

Top tips

for choosing the
best boat storage



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more
time
out

Introduction

Getting afloat made easy

I've been lifting, launching and storing boats all my working life; installing marinas, swinging moorings, operating cranes, hoists and marine forklift. So, it's safe to say that I know a lot about how to store boats.

Choosing the right place to lift, launch and store your boat is one of the most important decisions you'll need to make. Get it wrong at your peril! Get it right and you can have stress-free boating, allowing you to focus on making great memories to keep forever.

At Trafalgar, we have lifted everything from dinghies, RIBS and motor launches to catamarans, cruising yachts, super yachts and round the world racing yachts. We have even launched a Guinness World Record breaking motorised giant pumpkin that sailed to the Isle of Wight!



Whether you are an experienced boat owner or brand new to boating, I have written this guide to help provide the information you'll need to make the best decision for your boat storage and to share some of my experiences.

It will outline the different types of storage options and variety of different locations that can provide the perfect place to store your boat, and highlight the important considerations too.

Owning and enjoying a boat should be accessible, fun and adventurous. I hope this guide gives you the insight and the information you need to make an informed choice about which boat storage options are right for you.

Jonny Boys

Managing Director,
The Trafalgar Group

Where's best to store your boat?



Where's best to store your boat?

Marinas, boatyards, Drystacks, home storage or moorings?

Every boat owner wants to make the most of their boat. A significant decision to maximising your time afloat is the type of location from where to store and / or launch your boat.

There's a variety of options for different types of boat that meet a range of budgets and convenience factors including:

Home Storage

Subject to your boat's size, one of the simplest and most popular ways of storing a boat is to keep it

- **Home storage**
- **Boatyard or boat park storage**
- **Swinging mooring**
- **Marina berthing**
- **Drystack**

So, it is possible for every boat owner to find one that will work perfectly for them.

Upside

- easy to access
- cost effective way to store your boat
- on your doorstep to carry out maintenance and repairs

Downside

- impractical for some properties
- labour intensive – each time you use your boat you need to hook up and tow it to the water
- launching slipways can have queues at peak times
- possible launching fees, parking and trailer parking fees
- increased road travel / fuel costs from towing each time you use it
- trailer washing and maintenance, especially if used regularly in saltwater

Of course, you also need to load your boat back on the trailer and bring your boat home, which can sometimes involve waiting for slipway access.

There's a balance with home storage between the relatively low costs, and the time and money incurred towing, launching and retrieving your boat, when your

Where's best to store your boat?

time could be better spent just having fun on the water.

Importantly, you will also need to own a vehicle capable of towing a

boat to the correct load weights on a trailer and have the correct driving license to tow.

Boatyard / boat park

If you do not have the space or want a boat in your garden, another option is a boatyard or secure boat park.

Some private members yacht and boat clubs provide similar options. These locations can allow you to store your boat on a trailer (subject to size). Or on a free-standing

boat cradle, which can be more convenient for doing maintenance and anti-fouling, and the boat is lifted in when you need to use it.

Upside

- quicker to launch and recover your boat when you want
- closer access to the water
- limited towing to the water's edge, if using a trailer
- a launch tractor or lift in service may be available



Downside

- often still a large amount of labour and time involved to launch and recover the boat yourself
- trailer will need washing down after each launch
- more expensive than home storage
- normally there's a hire fee for a cradle, or you have to buy one
- possible extra fees for lift in services

If the boat park has good security and you do not use your boat too frequently, this can be a practical alternative to home storage.

If you intend to do work on your boat in the boat park, choosing a facility that offers access to power and water will make your life easier.

Where's best to store your boat?

Swinging mooring

To get as close to the water as possible, then a swinging mooring could be the best option for you.

Acting as a permanent anchor, these moorings allow your boat to be stored on the water.

Most harbours and creeks have a selection of moorings available, which may be deep water or drying,

with the costs adjusted accordingly. You can frequently rent a mooring from the local harbour authority, marina or yacht haven. Some yacht or sailing clubs often have them available for club members too.

