

= Eastbourne =

Eastbourne (pronunciation) is a large town , seaside resort , and borough in the non @-@ metropolitan county of East Sussex on the south coast of England , 19 miles (31 km) east of Brighton . Eastbourne is immediately to the east of Beachy Head , the highest chalk sea cliff in Great Britain . With a seafront consisting largely of Victorian hotels , a pier , and a Napoleonic era fort and military museum , Eastbourne was developed by the Duke of Devonshire from 1859 from four separate hamlets . It has a growing population , a broad economic base , and is home to companies in a wide range of industries .

Though Eastbourne is a relatively new town , there is evidence of human occupation in the area from the Stone Age . The town grew as a fashionable tourist resort largely thanks to prominent landowner , William Cavendish , later to become the Duke of Devonshire . Cavendish appointed architect Henry Currey to design a street plan for the town , but not before sending him to Europe to draw inspiration . The resulting mix of architecture is typically Victorian and remains a key feature of Eastbourne .

As a seaside resort , Eastbourne derives a large and increasing income from tourism , with revenue from traditional seaside attractions augmented by conferences , public events and cultural sightseeing . The other main industries in Eastbourne include trade and retail , healthcare , education , construction , manufacturing , professional scientific and the technical sector .

Eastbourne 's population is growing ; between 2001 and 2011 it increased from 89 @,@ 800 to 99 @,@ 412 . The 2011 census shows that the average age of residents has decreased as the town has attracted students , families and those commuting to London and Brighton .

= = History = =

Flint minerys and Stone Age artefacts have been found in the surrounding countryside , and there are Roman remains buried beneath the town , such as a Roman bath and section of pavement between the present pier and the redoubt fortress , and a Roman villa near the entrance to the pier and the present Queens Hotel . An Anglo @-@ Saxon charter , circa 963 AD , describes a landing stage and stream at Bourne .

In 2014 local metal @-@ detectorist Darrin Simpson found a coin minted during the reign of Æthelberht II of East Anglia (died 794) , in a field near the town . It is believed that the coin may have led to Æthelberht 's beheading by Offa of Mercia , as it had been struck as a sign of independence . Describing the coin , Christopher Webb , head of coins at auctioneers Dix Noonan Webb , said , " This new discovery is an important and unexpected addition to the numismatic history of 8th Century England . " It sold at auction on 11 June for £ 78 @,@ 000 (estimate £ 15 @,@ 000 to £ 20 @,@ 000 .

Following the Norman Conquest , the Hundred of what is now Eastbourne , was held by Robert , Count of Mortain , William the Conqueror 's half brother . The Domesday Book lists 28 ploughlands , a church , a watermill , fisheries and salt pans .

A charter for a weekly market was granted to Bartholomew de Badlesmere in 1315 ? 16 ; this increased his status as Lord of the Manor and improved local industry . During the Middle Ages the town was visited by King Henry I and in 1324 by Edward II . Evidence of Eastbourne 's medieval past can seen in the twelfth century Church of St Mary , and the manor house called Bourne Place . In the mid @-@ sixteenth century the house was home to the Burton family , who acquired much of the land on which the present town stands . This manor house is owned by the Duke of Devonshire and was extensively remodelled in the early Georgian era when it was renamed Compton Place . It is one of the two Grade I listed buildings in the town .

Eastbourne 's earliest claim as a seaside resort came about following a summer holiday visit by four of King George III 's children in 1780 (Princes Edward and Octavius , and Princesses Elizabeth and Sophia) . In 1793 , following a survey of coastal defences in the southeast , approval was given for the positioning of infantry and artillery to defend the bay between Beachy Head and Hastings from attack by the French . Fourteen Martello Towers were constructed along the western shore of

Pevensey Bay , continuing as far as Tower 73 , the Wish Tower at Eastbourne . Several of these towers survive : the Wish Tower is an important feature of the town 's seafront and was the subject of a painting by James Sant RA , and part of Tower 68 forms the basement of a house on St. Antony 's Hill . Between 1805 and 1807 , the construction took place of a fortress known as the Eastbourne Redoubt , which was built as a barracks and storage depot , and armed with 10 cannons .

Eastbourne remained an area of small rural settlements until the 19th century . Four villages or hamlets occupied the site of the modern town : Bourne (or , to distinguish it from others of the same name , East Bourne) , is now known as Old Town , and this surrounded the bourne (stream) which rises in the present Motcombe Park ; Meads , where the Downs meet the coast ; South Bourne (near the town hall) ; and the fishing settlement known simply as Sea Houses , which was situated to the east of the present pier . By the mid @-@ 19th century most of the area had fallen into the hands of two landowners : John Davies Gilbert (the Davies @-@ Gilbert family still own much of the land in Eastbourne and East Dean) and William Cavendish , Earl of Burlington . The Gilbert family 's holdings date to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when barrister Nicholas Gilbert married an Eversfield and Gildredge heiress . (The Gildredges owned much of Eastbourne by 1554 . The Gilberts eventually made the Gildredge Manor House their own . Today the Gildredge name lives on in the eponymous park .) In 1752 , a dissertation by Doctor Richard Russell extolled the medicinal benefits of the seaside . His views were of considerable benefit to the south coast and , in due course , Eastbourne became known as " the Empress of Watering Places " .

