

# The Edinburgh Reporter chats to Ian Andrews



Ian Andrews is a master cooper who learned his trade working in the whisky trade, making barrels for King George and then VAT 69 when they had a distillery in South Queensferry.

He carried on working on his own after the distillery closed, and it seems that he cannot yet lay down his tools for good. His latest commission is to make a new Crow's Nest for SS Discovery in Dundee and we went to meet him to see how that was going.

[The Edinburgh Reporter NEWS](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

He bought the original port pipe from a cooperage in Alloa which he then 'knocked down' to get it into his car. It meant that he then had to rebuild it, cutting out the bottom and completed the refurbishment with a seat and footrests inside where a sailor would have sat keeping lookout when the ship was at sea.

The port pipe he used was ideal as it is tall and thin, and would provide shelter for the sailor.

Ian has also made about 400 items for the Victory which is in Portsmouth such as gunpowder barrels.

The crow's nest will be taken to Dundee next week and will be clamped onto the mast with heavy brackets.

Ian told us that there are possibly only 140 coopers left in the whole of Scotland, whereas there were 140 in one shop in Edinburgh at one time. Although it is a trade which is

diminishing, it is far from gone, particularly in a shed in South Queensferry.

RRS Discovery was the last traditional wooden three-masted ship to be built in Britain and went off to the Antarctic as a Royal Research Ship. Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton sailed aboard the Discovery on their first successful journey to the Antarctic and is now a visitor attraction in Dundee.