



Fifie Boats

In addition to the large 80 foot Zulu Wherries there was a sprinkling of similar size 'Fifie' type boats in Lewis and we recall some of them in Cromore, Marvig, Calbost etc. The Fifie boat has very little rake on either stem or stern and they were known in Lewis as 'Bàta Cruinn'. Some of the 70 to 80 foot Fifies were converted to motor and survived in Lewis until the Second World War or after.

The Scottish Fisheries Museum at Anstruther, restored the 'Reaper', a 72 foot Fifie herring boat, 21 feet beam and 8 feet 6 inches draught, built in 1902 at Sandhaven near Fraserburgh. She is now under the care of the Scottish Fisheries Museum to whom we are indebted for photos and details of this historic boat, which spent most of her time in the Shetlands.

Both the big Zulus and Fifies were all built in the period approximately 1880 to 1906, a short life but the coming of the steam drifter and the motor boat ushered in a new age. A 70 foot overall, Fifie boat, built about 1905 cost £737 ready for sea but without nets. Included in that price was a suit of sails costing £150.

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