An early plan , for a town named Burlington , was abandoned , but on 14 May 1849 the London , Brighton and South Coast Railway arrived to scenes of great jubilation . With the arrival of the railway , the town 's growth accelerated . Cavendish , now the 7th Duke of Devonshire , hired Henry Currey in 1859 to lay out a plan for what was essentially an entire new town ? a resort built " for gentlemen by gentlemen " . The town grew rapidly from a population of less than 4 @,@ 000 in 1851 to nearly 35 @,@ 000 by 1891 . In 1883 , it was incorporated as a municipal borough ; a purpose @-@ built town hall was opened in 1886 . This period of growth and elegant development continued for several decades . A royal visit by George V and Queen Mary in March 1935 is commemorated by a plaque on chalet number 2 at Holywell .

The Second World War saw a change in fortunes . Initially , children were evacuated to Eastbourne on the assumption that they would be safe from German bombs , but soon they had to be evacuated again because after the fall of France in June 1940 it was anticipated that the town would lie in an invasion zone . Part of Operation Sea Lion , the German invasion plan , envisaged landings at Eastbourne . Many people sought safety away from the coast and shut up their houses . Restrictions on visitors forced the closure of most hotels , and private boarding schools moved away . Many of these empty buildings were later taken over by the services . The Royal Navy set up an underwater weapons school , and the Royal Air Force operated radar stations at Beachy Head and on the marshes near Pevensey . Thousands of Canadian soldiers were billeted in and around Eastbourne from July 1941 to the run @-@ up to D @-@ Day . The town suffered badly during the war , with many Victorian and Edwardian buildings damaged or destroyed by air raids . Indeed , by the end of the conflict it was designated by the Home Office to have been ? the most raided town in the South East region ? . The situation was especially bad between May 1942 and June 1943 with hit ? and ? run raids from fighter ? bombers based in northern France .

In the summer of 1956 the town came to national and worldwide attention , when Dr John Bodkin Adams , a general practitioner serving the town 's wealthier patients , was arrested for the murder of an elderly widow . Rumours had been circulating since 1935 regarding the frequency of his being named in patients ' wills (132 times between 1946 and 1956) and the gifts he was given (including two Rolls Royces) . Figures of up to 400 murders were reported in British and foreign newspapers , but after a controversial trial at the Old Bailey which gripped the nation for 17 days in March 1957 , Adams was found not guilty . He was struck off for 4 years but resumed his practice in Eastbourne in 1961 . According to Scotland Yard 's archives , he is thought to have killed up to 163 patients in the Eastbourne area .

After the war , development continued , including the growth of Old Town up the hillside (Green

Street Farm Estate) and the housing estates of Hampden Park , Willingdon Trees and Langney . During the latter half of the 20th century , there were controversies over the demolition of Pococks , a 15th @-@ century manor house on what is now the Rodmill housing estate , and the granting of planning permission for a 19 @-@ storey block at the western end of the seafront . The latter project (South Cliff Tower) was realised in 1965 despite a storm of protest led by the newly formed Eastbourne and District Preservation Committee , which later became Eastbourne Civic Society , and was renamed The Eastbourne Society in 1999 . Local conservationists also failed to prevent the construction of the glass @-@ plated TGWU conference and holiday centre , but were successful in purchasing Polegate Windmill , thus saving it from demolition and redevelopment . Most of the expansion took place on the northern and eastern margins of the town , gradually swallowing surrounding villages . However , the richer western part was constrained by the Downs and has remained largely unchanged . In 1981 , a large section of the town centre was replaced by the indoor shops of the Arndale Centre .

In the 1990s , both growth and controversy accelerated rapidly as a new plan was launched to develop the area known as the Crumbles , a shingle bank on the coast to the east of the town centre . This area , now known as Sovereign Harbour , containing a marina , shops , and several thousand houses , along with luxury flats and apartments , was formerly home to many rare plants . Continued growth in other parts of the town , and the taming of the central marshland into farmland and nature reserves , has turned Eastbourne into the centre of a conurbation , with the appearance from above of a hollow ring . Currently under review is the demolition of some of the town centre , to extend the existing Arndale shopping centre , and the adaptation of several existing roads to form an inner ring road . In 2009 the new Towner Arts centre was opened abutting the listed Congress Theatre built in 1963 .

= = Eastbourne Local History Society = =

The Eastbourne Local History Society was founded in 1970 . It is a charitable , not @-@ for @-@ profit organisation in the United Kingdom whose objective is the pursuit and encouragement of an active interest in the study of the history of Eastbourne and its immediate environs and the dissemination of the outcome of such studies . As the major landowner , the Cavendish family has had strong connections with Eastbourne since the 18th century . The current President of the Society is William Cavendish , Earl of Burlington .

Containing over 1500 articles about the history of Eastbourne , the Society 's indexed journal , The Eastbourne Local Historian , is the major historical resource for the town and has been published quarterly since its inception in 1970 . Over the years , the Society has published various books about the history of Eastbourne , seven of which are currently in print .

