

## Cowes Week

The Isle of Wight can be found roughly off the centre of the South coast of England. The town of Cowes is on the northern point of the Island. Every year Cowes is host to the famous Cowes Week Regatta. This takes place during the first week of August and is the world's oldest and largest sailing regatta. The event started in 1826 which means that it has been going on for 182 years!



Cowes Week is an important part in the British sporting calendar and is one of the U.K.'s most successful sporting events. There are up to 40 daily races. Over 1,000 yachts compete with 8,500 competitors. In excess of 100,000 spectators come to watch the sailing which takes place in The Solent. This is the stretch of water to the north of the Island which separates it from the mainland. The Solent has strong and complex tides. It also has a number of sandbanks. This makes sailing a challenge, as well as fun, for even the most experienced sailors. The range of yachts is huge, from the smallest at 6.55 metres to the super maxis at 30 metres plus.



Many famous sailors can be seen at Cowes. These include the round-the-world yachtswoman Dame Ellen MacArthur and Olympic double gold medallist Shirley Robertson. They both live in Cowes. Dee Caffari, the first woman to sail solo around the world against the prevailing winds, is seen frequently sailing at Cowes. In the past, Lewis Hamilton and Colin Jackson have sailed on The Solent.

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Before she was decommissioned, The Royal Yacht Britannia was always present during Cowes Week. She was often attended by The Queen and her husband, Prince Philip. Prince Charles, Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward were often seen at Cowes with their parents, when they were children.

Many older people may remember the former Conservative Prime Minister, Sir Ted Heath. His pride and joy was the yacht Morning Cloud. Before his death (on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2005) he was a regular participant in Cowes Week. Morning Cloud has now been restored to her former glory and has been renamed Opposition; this is intended to be a gentle jibe against Sir Ted.



Irrespective of the famous professional sailors, many amateur sailors take part in the daily races. The dynamic atmosphere and live entertainment is enjoyed by all, sailors and spectators alike. Cowes Week was established around sailing, but now, many people come just to soak up the vibes and enjoy the social activities. This sleepy town is turned into a festival of colour. There are street entertainers, live bands and market stalls. The parties and balls are too numerous to mention. This year an amazing display from the Red Arrows took place on the final day. This was followed by the traditional night-time firework show over the water which finished off the week's sailing with a bang!



For more information about Cowes Week go to <http://www.skandiacowesweek.co.uk/>

# Cowes Week - Questions

- 1) The purpose of this text is to
  - a) Persuade you to buy a yacht.
  - b) Inform you about Cowes Week.
  - c) Give instructions on how to sail.

2) Using the map on p1, name three places, other than Cowes, on the Isle of Wight.

i..... ii..... iii.....

3) When does Cowes Week take place?

.....

4) In what year did Cowes Week begin?

.....

5) Look up the word successful in the dictionary. Write here what it means.

.....

6) What do you think unsuccessful means? Write here what you think.

.....

7) The following words from the text are written here in capitals (upper case). Write them correctly as they appear in the text.

ISLE OF WIGHT .....

COWES WEEK .....

THE SOLENT .....

PRINCE CHARLES .....

8) *'The Solent has strong and complex tides with a number of sandbanks.'* This is a sentence from the text. Which of the following sentences is a good substitute?

- a) There are complicated sandbanks on The Solent with lots of tides.
- b) There are powerful and difficult tides as well as many sandbanks on The Solent.
- c) The Solent has no tides and no sandbanks.

9) Look up the word regatta in the dictionary. What does it mean?

.....

10) There are 8,500 competitors. Write this amount in words.

.....

# Cowes Week - Questions

11) Match the following words, one from each side, to make new compound words from the text. Write the new word.

- |        |       |       |
|--------|-------|-------|
| main   | banks | ..... |
| fire   | woman | ..... |
| sand   | land  | ..... |
| yachts | round | ..... |
| a      | land  | ..... |
| is     | works | ..... |

12) Where does the sailing take place?  
.....

13) Look up the word spectator in the dictionary. What does it mean?  
.....

14) One hundred thousand spectators watch the sailing. Write this amount in figures.  
.....

15) Add the suffix 'ing' to the following words. Write the new word.

- |      |       |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| sail | ..... | sport | ..... |
| buy  | ..... | sleep | ..... |

16) What are the lengths of the smallest and largest yachts in the regatta?  
Smallest..... Largest.....

17) Name the three famous **female** sailors who can be seen sailing at Cowes.  
.....

18) What was the name of the Royal Yacht?  
.....

19) Write the first names of the royal children in alphabetical order.  
.....

20) What was the old name of Sir Ted Heath's yacht? What is her new name?  
Old Name..... New Name.....