

The Royal Yacht Squadron is the most prestigious yacht club in the United Kingdom, and arguably the world.

The RYS has been based, since 1855, in their famous sea front castle which was built in 1539 by King Henry VIII as a deterrent to the French. This historic and beautiful building has unrivalled views over the Solent, now the established world centre of yacht racing.

The Yacht Club, as it was first known, was founded 1 June 1815 at the Thatched House Tavern in London. The club was for 'gentlemen interested in salt-water yachting'.

The club became The Royal Yacht Club in 1820 after the accession of George IV, who had joined in 1817, and was created The Royal Yacht Squadron by William IV in 1833.

The unbroken royal association with the Squadron, begun by George IV, is continued today by HM The Queen as patron.

The Squadron has always had a close association with the Royal Navy and its yachts, uniquely, fly the White Ensign.

In yachting history, 1851 is remembered as the year that the yacht 'America' won the Royal Yacht Squadron's 'One Hundred Sovereign Cup' in a race Round the Isle of Wight. That cup, and the contest for which it remains the prize, has become world famous as 'The America's Cup'.

This elusive sporting trophy has never been won back, for Britain, since that date, despite numerous attempts – the latest being known as 'Team Origin'.

The name 'Cowes Week' began to be used to describe the 'Royal Yacht Squadron Regatta' late in the 19th Century. However, the event really became popular when the Royal Yacht Club, as it then was, introduced organised yacht racing for cups to the Cowes Regatta, in 1826.

The Cowes Regatta took place each year, long before the The Yacht Club was founded in 1815, being based around the local annual Cowes Pilot Cutters Parade, to celebrate receiving their licences.