= = Geography = =

The South Downs dominate Eastbourne and can be seen from most of the town . These were originally chalk deposits laid down under the sea during the Late Cretaceous , and were later lifted by the same tectonic plate movements that formed the European Alps , during the middle Tertiary period . The chalk can be clearly seen along the eroded coastline to the west of the town , in the area known as Beachy Head and the Seven Sisters , where continuous erosion keeps the cliff edge vertical and white . The chalk contains many fossils such as ammonites and nautilus . The town area is built on geologically recent alluvial drift , the result of the silting up of a bay . This changes to Weald clay around the Langney estate .

A part of the South Downs , Willingdon Down is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest . This is of archaeological interest due to a Neolithic camp and burial grounds . The area is also a nationally uncommon tract of chalk grassland rich in species . Another SSSI which partially falls with the Eastbourne district is Seaford to Beachy Head . This site , of biological and geological interest , covers the coastline between Eastbourne and Seaford , plus the Seven Sisters country park and the Cuckmere valley . Several nature trails lead across the Downs to areas such as the nearby villages

of East Dean and Birling Gap , and landmarks like the Seven Sisters , Belle Tout lighthouse and Beachy Head .

= = = Districts = = =

Eastbourne 's greater area comprises the town of Polegate , and the civil parishes of Willington and Jevington , Stone Cross , Pevensey , Westham , and Pevensey Bay village . All are part of the Wealden District . Within Eastbourne 's limits are :

Langney : Langney Rise , Shinewater , Kingsmere , Langney Village , The Marina , Langney Point

Hampden Park : Hampden Park Village , Willington Trees , Winkney Farm , Ratton

Inner areas : Rodmill , Ocklynge , Seaside , Bridgemere , Roselands , Downside

Town centre : Town centre , Little Chelsea , Meads , Holywell , Old Town , Upperton

Sovereign Harbour : North Harbour , South Harbour

There was a community known as Norway , Eastbourne in the triangle now bounded by Wartling Road , Seaside and Lottbridge Drove . The name being a corruption of North Way , as this was the route to the North . The area is now a housing estate and the only evidence there was a Norway are a Norway Road and the local church whose sign reads " St Andrew 's Church , Norway " .

The former fishing hamlet of Holywell (local pronunciation ? holly well ?) was situated by the cliff on a ledge some 400 yards to the southwest of the public garden known as the Holywell Retreat . It was approached from what is now Holywell Road via the lane between the present Helen Gardens and St Bede 's School which leads to the chalk pinnacle formerly known locally as ? Gibraltar ? or ' The Sugar Loaf ' . The ground around the pinnacle was the site of lime kilns also worked by the fishermen . The fishing hamlet at Holywell was taken over by the local water board in 1896 to exploit the springs in the cliffs . The water board 's successors still own the site , and there is a pumping station but little evidence of the hamlet itself , as by now even most of the foundations of the cottages have gone over the cliff .

= = = Climate = = =

As with the rest of the British Isles and South Coast , Eastbourne experiences a maritime climate with cool summers and mild winters . The local climate is notable for its high sunshine levels , at least relative to much of the rest of England - Eastbourne holds the record for the highest recorded amount of sunshine in a month , 383 @. @ 9 hours in July 1911 . Temperature extremes recorded at Eastbourne since 1960 range from 31 @. @ 6 ° C (88 @. @ 9 ° F) during July 1976 , down to ? 9 @. @ 7 ° C (14 @. @ 5 ° F) In January 1987 . Eastbourne 's coastal location also means it tends to be milder than most areas , particularly during night . A whole six months of the year have never recorded an air frost , and in July the temperature has never fallen below 8 @. @ 3 ° C (46 @. @ 9 ° F) . All temperature figures relate to the period 1960 onwards . The Köppen Climate Classification subtype for this climate is " Cfb " (Marine West Coast Climate / Oceanic climate) .

= = Governance = =

Eastbourne Borough Council is responsible for local governance , with representation provided by twenty seven councillors from nine wards , with elections to the council being held every four years . The 2015 election resulted in a council made up of 18 Liberal Democrat and 9 Conservative councillors . The council operates out of a Victorian town hall designed by W. Tadman Foulkes , and built between 1884 and 1886 under supervision of Henry Currey , the Duke of Devonshire 's architect . East Sussex County Council has responsibility for education , libraries , social services , civil registration , trading standards and transport . Out of the 49 seats , nine are filled by the Eastbourne wards . The 2009 East Sussex County Council election resulted in 29 Conservatives , 13 Liberal Democrats , 4 Labour and 3 Independent , of which Eastbourne provided 6 Liberal Democrats and 3 Conservatives .

The Parliament Constituency of Eastbourne covers a greater area than the nine local wards ,

extending to the north and the east . Eastbourne is a marginal seat contested between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats . Until 2015 , the Member of Parliament for Eastbourne was the Liberal Democrat Stephen Lloyd , who took the seat from the sitting Conservative MP Nigel Waterson with a 3 @. @ 8 % swing on a turnout of 67 % in the 2010 General Election . At the 2015 general election , Lloyd lost his seat to the Conservative Caroline Ansell , who gained the constituency with a majority of 733 votes . At European level , Eastbourne is represented by the South @- @ East region , which holds ten seats in the European Parliament . The 2009 election returned 4 Conservatives , 2 Liberal Democrats , 2 UK Independence , 1 Labour and 1 Green .

