



Prince Philip learned to sail at Gordonstoun and was a keen sailor for much of his life. After the Second World War he helped inspire the revival of the sport by racing regularly in small boats in the Solent with his friend Uffa Fox. In 1962 he bought the 63-foot yawl *Bloodhound* for cruising with the family in the Western Isles each summer, and made sure that she was used for youth sail training at other times. After selling *Bloodhound* he raced at Cowes Week on Owen Aisher's yacht *Yeoman*. He clearly relished the informality and companionship of life on the water. The royal yacht *Britannia* was his headquarters during Cowes Week for more than 40 years, with guests and friends frequently invited to join him at this unique sporting festival. He hosted an annual cocktail party on board for Isle of Wight dignitaries and public servants, part of his lifelong commitment to encouraging all those who served the community in any role.

The formation in the early 1960s of Cowes Combined Clubs, which created a single organising authority for the racing in Cowes Week, required the efforts of many, but Prince Philip deserves credit for putting forward the idea. As he recalls it, 'The Royal Yacht Squadron originally ran four days in Cowes Week. Other Clubs did the other three. The result was that you had a stack of sailing instructions, and every day you had a different one, and you thought, "Have I got the right one?" And it seemed to me the right thing to do was put them all in one package. I didn't hear anyone else complaining. I complained because I didn't like it, and it seemed very easy to sort out.' Thus, with his encouragement, the Cowes Combined Clubs came into existence.

He has served as Patron or Admiral of several other sailing clubs and charities, including the Royal Engineer Yacht Club, the Royal Naval Sailing Association, and the United Hospitals Sailing Club.

One of the most favoured designs for many years among racing sailors on the Solent was the International Dragon. Originally created in Norway in 1929 by Johan Anker, the Dragon became popular in Scandinavia in the 1930s, and was first raced in Britain on the Clyde in 1935. After the Second World War their numbers increased dramatically, both as an Olympic class (1948–72) and as a racing boat in local regattas. Prince Philip and Princess Elizabeth received a Dragon, *Bluebottle*, as a wedding present from the Island Sailing Club in Cowes in 1948. In 1949 Prince Philip presented the Edinburgh Cup for a race in British waters between Dragons of any nation, followed by Edinburgh Cups for Canada in 1953 and Australia in 1954.

Commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron, Jamie Sheldon, added the following: *“We owe a substantial debt to our Admiral, who was an active and talented sailor and contributed enormously to the development of yachting on the Isle of Wight. He was the catalyst behind the formation of Cowes Combined Clubs, the organization which lies behind Cowes Week. He was elected a Member in 1947 and became Admiral on the accession of Queen Elizabeth II. He served as Commodore 1961 - 68. He was a dynamic, reforming Commodore who modernised the governance of the Club and admitted ladies as Associate Members (they were admitted as Full Members in 2015). He continued to take a keen interest in the Club’s affairs well into his nineties. For the Club’s Bicentenary in 2015, he undertook a Fleet Review of Squadron yachts, dressed overall, off East and West Cowes — a spectacular occasion. He will be sorely missed.”*

