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## Exciting season of events ahead at Buckler's Hard

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The Buckler's Hard team tells us...

(All words and images from Buckler's Hard).



The free exhibition on 'the Dig' closes on 19<sup>th</sup> April where you can see all the artefacts dug up from last year's archaeological dig in the historic shipyard. Next up is *Beautiful Places - From Beaulieu to Bucklers Hard - the Artists view* from 23<sup>rd</sup> April - 10<sup>th</sup> May 2026.



The [Buckler's Hard Shipyard Trust](#) has a new free exhibition of two leading artists who spent a year painting around the Beaulieu Estate at the Shipwrights Gallery in the historic shipbuilding village of [Buckler's Hard](#).

Paula Mitchell and Nick Botting were commissioned to capture the essence of the area, its beauty and historic settings, often painting amidst ponies and people, through rain and shine.

Nick Botting has an instinctive ability to capture in paint the atmosphere of his subject. Direct experience and careful observation are important themes throughout his work. He makes a point of painting directly from the subject rather than depending on references, for this establishes a spontaneity and sense of genuine experience that is often lost in the studio.



[Palace House, Beaulieu in the Spring, by Nick Botting.](#)

Nick said *"It's rare to find a place where you can be looking at the most beautiful view and then be able to turn and see another, just as fine, behind you. There is a sense of vast space here, and with that comes a sense of openness and freedom. It is land that's unchanged, a*



*land of the sea and river, oak trees, gorse and ponies that have all been here for millennia.*

*I found myself acutely aware of the seasons, of the tide, the wind and sun. I think because it is so open and exposed to the elements you are aware of the qualities of the day's weather so much more than you are in a more protected environment. A calm, still day here feels like a jewel, and like a reward for embracing the weather in all its wildness.*

*There's something exciting for a painter when their subject is so constantly changing - the tide coming and going, the boats moving with it, the sun endlessly playing games with the colours of the trees and river and houses and rooftops. I like trying to identify what it is that makes a particular mood in a day and picking out those qualities as precisely as I can.*

*I loved the spring at Palace House - the different types of daffodils and the grand old oak trees with the most delicate new leaves bursting out. I loved the powder blue skies and the airy sense of a new season. The horizon at Buckler's Hard was a thing of magic to me. I took great pleasure in trying to describe that extraordinary distance through painting the clouds and woodland, to get a sense of the air and the atmosphere itself."*

Paula Mitchell ARSMA from Hampshire, is a multi-award-winning artist with the Federation of British Artists and Hampshire born.

As a professional painter, Paula is known for her plein air oil paintings which capture the landscape and coastlines of the New Forest and Hampshire.

This exhibition includes a variety of Paula's oil paintings, all of which originated from her work as a 'en plein air' painter. Paula's paintings always begin outdoors involving careful observation to capture the light and atmosphere of the scene in front of her.



[Plain Sailing by Paula Mitchell.](#)

Paula's work has gained selection for the annual exhibitions of the Royal Society of Marine Artists, Society of Women Artists, Royal Institute of Oil Painters and the Royal Society of British Artists.

In 2019, Paula was a featured artist in the 2019 series of Sky Arts Landscape Artist of the Year. In 2021 the Royal Society of British Artists presented Paula with two society awards for her work 'Solent Sparkle'. These awards enabled Paula to enter and gain subsequent selection for the Winners: Award Winners 2020-2022 exhibition at Mall Galleries.

In 2025 Paula Mitchell was elected a member of the Wapping Group of Artists and later the same year, was proud to be elected an Associate Member of the Royal Society of Marine Artists.

## Other exhibitions to follow in 2026

Following this art exhibition, the [Buckler's Hard Shipyard Trust](#) will have an exhibition '*Beaulieu River at War*' which will be exploring the impact of the Second World War on the Beaulieu River and Estate from 22nd-May to end October.



Before the war, the Beaulieu River was a quiet, working waterway. But once it was requisitioned for naval use, it became part of a much bigger story, one that played out on hidden river banks, a temporary airfield, and local properties. Suddenly the area witnessed an extraordinary increase in activity, with craft moving in and out of the river, shore facilities adapted, and the estate drawn into the urgent demands of wartime Britain.