= = Demography = =

Whilst the overall population of Eastbourne is growing (between 2001 and 2008 the population grew from 89 @, @ 800 to 94 @, @ 800) , the age profile is dropping as younger people move into the town . Ethnically , the town is 93 @. @ 7 % white , with small minority groups including Chinese , and white minority groups from other countries in Europe . The 2001 census indicated that the largest non @- @ white ethnic group were Chinese ; studies conducted by the local council in 2008 indicated that there has been a growth in people arriving from Eastern Europe , particularly Poland . Unemployment in Eastbourne is below the national average 4 @. @ 1 % compared to 4 @. @ 4 % for England and Wales . The percentage of economically active people increased between 2001 and 2011 . There has also been an upward trend in the number of people with qualifications with an increase of 5 @. @ 19 %

= = Economy = =

With a population of 100 @, @ 000 people , Eastbourne is the second fastest @- @ growing seaside town in the UK , and is the economic driver of one of the fastest @- @ growing counties in the country . Eastbourne has a broad economic base and is home to companies in a wide range of industries . The town is home to the largest book distributor in the UK , as well as to a number of specialist advanced manufacturing and engineering companies , many of which are based on industrial estates in and around the town . It is also the base for a growing number of successful e @- @ commerce companies who distribute goods across the UK and throughout Europe . There is a high availability of affordable commercial property in Eastbourne and nearby Polegate , where a planned 700 new homes promise continued economic growth .

Development around Sovereign Harbour Marina , Britain 's largest composite marina , has created more than 3000 new luxury homes over the past 10 years and future plans include the construction of an innovation mall for small businesses and start @- @ ups . The Eastbourne business community is well connected and mutually supportive . The Chamber of Commerce is strong with around 600 members and holds many networking events to facilitate local B2B links . There are many business events for local entrepreneurs to promote their goods and services and a healthy ' buy local ' ethic . Large revenues are generated through tourism and conference tourism with reports showing a £ 365 million revenue from visitors in 2010 , 3 @. @ 1 % greater than 2009 and estimated to support 7 @, @ 160 jobs . The council 's blueprint for future development in the town centre maps out a strategy for further boosting these numbers by attracting even more residents , shoppers and visitors to the town .

= = = Tourism = = =

The seafront at Eastbourne consists almost entirely of Victorian hotels . Along with its pier and bandstand , this serves to preserve the front in a somewhat timeless manner . The Duke of Devonshire , retains the rights to the seafront buildings and does not allow them to be developed into shops . A stretch of 4 miles (6 @. @ 4 km) of shingle beach stretches from Sovereign Harbour in the east to Beachy Head in the west . In a 1998 survey 56 % of visitors said that the beach and seafront was one of Eastbourne best features , although 10 % listed the pebbled beach as a dislike .

Other recreation facilities include two swimming pools , three fitness centres and other smaller sports clubs including scuba diving .

A children 's adventure park is sited at the eastern end of the seafront . There are various other establishments scattered around the town such as crazy golf , go ? karting and Laser Quest . The pier is an obvious place to visit and is sometimes used to hold events , such as the international birdman competition held annually , although cancelled in 2005 due to lack of competitors . An annual raft competition takes place where competitors , usually local businesses , circumnavigate the pier in a raft made by themselves , while being attacked by a water @-@ cannon . A major event in the tourist calendar of Eastbourne , now the world 's biggest seafront air show , is the annually held 4 day , international air show , ' Airbourne ' . Started in 1993 , based around a long relationship with the Red Arrows display team , the event features Battle of Britain memorial flights and aircraft from the RAF , USAF and many others .

One of the museums in Eastbourne is How We Lived Then , a museum of shops and local history , with exhibits representing complete scenarios such as shops and houses with life sized dummies . The museum contains more than 100 @,@ 000 exhibits , covering the period from the 1800s to the Second World War .

= = Culture = =

Eastbourne has four council @-@ owned theatres ; the Grade II * listed Congress Theatre , the Grade II listed Devonshire Park Theatre , the Grade II listed Winter Garden and the Grade II listed Royal Hippodrome Theatre . The Devonshire Park Theatre is a fine example of a Victorian theatre with ornate interior decorations , and the Royal Hippodrome has the longest running summer show in Britain . Other theatre venues in the town include the volunteer @-@ run Underground Theatre , in the basement of the town 's Central Library , and The Lamb Theatre , based at the Lamb Inn in Old Town , and launched in August 2009 . In 2009 , Eastbourne gained a new cultural centre , replacing the Manor House (which has now been sold) as home of the Towner Art Gallery ; it is located in the cultural district next to the Congress Theatre and Devonshire Park . Eastbourne has two cinemas ? the Curzon Cinema and Cineworld . The Curzon Cinema is a small , family @-@ run , independent cinema in Langney Road , in the town centre . Cineworld is a large Multiplex cinema with six screens , located in The Crumbles Retail Park , near Sovereign Harbour .

