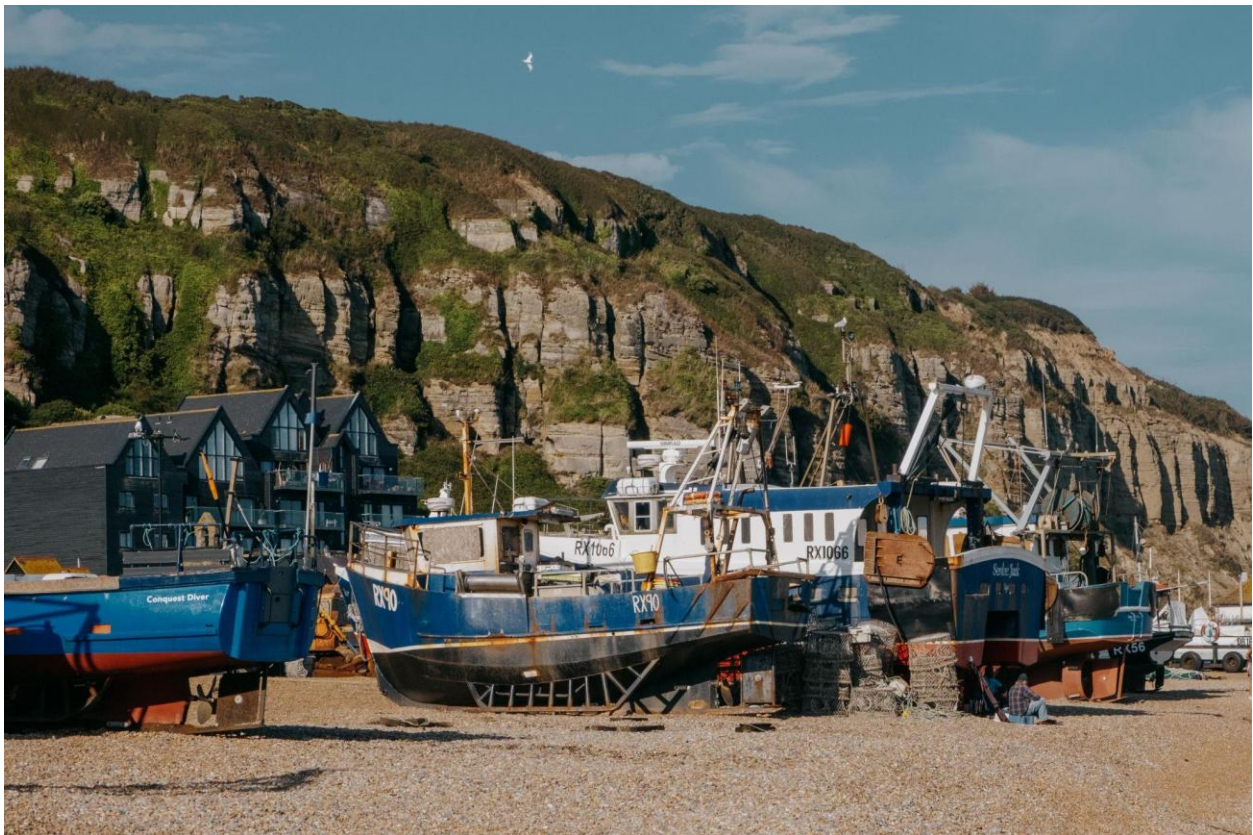


The Sun Feeds the Wind

29 March – 14 September 2025

One of Europe's oldest fishing communities – now at risk – to be centre of major cultural project in spring 2025



"When you look at the sea, you see the water. When I look at the sea, I see the seabed."

Paul Joy, Chairman of Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society

A ground-breaking new partnership and exhibition that will collect and display the living histories of the fishing community of Hastings, Sussex for the first time will open in spring 2025 at Hastings Contemporary.

The project, which will preserve an intangible cultural heritage for future generations, has received a grant of £249,972 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and is part of a season of events that celebrate the unique knowledge, skills and practices of the Hastings fishing fleet.

The exhibition is part of a year-long project between Hastings Contemporary and Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society to create an online archive of oral histories, an illustrated map of the historic Stade area, and a rich programme of events and engagement activities for the community.