The threat of invasion also reshaped local life. Beaulieu village itself was prepared as part of the wider defensive landscape, with measures designed to slow, funnel, and disrupt any enemy advance. As the war progressed and preparations for D-Day gathered pace, the estate took on new roles. Training intensified, secrecy tightened, and the river became a setting for experiments and trials linked to the coming assault on occupied Europe. Elements connected to the Mulberry Harbour story were constructed locally, while Buckler's Hard's historic shipyard pivoted to wartime production, turning its skills to the building of vital naval vessels.

The exhibition will be curated by local historian Marc Heighway and Mary Montagu-Scott.

## Buckler's Hard Wartime Weekend event

There will be a free *Buckler's Hard Wartime Weekend* on 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> June when there will be talks, exhibitions, the Portsmouth Model Boat display team, vehicles and stands. You can also step aboard HMS Medusa, a WW2 Harbour Defence Motor Launch, moored on the river for the weekend.

The Buckler's Hard Shipyard Trust's mission is to bring the story of Buckler's Hard shipyard alive, with its rich history from medieval times to shipbuilding in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, its role in WW2, the global footprint of ships originating from it and its rural village community and preserve it for future generations.

Buckler's Hard is open seven days a week in the heart of the New Forest National Park, with its beautiful riverside historic setting and museum telling its story.



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For more details see [www.bhshipyardtrust.org.uk](http://www.bhshipyardtrust.org.uk) and [www.bucklershard.co.uk](http://www.bucklershard.co.uk)

@bucklershardshipyardtrust



Portsmouth Model Boat Display Team.

Kim adds...

Congratulations to former deck cadet Henry Rogers, who joins the Beaulieu River team as



new Moorings Manager.



[Beaulieu River Moorings Manager Henry Rogers.](#)

Former deck cadet and local sailor Henry Rogers has joined the [Beaulieu River](#) team as new Moorings Manager for [Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour](#).

Henry, who achieved a Marine Technologies Level 2 Diploma at Brockenhurst College before progressing to South Shields Marine School, is now taking up the new challenge of serving over 500 berth and mooring holders at the Beaulieu River.

Providing a friendly face and maritime knowledge, he said: "I have a lifelong connection



with the water, having grown up in a Lymington family that has always owned and operated boats, giving me a strong foundation in boating, safety and marina life. I have a passion for being out on the water.”

During his career so far Henry, aged 23 years, has gained hands-on experience and expertise in vessel handling, navigation, safety procedures and crew coordination while working in a team operating vessels in busy commercial ports.

He added: “The Beaulieu River is by far the most beautiful river in the Solent and particularly peaceful. It’s more like a retreat than a marina and is a great place to work, where everyone is so lovely and welcoming.”

Delivering five-star customer service is at the top of Henry’s priorities, as he gets to know berth and mooring holders so he is ready to help with their queries and offer advice. He replaces former skipper and superyacht captain Rupert Parkhouse in the role, after his departure to head back out on the water.

Henry joins at the start of the 2026 sailing season after a £2m redevelopment of the boatshed has provided stunning waterfront offices, high-quality workshops and a new marina shop with an expanded range of fresh food and drink, gifts and boating supplies: [www.beaulieuriver.co.uk/boatyard-redevelopment](http://www.beaulieuriver.co.uk/boatyard-redevelopment).

To find out more about berths and moorings on the Beaulieu River, see [www.beaulieuriver.co.uk](http://www.beaulieuriver.co.uk), call 01590 616200 or contact Henry at [henry.rogers@beaulieu.co.uk](mailto:henry.rogers@beaulieu.co.uk).

## About the Beaulieu River

**Buckler’s Hard Yacht Harbour** was ranked as one of the UK’s best marinas by being placed in the top 5% of 5 Gold Anchors winners by The Yacht Harbour Association. It was also voted the best place for sailors to call home when it won the prestigious Marina of the Year title in British Yachting’s awards.



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At the gateway to the New Forest National Park, it provides habitats for more than 200 species of birdlife. The custodianship of the Montagu family for over four centuries has kept it special, yet it is only a short sail from the yachting hub of Cowes.

A packed events calendar offers regular opportunities to bring together new and old friends in the Beaulieu River community, while a restaurant, pub and tea shop are on the doorstep at the 18<sup>th</sup> century shipbuilding village of [Buckler's Hard](#) with its maritime museum.