The London Philharmonic Orchestra makes regular appearances and has an annual season at the Congress Theatre . Eastbourne Bandstand lies between the Wish Tower and the pier . It stages the 1812 Firework Concerts , Rock N Roll nights , Big Band concerts , Promenade concerts and Tribute Nights with tributes to artists such as ABBA , Elvis Presley and Queen . There was once a second similar bandstand (also built in 1935) in the " music gardens " near the redoubt fortress . The bandstand was removed to make way for the Pavilion Tearooms but the colonnades built around it are still there (behind the tea rooms) . Before 1935 each of these sites had a smaller " birdcage " bandstand ; the one in the music gardens having been moved from a rather precarious position opposite the Albion Hotel . The kiosk in the music gardens was originally one of the toll kiosks at the entrance to the pier . Local radio station Sovereign FM broadcasts to Eastbourne from nearby Hailsham . There are two other regional radio stations , Heart Sussex , (previously Southern FM) which broadcasts across Sussex from Portslade and BBC Sussex which broadcasts from Brighton .

Eastbourne has Cornish connections , most notably visible in the Cornish high cross in the churchyard of St Mary 's Church which was brought from an unspecified location in Cornwall . Trevithick , the inventor of the steam locomotive (a claim disputed on the grave of one Vyvyan in the churchyard at Camborne) , is reported to have spent some time here . A connection with India comes in the shape of the 18th @-@ century Lushington monument , also at St Mary 's , which commemorates a survivor of the Black Hole of Calcutta atrocity which led to the British conquest of Bengal . Proximity to London has led to Eastbourne being the home of actors and television personalities , including the comedian Tommy Cooper . A metal silhouette of the latter can be seen on the wall of a house opposite Motcombe Gardens .

The seafront and the iconic cliff at Beachy Head has been used for many scenes in feature films ,

and the local council has set up a film liaison unit to encourage and facilitate the shooting of film sequences in and around the town . The 2006 Academy Award @-@ nominated film Notes on a Scandal includes scenes filmed at Beachy Head , Cavendish Hotel and 117 Royal Parade . Beachy Head and the Seven Sisters were used as backdrops for scenes from the Quidditch World Cup in Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire . Scenes from Half a Sixpence (1969) were filmed on the pier and near to the bandstand . The seafront area was also used for the film Angus , Thongs and Perfect Snogging directed by Gurinder Chadha . The Langham Hotel was a filming location for Made in Dagenham , which also featured the seafront and pier . A sequence of a rainy day at the seaside for the Doel family has as its backdrop the Wish Tower , the bandstand , the Cavendish Hotel and the pier in the 1987 British / American drama film 84 Charing Cross Road directed by David Jones .

Television too has used Eastbourne as a backdrop . The series Little Britain had the character Emily Howard strolling along the promenade . Other brief appearances were made in the television series Agatha Christie 's Marple , French and Saunders and Foyle 's War . One scene in Bang , Bang , It 's Reeves and Mortimer , was shot in and based around what is now known as " D2L " on Seaside Road .

BBC South East Today and ITV Meridian are the two regional news channels .

= = Parks and gardens = =

Eastbourne has numerous parks and gardens , although there are several smaller open spaces including Upperton Gardens , the Carpet Gardens and the Western Lawns . The first public park in Eastbourne was Hampden Park , originally owned by Lord Willingdon and opened on 12 August 1902 . Facilities include : football pitches , rugby club , indoor bowls , a large lake (formerly a Decoy pond) , lakeside cafe , children 's recreation area , tennis courts , BMX and skate facility , disc golf course (target) and woodland . The largest and newest park is Shinewater Park , located on the west side of Langney and opened in 2002 . There is a large fishing lake , basketball , football pitches , a BMX and skate park and children 's playground .

Gildredge Park is a large open park located between the town centre and Old Town ; it is very popular with families and has a children 's playground , cafe , tennis courts , disc golf course (target) and bowls lawns . The smaller , adjoining , Manor Gardens combines both lawns and shady areas as well as a rose garden . Until 2005 , Manor Gardens was the home of the Towner Gallery . This gallery incorporated a permanent exhibition of local art and historical items , plus temporary art exhibitions of regional and national significance . It was relocated to a new , £ 8 @. @ 6 million purpose @-@ built facility adjacent to the Congress Theatre , Devonshire Park which opened on 4 April 2009 .

Princes Park obtained its name during a visit by the Duke of Windsor as Prince of Wales in 1931 . Located at the eastern end of the seafront , it has a children 's playground with paddling pool , cafe , bowls and a large lake , noted for its swans . The lake is used by a nearby water @-@ sports centre , which offers kayak and windsurfing training . Princes Park lake is also home to Eastbourne Model Powerboat Club and Eastbourne Model Yacht Club . Close by are tennis and basketball courts and a football pitch . At the north of the park is Eastbourne United F.C .. Devonshire Park , home to the pre @-@ Wimbledon ladies tennis championships , is located just off the seafront in the towns cultural district . Other parks include : Helen Gardens and the Italian Gardens at the western end of the seafront , Sovereign Park between the main seafront and the marina and Motcombe Gardens in Old Town .