Upside

- it's easy to just drop the mooring and go, once you get aboard
- no need to launch or recover the boat yourself
- moorings are often in beautiful locations to sit and enjoy your boat
- usually lower cost than berthing in a marina or yacht haven

Downside

- you may need a tender (dinghy) or to pay a launch service to reach your boat
- additional maintenance / harbour dues for tender
- time & effort to reach the mooring, depending how far it is away from the shore
- can limit the time available out boating if you are on a drying mooring
- moorings, tackle and outboard engines need regular servicing
- your boat is permanently in the water, requires anti-fouling

Depending on your boat, if it has a shallow draft it may be happy to sit on a drying mooring in mud or sand at low tide. Be sure to look for

a sheltered mooring site, so there's less to worry about when you leave the boat.



Marina berthing

A marina berth can a very convenient option and removes the need to take a dinghy in and out to your mooring.

Marinas allow you to berth your boat alongside pontoon docks, so you can walk from your car to your boat, which is an attractive option for many boat owners.

Upside

- easy access to boat
- convenient for boarding guests and loading gear
- normally there's access to power and fresh water
- quick and easy to cast off and go



Downside

- generally, marina berths incur higher costs than moorings
- if it has a lock system or sill to retain water there may be limited times either side of high water when you can get in and out
- in peak periods you may have to wait in a queue to lock in or lock out
- some marinas can be busy or have strong tidal steams, so there's a potential risk of damage from other manoeuvring boats
- your boat is permanently in the water, so requires anti-fouling



Where's best to store your boat?

Drystack

One of the best forms of storage is a Drystack for the right type of boat.

Generally suited to small to medium sized powered boats, these giant stacking boat racks can hold up to 5 or 6 tiers of boats above the ground. Your boat will be launched from a large forklift whenever you request it. Then it is lifted from the water and stored on the rack when you have finished.

It's a bit like valet parking for boats!

Some Drystacks are open air or have a simple roof or single side wall for a bit of protection. Others are completely enclosed with the boats stored inside a warehouse-sized building, offering totally dry protection from the elements for your boat. You do not even need to invest in a boat cover!

Upside

- highly convenient, your boat is launched and recovered for you
- keeping your boat out of the water helps preserve its condition
- no antifoul needed – saves you time and money
- your boat and hull is always clean
- better fuel efficiency and performance from not having barnacles and weed
- lower maintenance costs – no antifoul, damage etc
- indoor Drystacks reduce degradation from UV, pollution, rain etc
- preserves and enhances resale value
- security from storage high up - difficult for anyone to steal the engine!

Downside

- unsuitable for boats with masts or very large powerboats
- a bit inconvenient if you leave something on board your boat!
- open air drystacks can be a bit exposed

Where's best to store your boat?

'Drystacking' can be a similar price to using a marina. However, when you consider the cost savings over a year with less maintenance, it is actually significantly less expensive.

Always check the contract you are offered for any restrictions on numbers of times your boat can be launched, or any 'extra' fees.

At Trafalgar Drystack you receive unlimited boat launching, recovery and wash off within your contract. You can go afloat as many times as you wish. We also include a lift down service onto our maintenance racks anytime your boat needs servicing or valeting, with no extra charges.



Winter Storage

Making sure that your boat is correctly and safely stored over the winter period is essential for any boat owner.

If the boat is normally kept in a marina or on a mooring it is often good for the boat to lift it out for the winter. This can help to:

- avoid damage
- reduce exposure and deterioration from winter storms
- preserve the condition of the hull
- avoid excessive weed growth or the risk of osmosis

At Trafalgar's marina and boatyard, and also at Thornham Marina, we offer specialist winter storage care package, ensuring that our customers boats all survive the harsh winter weather.

Your boat will be expertly lifted, washed off and safely stored. Plus, you have the chance for maintenance to be completed when you like.



