



## Cowes: Craft and Columbine!

### Introducing Cowes

Cowes did in fact get its name from, well, cows! Two sandbanks once stood on either bank of the River Medina and, apparently, they resembled Cows. There we are – welcome to Cowes!

East Cowes and Cowes are separated by the mouth of the River Medina which flows from Newport, the main town on the Isle of Wight.

Cowes (on the west side) is linked to the smaller town of East Cowes on the opposite side of the river by the 'floating bridge' chain ferry.



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Funnel Red-Jet service (in Cowes) bringing passengers to the island from Southampton.

Since the middle of the 19th century, when the Royal Yacht Squadron was founded here, Cowes has been seen as a bit of a sailing 'Mecca'.

The world's oldest regular regatta, Cowes Week, takes place here every August. Up to 40 races each day during the week attract over 8,500 competitors and 100,000 spectators; it is the largest event of its kind in the world.

There are numerous other sailing events during the year, including the round-island-race, for which Cowes is the base.



### Ship Ahoy, Captain!

Cowes harbour is, quite literally, swimming with vessels of all shapes, sizes and purposes.

Find a good 'ship spotting spot' by the waterside and see how many of the following you can spy...



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What's the funniest named boat you can find?!



### Breaking the Waters!

What is that shingle bank in the entrance to the harbour?

Cowes harbour is not a natural harbour, and is exposed to northerly winds and storms here. The winter storms of 2014, that battered much of the country, caused extensive coastal flooding. On February 14th 2014, a

storm hit the south coast of the UK and 250m of the high street in Cowes was flooded by a tidal surge.

A 350 x 50m offshore rock and rubble breakwater (pictured), costing £7.5m, has been constructed at the entrance to Cowes harbour. This will protect homes and businesses from exposure to northerly winds/storms, and provide a safer environment for harbour users.



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'I am now retired and I actually live right here, in Cowes. I am a world-famous solo long-distance yachts-woman. My charity is the official round-island-race charity, which helps young people recovering from cancer to regain their confidence and self-belief.'

'Just call me 'Sir'... I've come a long way from my first competition when I was 10 - I am now the most successful sailor in Olympic history, having won medals at the last five consecutive Olympics, including Gold at the last four. I love the round-island race because it attracts sailors of all abilities, and boats of all different types.'

## Breaking the Waters!

East Cowes is the smaller neighbour of West Cowes on the opposite bank of the River Medina, and reached by the floating bridge.

Viewed from the western side, you may see this building...



It is the **Columbine Shed**, built in 1935 by Saunders Roe, a giant of British industry.

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- **CORKTSE** - the UK's first indigenous project of its kind saw the 'Black Knight' made here
- **FAVHERCOR** – the first one in the world was developed and tested here
- **OABST** of many different types have been built here.

The flag painted on its huge doors is the largest permanent image of the Union Jack in the world. It was first painted on in 1977 to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee, and re-painted to commemorate her Diamond Jubilee in 2012. It took 700 litres of paint to do it!

The shed now awaits redevelopment as part of a regeneration project for East Cowes which will see a mix of marine, commercial and leisure uses take the place of the former Saunderson's base.

### Turbine transfers

The vessel in front of the Columbine Shed in the picture above (taken in May 2015) is a turbine transfer vessel, owned and operated by South Boats IOW, based in East Cowes. These boats transfer crews to offshore wind farms.

Navitus Bay is a proposed wind park development, which would be located about 11km from the Needles. The developers claim that the project could generate millions of pounds for the UK economy, create 140 permanent jobs, and that the 194 turbines would provide sustainable energy for up to 700,000 average UK homes. However, opponents fear it could drive away tourists and have an impact on the coastline, environment and sailing. It has been refused planning consent once already.



*It's a contentious issue – what do you think?*