One feature that has always been heavily promoted is Eastbourne 's floral displays , most notably the Carpet Gardens along the coastal road near the pier . These displays , and the town as a whole , frequently win awards ? such as the ' Coastal Resort B ' category in the 2003 Britain in Bloom competition .

= = Sport = =

Eastbourne 's Devonshire Park is the venue for the Eastbourne International , a tennis tournament

held in the town since 1974 and serving as a warm @-@ up to Wimbledon . Previously a women only tournament , in 2009 the Lawn Tennis Association merged it with the men only event the Nottingham Open .

Eastbourne has four senior football clubs : Eastbourne Borough F.C. play in the Conference South . Eastbourne Town F.C. and Eastbourne United Association F.C. both play in the Southern Combination League Premier , while Langney Wanderers F.C. play in the Southern Combination League Division One .

The Eastbourne Eagles are a speedway club located at Arlington Stadium , just outside the town . Between 1997 @-@ 2014 they competed in the Elite League , the highest level of speedway in the UK . They were champions in 2000 . They now compete in the National League . Arlington stadium also sees stock @-@ car racing on Wednesday evenings in the summer months .

Other local sports clubs include cricket , hockey , rugby , lacrosse and golf . Among Eastbourne 's golf courses are the Royal Eastbourne , Eastbourne Downs , Willingdon and the Eastbourne Golfing Park . There is an annual extreme sports festival held at the eastern end of the seafront . Eastbourne Sovereign Sailing Club , on the seafront towards the eastern end , organises dinghy sailing for its members and visitors from Easter to Boxing Day and usually holds a National Championship Series for a popular UK class in the summer months .

= = Landmarks = =

= = = Beachy Head = = =

Beachy Head cliff , to the west of the town , is an infamous suicide spot . Statistics are not officially published to reduce suicidal mimicry , but unofficial statistics show it to be the third most common suicide spot .

The lighthouse at the foot of the cliff came into operation in October 1902 . Although originally manned by two keepers , it has been remotely monitored by Trinity House via a landline since June 1983 . Prior to its construction , shipping had been warned by the Belle Tout lighthouse on the cliff top some 1 @,@ 500 metres to the west . Belle Tout lighthouse was operational from 1834 to 1902 , and closed because its light was not visible in mist and low cloud . It became a private residence , but was severely damaged in the Second World War II by Canadian artillery . In 1956 , it was rebuilt as a house and remains a dwelling to this day . In March 1999 , the structure was moved 55 feet (17 m) back from the cliff edge to save it from plunging into the sea. The structure may need to be moved again to safeguard it from cliff erosion .

= = = Eastbourne Pier = = =

Eastbourne Pier was built between 1866 and 1872 at the junction of Grand and Marine Parades . The pier interrupts what would otherwise have been a ribbon development of buildings ? to the west , high @-@ class hotels , with modest family hotels and boarding houses to the east . The Eastbourne Pier Company was registered in April 1865 with a capital of £ 15 @,@ 000 and on 18 April 1866 work began . It was opened by Lord Edward Cavendish on 13 June 1870 , although it was not actually completed until two years later . On New Year 's Day 1877 the landward half was swept away in a storm . It was rebuilt at a higher level , creating a drop towards the end of the pier . The pier is effectively built on stilts that rest in cups on the sea @-@ bed allowing the whole structure to move during rough weather . It is roughly 300 metres (1000 ft) long . A domed 400 @-@ seater pavilion was constructed at a cost of £ 250 at the seaward end in 1888 . A 1000 @-@ seater theatre , bar , camera obscura and office suite replaced this in 1899 / 1901 . At the same time , two saloons were built midway along the pier . Access to the camera obscura was destroyed by an arson attack in 1970 , but was restored in 2003 with a new stairway built .

= = = = Eastbourne Pier Fire = = = =

On 30 July 2014 , a fire broke out in the middle building of the pier . BBC News reported that 80 firefighters attended the scene . One third of the pier was badly damaged .

On 19 August 2014 , a worker from Cumbria died after falling through the decking of the damaged pier .

The government promised £ 2m support for lost trade caused by the pier fire and in lost tourism revenue .

= = = Eastbourne Redoubt = = =

Eastbourne Redoubt on Royal Parade is one of three examples of a type of fortress built to withstand potential invasion from Napoleon 's forces in the early nineteenth century . It houses collections from The Royal Sussex Regiment , The Queen 's Royal Irish Hussars , and the Sussex Combined Services Collection ; including four Victoria Crosses and General Hans @-@ Jürgen von Arnim 's Steyr Automobile 1500A Afrika Korps Staff Car .

= = Education = =

Eastbourne 's reputation for health , enhanced by bracing air and sea breezes contributed to the establishment of many independent schools in the 19th century and in 1871 , the year which saw the arrival of Queenwood Ladies College , the town was just beginning a period of growth and prosperity . By 1896 , Gowland 's Eastbourne Directory listed 76 private schools for boys and girls . However , economic difficulties during the inter @-@ war years saw a gradual decline in the number of independent schools .