At the centre of the project will be the presentation of an oral history archive, collected and curated by Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society and artist Mary Hooper. Hooper will create an immersive sound installation, *The Sun Feeds the Wind*, in Hastings Contemporary's Foreshore Gallery (29 March – 14 September 2025), giving voice to the fishing community which surrounds the gallery.

Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society has been working informally with Hooper since 2011, who has had a long association with the community, to record conversations and document their work, traditions, and familial heritage with a breadth and depth that has real value for a future and national archive.

Paul Joy, Chairman of Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society, said *"Inshore fishing faces immediate and existential threats, but as fishermen we are eternally optimistic for a brighter future. As custodians of the sea, we connect our town to its history, with traditions which pre-date 1066, and to its future - offering answers to the challenges facing our oceans and coastal communities. We are excited to share our stories and preserve them for future generations."*

The exhibition will be designed by Jane Bruce and will include moving image by local artist Nichola Bruce and video designer Sam Sharples. Interpretation from the fishing community will be woven into the exhibitions and programme of events, including text, tours, recordings, talks and workshops, ensuring the fishermen's living culture and experience of life at sea is centred.

The histories will also be transcribed and donated to archival partner, The Keep. Meanwhile, Hastings Contemporary will create a Listening Station in their new mobile studio, funded by the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The studio will also host a series of workshops and activities.

Hastings is home to one of Britain's oldest and most historically significant fishing ports, the origins of which go back to Viking times. For over 1,000 years, boats have launched from the beach known locally as the Stade, itself an Anglo-Saxon term for 'landing place'. Fishing and seafaring are integral parts of Hastings' culture and identity. With significant challenges posed by the climate crisis, ecosystem changes, shifting regulation and an ageing workforce, the fleet now numbers around 25 boats. It is one of the oldest remaining beach-launched fishing fleets in Europe.

Kathleen Soriano, Interim Director at Hastings Contemporary, said, *"We are so excited to announce this important partnership project, made possible by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. It will allow us to find new creative ways to celebrate and share the rich industrial and cultural heritage of our town, showcasing cultural traditions, practices and sounds which are at risk of being lost. Thanks to National*

Lottery players, our audiences and communities will be able to celebrate and learn about the craftsmanship and ingenuity of the Hastings fishing fleet.”

Stuart McLeod, Director of England - London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said, “*We are delighted to support Hastings Contemporary with their project to capture and share the intangible cultural heritage of the Hastings fishing fleet. This grant, made possible by the National Lottery players, ensures that the voices and memories of this community can be heard for generations to come.*”

The project has been conceived by Hastings Contemporary and Hastings Fishermen’s Protection Society to document, celebrate and raise awareness of what is, historically, one of Europe’s largest beach-launched fishing fleets.

The show is part of a season of exhibitions at Hastings Contemporary showcasing life above and below the waves. *The Sun Feeds the Wind* appears alongside *Undersea* which brings together paintings, prints, drawings and objects spanning four centuries and from around the world, curated by the art historian James Russell.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS, AND IMAGES

[HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE](#)

Hastings fishing fleet photographed by Euan Baker

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About Hastings Contemporary

[Hastings Contemporary](#) brings world-class modern and contemporary art to a spectacular coastal setting. With an ambitious programme of exhibitions, events and activities, the gallery aims to enrich lives, support creativity and help Hastings to thrive. Showcasing internationally celebrated artists and emerging practitioners, the gallery has developed a reputation for its focus on painting and drawing, supported by Artist Patron Sir Quentin Blake. The award-winning building is located on the town’s historic fishing beach among the net huts and working structures of the fishing fleet.

Hastings Contemporary is a registered charity. Under 18s can visit for free. Hastings and Rother residents can visit for half price, from just £5. For unlimited free visits, discounts, and more, annual membership starts at £32.

www.hastingscontemporary.org / Instagram [@hastings.contemporary](#)

About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. That’s why as the largest funder for the UK’s heritage we are dedicated to supporting projects that connect people and communities to heritage, as set out in our strategic plan, [Heritage 2033](#). Heritage can be anything from the past that people value and want to pass on to future generations. We believe

in the power of heritage to ignite the imagination, offer joy and inspiration, and to build pride in place and connection to the past.

Over the next 10 years, we aim to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to make a decisive difference for people, places and communities.

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