What to consider when choosing where to store your boat

What to consider when choosing where to store your boat

Whilst all of the different types of storage have their advantages and disadvantages, it is important to know what you really want to get from your boat storage.

This will influence your choice of the right storage option and the best location for you.

There's a number of factors to consider in addition to just the storage costs.

These include:

- **Access**
- **Maintenance**
- **Security and safety**
- **Flexibility**
- **Convenience**
- **Fun!**

Access

Quick and convenient access to your boat is a consideration that is often overlooked.

Good, easy road access to where you will store or launch your vessel is essential, especially if you are towing to and from the location.

To make the most of your time with your boat, you will want to avoid longer journeys, sitting in traffic or queuing on single lane roads.

It can be easy to believe you are saving money on storage costs, when in fact you are spending extra time, fuel and money travelling further to reach your boat. Make sure that your chosen facility has:

- convenient and accessible parking to reduce hassle on arrival
- preferably free parking with 24 hour security

- decent hard standing – muddy bags and gravelly shoes on your decks is a bad way to start the day!
- the parking is close to your boat for easy loading of crew and gear
- the tender park is near a slipway to save time getting out to your mooring

With everyone having busy lives, finding time to get out on the water is increasingly important to make the most of owning your own boat. Avoid spending extra hours travelling just getting to the boat and choose a location where access to the water is easy and stress free, so that you can spend more quality time out on the water.

What to consider when choosing

Maintenance

Keeping your boat in top condition is a priority for most boat owners.

Yet choosing a boat storage facility with an on-site maintenance team, or with maintenance facilities nearby, is something some owners omit to consider.

To make sure that you preserve the safety and value of your boat with regular maintenance, it can help if there are skilled people nearby and ready to help should you need them. Alternatively, check that you can bring your preferred specialist contractor on site to do the work, without any issues.

Inevitably, things can and do go wrong with boats, no matter how many preventative measures you take. Whilst you can often do some jobs and repairs yourself, there will always be the need for maintenance experts. Just as a car

needs a trained specialist, so too do boats. Services you may wish to have nearby include:

- hull repairs and boat maintenance
- engine servicing & parts
- sail loft / cover repairs
- rigging specialists
- life raft servicing
- life jacket service / collection points
- chandlery

At Trafalgar Drystack & Marina and also Thornham Marina we have a selection of onsite tenants, ready to help you. Plus, you are welcome to bring your own suppliers to the site, whereas many marinas do not permit this. Your suppliers just need to check in at reception and show their insurance credentials.



Security and safety

Another thing to consider is the security of a boat storage site.

Having made the decision to spend your hard-earned money on a boat, you want to be certain that it will be well looked after at whichever facility you choose.

Always check about the security that is on offer, which may include:

- lockable compounds
- security barriers and number plate recognition

- 24 hour on-site security
- CCTV cameras
- lockable storage units
- restricted pontoon access / berth-holder codes

You want to be sure that no matter where you store your boat, it is a safe place for you and your boat to be.

Flexibility

Different boat storage facilities have their own ways of operating and their own restrictions. You may prefer a high degree of flexibility when you can access or work on your boat.

Find out in advance about any specific site rules that may influence the use of your boat. For example, some winter storage facilities have strict policies about working on boats, staying on boats or the dates that boats can be launched and recovered. Your boat may be inaccessible for a period of time if it is stored behind a number of other boats.

You need to see if there are:

- specific lift out or launch days or times that the site uses
- whether the boatyard, marina or Drystack are flexible should you change your mind about when you choose to go boating
- whether there is a tidal sill or marina lock gate with specific time periods you can come or go

It's important to make sure that your choice of boat storage facility is able to fit around your schedule – if they cannot, it may not be the place for you.

If you are unsure about the best type of storage for you, a good option is to choose a site that has different boat storage choices, where you can switch from one to another, without being tied into an inflexible or long-term contract.

For example, some boat owners initially come to Trafalgar Wharf and use our boat trailer park. Subsequently, they have decided to swap to using the Drystack as they prefer the convenience and service it offers.