In 1930 , the headmistress of Clovelly @-@ Kepplestone , a well @-@ established boarding school for girls , referred to " heavy financial losses experienced by schools in the past few years " . In 1930 , this school was forced to merge its junior and senior departments ; in 1931 , one of its buildings was sold off , and in 1934 the school closed altogether . Finally , indicative of the changes that would later befall many of the larger buildings in the town , the school was demolished to make way for a block of flats , which was completed in 1939 .

The Eastbourne (Blue Book) Directory for 1938 lists 39 independent schools in the town . With the fall of France in June 1940 , and the risk of invasion , most left ? the majority never to return . By 2007 , the number had reduced to just four : St. Andrew 's School , Eastbourne College , St. Bede 's Preparatory School and Moira House Girls ' School .

Eastbourne has 6 state secondary schools , 17 state primary schools , 1 primary special school , and 2 secondary special schools . Parts of the University of Brighton are based in the Meads area of the town . There are several language colleges and schools , with students coming mainly from Europe .

Sussex Downs College is a large further education college with a campus in Eastbourne . This state @-@ funded college provides a range of GCSE , GCE A Level , BTEC and vocational programmes for students aged 16 ? 19 years of age , plus a full range of adult FE programmes . It gained its current structure in 2003 from a merger of Park College (the old Eastbourne sixth form college) , Lewes Tertiary College and Eastbourne College of Arts and Technology (ECAT) .

= = Health and emergency services = =

The town is served by Eastbourne District General Hospital , part of East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust . As of 2014 , the maternity unit of the hospital has been permanently transferred to The Conquest Hospital , Hastings after years of campaigning to save the unit . An earlier hospital , St Mary 's , opened on Vicarage Road in 1877 as the infirmary to the local workhouse ; it was demolished in 1990 . Eastbourne Fire Station is in Whitley Road , and the town 's police station is in Grove Road . Eastbourne has an RNLI lifeboat station . A new boat named Diamond Jubilee was launched in 2012 by the Earl and Countess of Wessex .

Eastbourne Blind Society was founded in 1923 to support eight war @-@ blinded veterans . In 1963 a centre in Longstone Road was opened and today the society has almost 800 members .

= = Religious life = =

As well as the medieval parish church of St Mary in Old Town , another remarkable church building in Eastbourne is the redbrick St Saviour 's and St Peter 's . Originally consecrated under the former name in 1872 , it was designed by George Edmund Street but merged with St Peter ? s in 1971 when the latter was made redundant and demolished . The Catholic Church of Our Lady of Ransom is a generously proportioned building with a tall Gothic interior . One of the windows commemorates the exiled Polish @-@ Lithuanian nobleman , Prince Lev Sapieha , who lived in the town , and there is much other artwork in the building . The recently formed Personal Ordinariate of Anglicans reconciled to the Catholic Church meets at St Agnes , another Victorian Gothic building .

The tall flint tower of St Michael 's at Ocklynge is one of Eastbourne 's landmarks . The church was consecrated in 1902 and built on the site of the mission hall where the nonsense writer Lewis Carroll (the clergyman CL Dodgson) is known to have preached during his holidays in the town . All Souls , in Italian style , is a finely proportioned building with an Evangelical church tradition . Holy Trinity also has a strong history of Evangelism , particularly during the early 20th century when Canon Stephen Warner was the vicar for 28 years . There is a Greek Orthodox Church converted from a 19th @-@ century Calvinistic chapel . The Strict Baptist Chapel in Grove Road is an interesting building , despite its rather grim street frontage . The United Reformed Church in Upperton Road has tall rogue Gothic windows set in red brick walls . Several other denominations have similarly interesting church buildings , including some of 20th century design , such as the Baptist Church in Eldon Road . The copyrights of many well @-@ known hymns used in the English @-@ speaking world are handled by Kingway 's Thankyou Music of Eastbourne . There is a tradition of Judaism in Eastbourne , and a Jewish rest home . The Islamic community uses a small mosque that was formerly the Seeboard social club .

= = Transport = =

Eastbourne is connected by road to London by the A22 , and to Brighton and Hove and Hastings by the nearby A27 . The car is the most used form of transport in the town , with only 6 % of journeys taken by bus ; the local council transport plan aims to reduce the amount of car usage . Bus services within Eastbourne have been provided by Stagecoach Group under the name Stagecoach in Eastbourne since November 2008 , when the company acquired Eastbourne Buses , a service run by the local council , and subsequently the independent company Cavendish Motor Services . Eastbourne Buses had been formed in 1903 by the County Borough of Eastbourne , who were the first local authority in the world authorised to run motor buses . As well as local journeys within the town , Stagecoach also runs routes to Polegate , Hailsham , Tunbridge Wells , Uckfield and East Grinstead at various frequencies , while the two routes to Hastings via Bexhill are run by Stagecoach South East from Hastings . The other main operator into Eastbourne is Brighton & Hove , owned by the Go @-@ Ahead Group , which runs frequent services seven days a week from Brighton via Seaford and Newhaven . Limited numbers of additional buses are run by the Cuckmere Buses , and a regular National Express coach service operates daily from London 's Victoria Coach Station .

