

THE WOODEN BOAT STAGE RETURNS IN 2026 WITH AN EXPANDED PRESENCE FOLLOWING A STANDOUT DEBUT YEAR

The Southampton International Boat Show, taking place from 18 - 27 September, will unveil a significantly expanded Wooden Boat Stage in 2026, creating an even bigger platform to celebrate, showcase and support the future of wooden boatbuilding in the UK.

The inaugural Wooden Boat Stage in 2025 was created by the collaborative forces of the Boat Building Academy in Lyme Regis (BBA), the Wooden Boatbuilders' Trade Association (WBTA) and Women In Boat Building (WIBB) to shine a spotlight on the skills of wooden boatbuilding in the UK.



Following a strong debut year, the stage firmly established its place within the show, attracting visitors through daily demonstrations, practical sessions, and expert-led talks and panels. The enduring craft of wooden boatbuilding continues to hold strong appeal for a wide audience, with many visitors sharing their own personal connections to wooden boats in the welcoming and authentic atmosphere created around the stage. Building on this momentum, the Southampton International Boat Show is investing in the 2026 stage to significantly expand its presence, creating a more dynamic, high-profile platform for live demonstrations, storytelling and skills in action.

Jasmine Hill, Event Director of Southampton International Boat Show said:

"The Wooden Boat Stage embodies the heart and craft of the UK's wooden boat industry, bringing stories, skills, and projects to life for our visitors. We're excited to expand the stage in 2026, offering an even bigger platform for talent, innovation, and the timeless appeal of wooden boats."



Also, new for 2026, the *Wooden Boat Stage Afloat* will expand the experience onto the water, showcasing a special collection of standout wooden boats with unique stories and outstanding craftsmanship for visitors to experience up close.



“Wooden boatbuilding represents the very best of craftsmanship, where traditional techniques meet modern thinking, and where every build is a reflection of skill, care, and experience. It’s a discipline that connects people to the water in a uniquely authentic way. The Wooden Boat Stage gives that craft the platform it deserves, allowing us to share not just the finished boats, but the process, the people, and the stories behind them. Expanding the stage in 2026, and also showcasing wooden boats afloat, will help us reach new audiences and continue building momentum for the future of the craft.” Colin Henwood, Wooden Boatbuilders’ Trade Association

The Wooden Boat Stage schedule will bring alive the passion, craft, people and projects from the UK’s wooden boatbuilding industry, showcasing the history and heritage alongside modern wooden boatbuilding, promoting the viability of wood as a sustainable material for the future.

In 2025, the Wooden Boat Stage hosted 68 sessions delivered by 34 organisations, featuring more than 60 individuals, including Jazz Turner, Conrad Humphreys, and Dan Lee. This year, the programme will once again be led by the WIBB, WBTA and BBA, ensuring it remains a true community effort. Applications are now open for those with a story to tell, a project suited to the stage, or a relevant skill to demonstrate. The organising group is particularly keen to support younger and lesser-known individuals in the industry who may not have previously had the opportunity to showcase their craft and encourages applications from those wishing to share their work with show visitors.

Apply here: <https://forms.gle/yMRFgJKuSaMWTyFT9>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE STAGE EMAIL belinda@womeninboatbuilding.com

The Southampton International Boat Show takes place from 18-27 September. Wave 2 tickets for the show are on sale from £21. Book your tickets here: www.southamptonboatshow.com

About the Southampton International Boat Show

From SUPs to superyachts and everything in between, the Southampton International Boat Show is an on-water event, one of the largest in Europe and the biggest and most popular of its type in the UK. Welcoming thousands of visitors, the event provides a showcase for everything the leisure marine industry has to offer and provides an exciting family day out with many chances to get afloat.

For further show information visit: www.southamptonboatshow.com.
PR team: ADPR – sibs@adpr.co.uk

About British Marine

The Southampton International Boat Show is owned and operated by British Marine. British Marine is the trade association for the UK leisure, superyacht and small commercial marine industry. Through the provision of world-class events, specialist services and business support tools, we support over 1,300 members from both sea-going and inland sectors in achieving long-term sustainable growth and represent an industry which employs more than 38,000 people in the UK.

For more information about the work of British Marine and how to join, please visit the website: www.britishmarine.co.uk, or follow British Marine on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook

About Women in Boat Building – WiBB

Women in Boat Building is a UK-based Community Interest Company that connects and supports women working hands-on in boatbuilding and related marine trades. A volunteer-led organisation founded in 2022, WiBB has already had an impact with more women entering the industry, and improved retention and visibility. The Wooden Boat Stage concept originated from the WiBB events at the Pot Townsend Wooden Boat Festival in 2024 – their work to increase visibility for all boatbuilders is having a positive impact. www.womeninboatbuilding.com

About the Wooden Boatbuilders' Trade Association – WBTA

The Wooden Boatbuilders' Trade Association (WBTA) is a volunteer-led organisation, established in 1990, dedicated to supporting and promoting the craft of wooden boatbuilding across the UK. Our members – ranging from established builders to allied trades and emerging professionals – are united by a shared passion for working with wood and a belief in its value as a boatbuilding material, both now and for the future.

We are a small organisation with a big aim – to demonstrate that wood is not only a beautiful and capable material for building boats but is also one that supports sustainable practices and a long-established skilled tradition of wooden boatbuilding in the UK.

We embrace proven, time-honoured wooden boat construction, and champion modern techniques and technologies. <https://www.wbta.co.uk/>

About the Boat Building Academy – BBA

The Boat Building Academy is a registered charity in Lyme Regis. Founded in 1997, it has trained nearly 1,000 boat builders and furniture makers of all ages through its 12 and 40-week courses, with many more enjoying short courses ranging from one to ten days. Welcoming complete beginners, career changers, and enthusiasts from across the UK and beyond, the BBA offers a practical, immersive route into the craft — and for many graduates, it has been truly life-changing. As a charity, the BBA is committed to making its training as accessible as possible. Bursaries are open to any UK resident who would otherwise be unable to fund their place, with some reserved specifically for women. Bursaries are awarded on application, and candidates must demonstrate genuine commitment and dedication to their training. The BBA is passionate about keeping the craft of wooden boat building alive, and welcomes applications from anyone — at any age — with the drive and passion to get stuck in. <https://boatbuildingacademy.com/>