



## SOME INTERESTING EXTRACTS FROM PUBLICATIONS REFERRING TO METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS IN AND AROUND EASTBOURNE

- 1117 Henry I on his way to Normandy was detained in Eastbourne by a gale.
- 1729 In a great hurricane or tornado which swept across East Sussex on the 20th May 1729, 1,300 trees were destroyed on one estate near Battle.
- 1766 On the 18th July, during a heavy thunderstorm, the water poured from the Downs in such a manner that the streets of Eastbourne were soon several feet deep, and it was reported that:  
*"The Parish Church received great damage; and it is feared the inhabitants will not be able to hear Divine Service for many months, especially a sermon, as the pulpit has greatly suffered"*.
- 1780 A terrific thunderstorm occurred on the 17th September which killed two servants in the "Field House" at Eastbourne. The house belonged to a family named Drury.
- 1825 Seaford was devastated by a great storm which at Blatchington, half a mile inland, caused a wave to flow into a pond and destroy its fish.
- 1836 On the 29th November, a heavy gale, but not equal to the storm of Queen Anne's Reign (26th November 1703), damaged most of the houses in Eastbourne – bringing down the large chimney at Susans Farm and rolling up whole sheets of lead from the roof of the "Elms".
- 1836 Following the severe gale of November, the heaviest snowstorm occurred on Christmas Day, blocking all roads and the London coach ceased running for a week and then could only proceed through an alley with a wall of snow each side – there was no postal service from Sunday to Thursday.
- 1840 The commissioners who surveyed the coast with a view to the construction of harbours of refuge stated that the sands of Eastbourne were dry, pleasant and, the water being clear, the bathing is good.
- 1857 The South coast was visited by a heavy gale from the South and it was near on spring tide, the water overflowed the parades at Eastbourne and inundated the houses to an extent such as has not been the case since the year 1822. The troops located in the Redoubt had to be removed owing to the breaking in of the water.
- 1867 A snowstorm occurred as late in the year as Derby Day.



- 1877 On January 1st the most destructive storm on record occurred which washed away the shoreward end of the Pier, flooded many houses in Seaside and caused a great devastation of property.
- 1881 On the 18th - 19th January, so much snow fell on Eastbourne that there were no trains on the blocked lines for 30 hours. A cutting adjacent to the chalk pit, Willingdon Road, was filled with drifts above the level of the footpath – the snow being 10-12 feet deep.
- 1883 Exceptionally hard frost froze the Cuckmere so people could walk on it.
- 1889 The SS International, under tow from London to Cherbourg, was stranded in a gale near Birling Gap on the 30th September.
- 1893 On one day (16th July) several waterspouts were observed near Beachy Head. In December, Eastbourne was made a Storm Warning Station.
- 1894 Careful comparative values with other leading health resorts of the United Kingdom were, from time to time made and published in the local press, whenever remarkable extremes of temperature or violent or destructive gales visited the United Kingdom. At such times the immunity of Eastbourne from all extremes manifest annually more and more, the climatic advantages afforded as a place of permanent residence. The continued growth of the Town in all directions is witness of the high estimation the climatic advantages enjoyed is held by the public.  
22nd April – On the evening of Sunday 22nd April, whilst it was still broad daylight, a magnificent meteor burst like a rocket apparently over the Western portion of the Town.  
Extract from an early Meteorological Report - *REMARKS ON THE TEMPERATURE OF THE AIR*  
*December was very warm, 3.6°C above its average; swallows and martins were observed flying near the Wish Tower as late as the 18th.*
- 1895 Extract from an early Meteorological Report - *REMARKS ON SEA TEMPERATURE*  
*There are many residents who bathe from the Pier Head the whole year round, but during February their number was reduced to one. I have the permission of the veteran bather, the elder Mr Gowland, to state the severity of February was not sufficient to stop him from his usual morning plunge from the Pier Head, although for several mornings the temperature of the water was below freezing, and near the shore (after a severe night) broken ice was observed upon the water. From all I can gather, the appearance of the sea was the same during the Crimean War. There is ground for believing it has not been so cold from then till February 1895.*
- 1896 Bright sunshine fell somewhat below the average of the previous ten years, but yet some months were very bright. Especially was this observable during that

month of gloom and thick dense fog in London, namely November. This month at Eastbourne was unusually bright, and during the early portion when the trees adorning the Town were arrayed in their autumnal beauty of colour, rendered the month a very pleasant one, for "Such hues hath nature thrown, The trees they wear on sunless days A sunshine of their own".