The main railway station is situated in the town centre and is served by Southern . The present station (the town 's third) , designed by F.D. Bannister , dates from 1886 . It was originally on what was termed the Eastbourne Branch from Polegate . There was a rarely used triangular junction between Polegate and the now @-@ closed Stone Cross which allowed trains to bypass the Branch ; the track has now been lifted . Also on the erstwhile Branch is Hampden Park railway station to the north of the town . Regular services along the coast have invariably served Eastbourne . All trains , because of the layout , have to pass through Hampden Park once in each direction . This has the effect of making the Hampden Park level crossing very busy . Indeed , it is thought to be the busiest

in the country . Regular services are to London Victoria , Gatwick Airport , Hastings and Ashford International and a commuter service to Brighton . Trains leave from London Victoria to Eastbourne with a journey time of 1hr 36mins . A miniature tramway once ran a mile across " the Crumbles " (then undeveloped) from near Princes Park / Wartling Road towards Langney Point . It opened in 1954 but ceased operation in 1970 , relocating to Seaton in Devon after the owners had fallen out with the council ; it is now the Seaton Tramway .

= = Notable people = =

Eastbourne can claim some notable regular visitors . Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were often in the area ; the latter 's ashes were scattered from Beachy Head at his request . Claude Debussy finished composing La mer at the Grand Hotel in 1905 . " Darwin 's Bulldog " Thomas Henry Huxley spent the last few years of his life in Eastbourne . Notable residents include Charles Webb , writer of The Graduate , who moved to Eastbourne with his wife in 2006 , where they are housed by social services . The pianist Russ Conway was a resident for many years as was Henry Allingham , briefly the world 's oldest man when he died in 2009 aged 113 . Percy Sillitoe , director of MI5 , also lived in the town in the 1950s . The novelist and children 's writer Annie Keary died in the town in 1879 . The leading evangelist Canon Stephen Warner was the vicar of Holy Trinity between 1919 and 1947 . Novelist Angela Carter was born in Eastbourne in 1940 before relocating to South Yorkshire as a child .

Several bands have formed in Eastbourne , including Toploader , Easyworld , The Divided , ROAM and The Mobiles . Musician Robin Romei is a resident of Eastbourne , and has written a song named after the Town .

Various notable scholars have passed through the Eastbourne education system . Frederick Soddy , radiochemist and economist , was born in Eastbourne and studied at Eastbourne College . Aleister Crowley , occultist and mystic attended Eastbourne College and later edited a chess column for the Eastbourne Gazette . Polar explorer Lawrence Oates attended South Lynn School in Mill Gap Road . George Mallory , the noted mountaineer , attended Glengorse Preparatory School in Chesterfield Road between 1896 and 1900 . Count László Almásy , the basis of the lead character of The English Patient , was educated by a private tutor at Berrow , and was a member of the pioneering Eastbourne Flying Club . Douglas Bader , who became a successful Second World War fighter pilot despite having lost both legs in a flying accident , attended Temple Grove Preparatory School in Compton Place Road .

The philosopher A. J. Ayer was a pupil at Ascham St Vincent 's School in Carlisle Road . The artist Eric Ravilious grew up , was educated and taught in Eastbourne . In addition to Orwell , Connolly , Beaton , Maxwell and Longhurst listed on the St Cyprian 's School blue plaque , the writers Alaric Jacob , E. H. W. Meyerstein and Alan Hyman also attended that school . The biographer and historian Philip Ziegler was a pupil as was the music historian Dyneley Hussey and politician , historian and diarist Alan Clark . Other politicians were Richard Wood who had lost both legs in the war , and David Ormsby @-@ Gore later ambassador to the USA . Artists Cedric Morris and David Kindersley also attended the school as did military figures such as General Sir Lashmer Whistler and Major General Henry Foot VC . Pupils with sporting connections include the amateur jockey Anthony Mildmay and Seymour de Lotbiniere Director of Outside Broadcasts at the BBC . Jagaddipendra Narayan was a reigning Maharaja of Cooch Behar while at the school . Other former pupils include the war @-@ blinded life peer Lord Fraser and the submarine commander Rupert Lonsdale . NASA aerospace engineer Bruce Woodgate , who attended Eastbourne Grammar School , was the principal investigator and designer of the Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph , which was installed on the Hubble Space Telescope in 1997 . Modern celebrities who studied in the town include Prunella Scales and Eddie Izzard .

In 1993 , following a suggestion to Eastbourne Borough Council by Eastbourne Civic Society (now Eastbourne Society) , a joint project was set up to erect blue plaques on buildings associated with famous people . The principles for selection are broadly those already established by English Heritage for such plaques in London . The first was erected in November 1994 in Milnthorpe Road at

the former home of Sir Ernest Shackleton , the Antarctic explorer .

= = In Popular Culture = =

In Season 4 , Episode 4 of Red Dwarf entitled " White Hole " , Rimmer jokes about a way he claims the Eskimo people deal with their elderly , leaving them to freeze to death . When Kryten asks if that is really the case , Rimmer responds " Absolutely . That 's why there 's no Eskimo word for Eastbourne . " Presumably referring to the climate and demographics of Eastbourne at the time the episode premiered .