrability and a very elegant profile.



The elegant raked stern of the Zulu

Nick Chalmers, SFM Boats Club, March 2020