



National Maritime Museum Cornwall (NMMC) kicked off 2025 with the launch of its major new exhibition, SURF!. Carefully curated by local surf academic and surfing household name, Dr. Sam Bleakley, the vibrant exhibition celebrates the culture, craft, art and activism of Cornwall's surf scene over the last century.

From wooden bellyboards of the 1920s made by local coffin makers, to an original 1965 VW Transporter campervan, complete with scents of the 60s, the exhibition takes visitors on a nostalgic journey through 100 years of surfing history in Cornwall.

"Cornwall has been shaped by the 'cool' of surfing for over 100 years," says Sam. "SURF! is not only an inspiring journey through Cornwall's surfing heritage, but a sensory feast, celebrating the enormous impact of waveriding in Cornwall."

Other exhibition highlights include the



world's longest surfboard, a recreation of Newquay's original Bilbo Surf Shop, and the first-ever public display of internationally acclaimed artist Damian Hirst's stunning butterfly board.

Celebrating the launch of SURF!, the museum has transformed an entire wall of its gift shop into a Bilbo-inspired bright orange checkerboard print and now stocks a range of surfing mementos, including iconic Dick Pearce wooden bellyboards.

There's also a new community co-created exhibition called Surfing Memories running alongside SURF!, enabling members of the public to contribute their own special memories of Cornwall's coastline. Dr Jenny Lee, Curator of Exhibitions and Special Projects, explains, "SURF! takes visitors on a journey through surfing culture – the boards, the medals and the characters, but it's been wonderful hearing visitors talking about their own seaside experiences as they walk around it.

"This community exhibition is an opportunity to tell all those personal stories, communicating our individual, deep-rooted connections with the Cornish coastline and what it means to us."

The new exhibition will shift and change according to the submissions received over time – a great one to keep coming back to.

NMMC is a registered charity. On paying the admission fee, you will receive an Annual Pass which allows you to return as many times as you wish for the following 12 months. Money raised from admissions, donations, the gift shop and café supports school workshops and care of NMMC's collections, preserving Cornwall's maritime heritage for generations to come.



This festive season, NMMC welcomes back O-region's Nadelik Christmas show, based on the book A Christmas in Cornwall by Craig Barr-Green. This wonderful interactive family show features original live music, puppetry and a heap of festive cheer. Three shows a day from Saturday 20th December to Tuesday 23rd December. Tickets available online at <https://nmmc.co.uk/nadelik-a-family-christmas-show/>

From 20th December to Sunday 4th January, families can enjoy A Cornish Christmas crafting and museum trail, featuring lots of festive activities free for Annual Pass holders.

### What's coming in 2026

NMMC's Boatbuilding team has been hard at work creating a replica of the WW2 S.N.2

Special Operations Executive (SOE) boat. Join a Boatbuilding Workshop Open Day to take a closer look at the Surfboat and chat to the team working on the project. Visit <https://nmmc.co.uk/whats-on/> for upcoming dates.

On March 20th, Alicia Ray from Gwithian Beach Yoga returns to the museum to lead an uplifting Ocean-inspired Yoga Flow, suitable for all levels. Out of hours access to SURF! exhibition from 6pm, collect headsets at 6.30pm. Tickets available now at <https://nmmc.co.uk/deep-blue-silent-disco-yoga/>



NMMC's Spring Lecture Series is surf-focused. Expect top industry speakers and academics to cover surf-inspired art, activism, social history and more. Booking opens soon at <https://nmmc.co.uk/whats-on/>.

During every school holiday, NMMC offers a range of activities and events free with admission. At Easter 2025, Annual Pass holders enjoyed The Cornish Caretakers and the Treasures of Cornishness, starring Ed Rowe (AKA Kernow King). In summer 2025, audiences were wowed by Wipeout, a surf-themed aerial dance performance. 2026 brings more shows, crafting activities and exciting museum trails for all the family to enjoy.

**CONTACT US**

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