Eastbourne has long been renowned for its magnificent sunsets, but the display on the evening of the 27th of this month surpassed in the extreme beauty and blending of colour, any previous sunset observed over many years.

The most memorable gale of the year occurred on the evening of Friday the 4th December. It was this gale that brought down the Chain Pier at Brighton. The gale rose to its highest at Eastbourne just before 11.00 pm and for a short time the sea poured over the sea wall in immense volumes. Truly it was a night when it could be said: "The storm king's out in his strength tonight And the wind is under his wings, Downward to Earth he bends his flight, And wild is the song he sings".



1896 Extract from an early Meteorological Report - REMARKS ON THE DURATION OF BRIGHT SUNSHINE

*It is somewhat singular that, during the month of June in the year of Her Majesty's first Jubilee, a record of the brightest three consecutive days at Eastbourne was obtained, this record remaining unbroken till the month of June in the year of the more magnificent Diamond Jubilee, when the three days were beaten thus:-*

**1887 1897**

June 13th - 15.5 hours June 11th - 15.3 hours

14th - 15.4 hours 12th - 15.3 hours

15th - 14.5 hours 13th - 15.3 hours

Total - 45.4 hours Total 45.9 hours



1901 Remarks on the temperature of the sea.

*If future observations confirm this rise in sea temperature upon the South Coast, then will the winters during this present century grow gradually warmer, as most certainly, according to historic works, the winters in the early portion of the century but recently closed were much colder, and in one, it reports the sands upon the shore at Brighton at low tide in December 1788, were covered with a coat of ice.*

1903 The total velocity of wind, as measured by the anemometer upon the Wish Tower was 127,014 miles against 108,988 miles last year, or 18,026 more than last year, or very nearly 11 miles per hour; thus the air we breathe is renewed about every half hour, night and day, the whole year round. Local historians vie with each other in their high appreciation of the village as a health resort, and, when describing the natural beauties of the place, express "their satisfaction" at the various

beautiful prospects and diverse social scenes of this healthy and romantic spot "which Nature seems in a very peculiar degree to have adapted as well for health as for pleasure".

1909 Extract from: The Eastbourne Pictorial being a Guide to, and a souvenir of the Empress of Watering Places.

*"our townsmen would then dwell on the healthfulness of Eastbourne's ozone laden air (which an English Royal Prince once felicitously likened to "champagne minus the headache")."*

1912 The P & O liner "Oceana" sank off Beachy Head after colliding with the barque "Pisague" in poor visibility.

1977 Extract from the Meteorological Magazine. *Bright Sunshine during the Heatwave of 1976 (Article by M S Shaw)*

*"Sunshine amounts increased towards the south-east where most of Kent and East Sussex and also parts of Norfolk and Suffolk exceeded 85 per cent of the possible maximum sunshine, while the Midlands and remaining parts of East Anglia and south-east England reached between 80 and 85 per cent.*

*The highest sunshine totals for the sixteen day period from 23rd June to 8th July inclusive, and the percentage of possible sunshine, were as follows:-*

227.8 hours at Schole (Norfolk) ... ..	87.5%
227.6 hours at Wattisham (Suffolk) ... ..	87.8%
227.4 hours at Eastbourne (East Sussex) .	88.9%
227.1 hours at Bexhill (East Sussex) ... ..	88.8%
226.1 hours at Folkestone (Kent) ... ..	88.2%
225.8 hours at Hastings (East Sussex) ... ..	88.1%
225.3 hours at Wye (Kent) ... ..	87.6%
224.3 hours at Lowestoft (Suffolk) ... ..	86.4%

*It would appear that Eastbourne achieved a higher percentage of possible sunshine over the sixteen day period than any other meteorological station in the country."*

Thanks are expressed to the Director General, Meteorological Officer, for permission to reproduce this extract.

1981 On the 2nd February, the British cargo vessel "Maral R", en route to France, collided with the 5,000 ton Philippine boat the "Malayan Reefer" 17 miles off Eastbourne in thick fog. No-one was hurt.

1987 Overnight on the 15th – 16th October, a hurricane raged through southern England causing untold damage to the town and surrounding countryside.

Weather records have been kept continuously in Eastbourne since 1867. You can find out about Eastbourne's Weather Station and the history of meteorology from our website at:

**[www.eastbourne.gov.uk/weather](http://www.eastbourne.gov.uk/weather)**