



New CEO takes the helm of The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust for the first time in 26 years

Rear Admiral Neil Rankin CB CBE, Chairman of The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust (the Trust), has announced the appointment of their new Chief Executive: Franck Bruyère, 45. Mr Bruyère will replace Mr Bob Downie when he retires later this year after 26 years at the helm of the award-winning maritime attraction Britannia and its sister-ship, the luxury floating hotel Fingal.

Mr Bruyère is currently the Trust's Director of Hospitality and brings over 25 years' global hospitality management experience to his new role. His passion for hospitality and a 'people first' approach has taken him around the world, working for some of the most iconic and renowned hotels, including Renaissance Worthington, USA; InterContinental Paris Le Grand; Fairmont Monte Carlo; Fairmont St Andrews; and The Caledonian Edinburgh.

More recently, before joining the Trust, Mr Bruyère also played a key role in the pre-opening and opening team of St James Quarter, Edinburgh's retail and lifestyle destination, where he was Director of Operations and Sustainability Strategy.

Commenting on Mr Bruyère's appointment, Chairman of The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust, Rear Admiral Neil Rankin CB CBE, said:

"After a rigorous and thorough search, the Board of Trustees are confident that in Franck Bruyère we have found a very worthy successor to Bob Downie, who has been at the heart of Britannia's outstanding success as a leading visitor attraction over many years. Franck Bruyère comes with a wealth of experience in the hotel, hospitality and visitor attraction industry and we look forward to the business continuing to move forward under his direction."

Mr Bruyère said:

"It's a huge privilege and an honour to be given the opportunity to lead the outstanding award-winning teams on both Britannia and our sister-ship, the luxury floating hotel Fingal, and to follow in the footsteps of Bob Downie who has done so much to improve the quality of customer experiences in Scotland."

Mr Bruyère added:

"The ongoing regeneration of the Port of Leith with the recently opened tram link to Edinburgh city centre offers a fantastic opportunity for the area to make an even greater contribution to the UK's second most visited city."

Mr Bruyère is originally from France; he has been living in Scotland with his wife and two young sons for over a decade. He enjoys cooking, making a positive impact in the Edinburgh community, and travelling.

At the heart of the Trust's success is an absolute commitment to the quality of the visitor experience.

Supported by outstanding staff, the Trust is committed to providing the highest standards of customer experience to every visitor. Developments have included the audio guide being available in British Sign Language, American Sign Language, Braille script and over 30 languages, making it one of the most translated tours in the world.

This commitment to excellence has led Britannia to the tremendous achievement of being voted Tripadvisor's No.1 UK Attraction twice, plus winning the title of Best UK Attraction, as voted for by readers of Which Magazine, two years in a row.

Re-launched in 2019, Fingal was developed and is managed by the award-winning team at The Royal Yacht Britannia. Fingal was recently crowned 'AA Hotel of the Year Scotland 2023-24' by the internationally recognised Automobile Association (AA). The AA inspectors singled out Fingal for the top accolade and praised the exceptional quality of the ship's stylish interior design, meticulous attention to detail, unique maritime heritage, outstanding customer service and fine dining experience.

Earlier this year, Fingal also sailed to the top of the world's best hotels list in the Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards 2024. The ship was singled out by reviewers on the world's largest travel guidance platform as one of the highest rated hotels on the planet and 'Best of the Best' in the UK. The five-star 'boatique' hotel was named among best Small and Boutique Hotels in the world by Tripadvisor reviewers, taking first and second place in the UK and Europe lists, respectively.

Fingal is located opposite the new Port of Leith tram stop, which offers a direct and quick transport link between Leith and Edinburgh city centre.

For more information on The Royal Yacht Britannia, visit www.royalyachtbritannia.co.uk and follow on social media, including Facebook www.facebook.com/TheRoyalYachtBRITANNIA and Instagram www.instagram.com/RoyalYachtBritannia

For more information on Fingal, visit www.fingal.co.uk and follow on social media, including Facebook www.facebook.com/fingaledinburgh and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/fingaledinburgh>

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Media contact:

Jonathan Perkins

jonjamesperkins@gmail.com

07894 711 515

Notes for Editors:

The Royal Yacht Britannia

- Britannia attracts around 350,000 people from across the world every year and is proud to have one of the world's most translated audio tours with over 30 languages and a British Sign Language tour tablet.

- One of the UK's most accessible tourism destinations, allowing each and every visitor access to explore all five decks of the ship, plus the Royal Tearoom with stunning waterfront views, and Gift Shop within Ocean Terminal.
- 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, calling at more than 600 ports in 135 countries. Situated in Edinburgh's historic Port of Leith, Britannia is now a five-star visitor attraction, as well as an exclusive evening events venue. Visitors enjoy a fascinating insight into Queen Elizabeth II's former floating palace, and the lives of those who lived and worked on board.
- Britannia is owned by The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust (Registered Charity No. SC028070). The Trust's responsibility is to maintain and preserve Britannia in keeping with her former role and to display her to the public as a key part of British maritime history. The Trust is a wholly self-funding, not-for-profit, charitable organisation. Britannia is the official headquarters of the Association of Royal Yachtsmen.

Fingal

- The £5m investment by The Royal Yacht Britannia has seen this classically designed ship transformed to provide the ultimate in luxury.
- Launched in 1963, Fingal, a former Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) tender was the last ship to be built by the Blythswood Ship Building Company in Glasgow. Like all NLB Ships, Fingal was Leith registered but spent most of her service life working out of Oban for 30 years, followed by her last six working years, based in Stromness, Orkney. She was sold to a private owner who lovingly maintained the ship for 14 years before Britannia purchased the vessel in August 2014.