

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 25 June 2026



Bluebottle Tops International Dragon Rankings in Historic Return to Racing Glory

BLUEBOTTLE (GBR 192), the historic Royal racing yacht cared for by The Royal Yacht Britannia's charitable trust, along with her world-class helm **Graham Bailey**, has surged to the top of the **Dragon Class 2026 International Ranking List**, marking a stunning new chapter in Bluebottle's 79-year history.

The breakthrough moment came with Team Bluebottle's recent victory at the **Finnish National Championship in Helsinki**, propelling Bailey and Bluebottle to number one in the international rankings. Supporting Bailey is Bluebottle's outstanding race crew: **Julia Bailey, Will Bedford and Killian Boag**.

Heritage vessel Bluebottle has now re-established herself as a dominant force, competing - and winning - against modern fibreglass yachts on the global stage.

This achievement follows investment by The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust who meticulously restored and maintain Bluebottle within their fleet of former Royal racing yachts. The comprehensive refit was carried out by David Heritage Racing Yachts in Cowes, Isle of Wight, which returned the classic wooden Dragon to full racing condition.

History and heritage

Built in 1948 by Camper and Nicholsons, Bluebottle was presented as a wedding gift to Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip by the Island Sailing Club, Isle of Wight. In 1956, the yacht was loaned to the British sailing team for the Melbourne Olympic Games, where, under Lt Cdr Graham Mann, it secured a bronze medal - the only Olympic medal ever won by a British Dragon.

Graham Bailey, Bluebottle Helm: "We love racing Bluebottle. It is always an absolute privilege and joy to put her up against the best teams on the international circuit but sometimes you must pinch yourself; achieving current world number one ranking is one of those moments."

Franck Bruyère, Chief Executive Officer of The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust, said:

"A longstanding ambition of the Trust has been to reunite the former Royal sailing yachts Bluebottle, Coweslip and Bloodhound - Britannia's historic sailing fleet. In recent years, all three have come under our care and are benefiting from investment and specialist expertise."

"Reaching the top of the Dragon class rankings is an incredibly proud moment and a testament to the dedication and hard work of everyone involved. The Trust remains committed to supporting our Royal sailing fleet and investing in its future."

Next move

Team Bluebottle will compete in the 2026 Dragon European Championship in Helsinki, where many of the world's leading Dragon class teams are expected to contest for honours.

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For more information on The Royal Yacht Britannia, go to www.royalyachtbritannia.co.uk

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- **SAILING THROUGH ROYAL HISTORY EXHIBITION** - For the first time in nearly 30 years, The Royal Yacht Britannia returns to Cowes on the Isle of Wight through 'Sailing Through Royal History', an exhibition from The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust celebrating its enduring connection with Cowes, its community and the close Royal links to legendary local yacht designer Uffa Fox.

This brand-new touring exhibition will be hosted in the historic Commodores House, once the workshop of renowned yacht designer and builder Uffa Fox, Commodores House also hosted members of the Royal Family, including Prince Philip who was a former crewmate and friend of Uffa.

The exhibition will run throughout August (31 July–29 August).

- **MARITIME HERITAGE TRAIL** - In addition to the exhibition, The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust, in partnership with the Classic Boat Museum, has developed an exclusive series of informative panels located by the waterside on The Parade in Cowes. The panels highlight the bicentenary of 'Racing Royals' featuring Edward VII, George V and Prince Philip and their contribution to the maritime heritage of Cowes through their presence and support to the event.
- **BLUEBOTTLE IN COWES** - Bluebottle will be in Cowes for the month of August taking part in three major sailing events including Cowes Week Bicentenary Regatta and the two prestigious Dragon class regattas, The Edinburgh Cup and the Marblehead Trophy.

Bluebottle is registered with the Royal Yacht Club in Cowes. Following its victory in the prestigious Marblehead Trophy in 2025, the Royal Yacht Club will host Bluebottle's defence of the title from 23 to 25 August.

- **COWESLIP** – Central to the Sailing Through Royal History exhibition will be Coweslip, the most celebrated of the Flying Fifteen keelboats, sailed by the Royal Family. Coweslip is currently on display in the Classic Boat Museum in Cowes until the start of the exhibition.
- **BRITANNIA** – No.1 Attraction in the World (Tripadvisor), The Royal Yacht Britannia was home to Queen Elizabeth II and the Royal Family for over 40 years, sailing over a million nautical miles around the world. Now a visitor attraction and evening events venue, the Royal Yacht has been voted Tripadvisor's No. 1 Attraction in the UK three times, and has been permanently berthed in Leith, the waterfront area of Edinburgh.