What to consider when choosing



Convenience

For many people, boats are a release from the stresses of everyday life, so time spent on your boat is very important.

Some busy motorboat owners may want to make sure they can get on board as quickly as possible and set off. For others, the enjoyment is as much about preparing your boat and putting it to bed, as the voyage itself.

Our Trafalgar Drystack service offers powerboaters the opportunity to have their boats launched, fuelled and waiting for them on the pontoon ready for the time they specify. Meaning they can just hop aboard and maximise their time afloat.

On the other hand, at Thornham Marina, some of our boat owners want to take things more slowly and enjoy the tidal nature of this beautiful marina set on Chichester Harbour, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Whatever you are looking for, the important thing to remember is to have fun!



Fun!

Anyone who has ever been on or around a boat will know that there is a sense of freedom and excitement that simply cannot be matched.

If you choose a truly great storage facility, the atmosphere will reflect this, allowing you to enjoy the fun of boating. Often people don't even think about this until it's too late, however it's such an important consideration.

It can make a huge difference both ashore and afloat, if the people at your boat storage facility are as excited about boats as you are. Whether you choose a marina, boatyard or Drystack, the site team should always be friendly, helpful and enthusiastic.

At Trafalgar and Thornham Marina we strongly believe in helping people to capture the sense of fun in boating. Which is why we have built communities of marine enthusiasts who all come to us to indulge in their passion for the sea.

Make sure your experience as a boat owner is a great one, and be sure to choose somewhere fun, family-friendly and exciting to store your pride and joy.

Top tips

Our Top Tips

- Visit before you decide
- Meet the team
- Meet the Neighbours

#1 Visit before you decide

Just as you would normally look around a house before you buy it, make sure you visit and look around a few times before committing yourself.

No doubt you will spend considerable time here, so it needs to feel right.

Are you someone who likes to be in the city, close to good bars and restaurants? If so, perhaps somewhere like Gunwharf Quays would suit you. If your preference is peace and quiet, beautiful views and wildlife, a venue like Thornham Marina in the Prinsted Creek could be ideal for you.

Check that the facilities that you require are available onsite:

- is there food and drink close by?
- is there a washing machine available?
- are there showers and toilets?
- what marine services are on site?
- how close are you to the nearest shops or town?
- are there car recharging points available?

No matter what it is you are looking for, be sure to make a list of the different aspects that are important to you in a boat storage location. It will help you to focus in on the best options for you.



Top tips!

#2 Meet the team

Make sure you meet the team of people who will be looking after you and your boat.

You'll be spending quite a lot of time liaising with them, so it's worth feeling sure that they are friendly, helpful and fun. Not grumpy,

obstructive or boring! And it's always nice if they recognise your boat name, if not your own name too!

#3 Meet the neighbours

Before you make your final decision, have a chat with the other boat owners onsite, and find out first-hand what they think. There's nothing better than a personal recommendation.

They've already made the decision to keep their boat at that location, so why not find out from them why they chose to keep their boat here, and their personal experiences.

It may not be for the same reasons as you, however it can help you narrow down your choices.

Summary

If you want to make the most of your boat owning experience, and the time and money you have invested:

- take the time to do your research on selecting where to store your boat
- choose the best place and facilities to suit how you want to use your time
- focus on the location and ease of access
- check out the atmosphere of the site and the people
- assess the ease with which you can reach your boat at peak times

Your will want to be certain that you have found the best storage facility that will work for you.

At Trafalgar Drystack & Marina, and Thornham Marina we offer all of our boat owners the very best in boat storage facilities and choices. With every type of boat storage and mooring available.

We have spent many years developing our facilities and our boat owners come back to us year after year because they enjoy being based at our sites. With a large community of enthusiastic people, a wide range of storage options and an efficient and focused service, we are determined to show you the joy that can be had with hassle-free boating.

Top tips



Please call our friendly team today
to discuss your boat storage

023 9238 7833

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