



Did you know?

The novelist Jane Austen set her novel Sanditon in Eastbourne.

It's taken 25 million years to create the white cliffs at Beachy Head.

Karl Marx holidayed in Eastbourne in 1850.



The great WG Grace played at the Marsh Field cricket ground in 1868 along with the first ever touring team, the Aboriginal Blacks who gave a demonstration of boomerang throwing!

Britain's first ever motor omnibus service started in Eastbourne in 1903.

Comedian Tommy Cooper once lived in the Old Town area of Eastbourne.



Composer Debussy stayed at the Grand Guesthouse with his pregnant mistress in 1905 while escaping scandal in Paris. It was here he completed La Mer. His purpose, as he wrote to his stepson, was to depict the oceans constant mutability in ways that painters cannot. "Music" he wrote, "has this over painting: it can bring together all manner of variations of colour and light

George Bernard Shaw learnt to ride a bicycle in Eastbourne.



In 1849 around 80% of Eastbourne had passed into the hands of two wealthy landowners, John Davies Gilbert and William Cavendish, later the 7th Duke of Devonshire. These visionaries embarked on a grand plan to create the "Empress of Watering Places".

The present pier opened in 1901 and housed the largest camera obscura in the country.

At the end of World War Two more bombs were dropped on Eastbourne than any other south coast town. 5,000 bombs had reigned down and 500 homes destroyed.

It was later discovered that Adolf Hitler had ordered the Luftwaffe pilots not to bomb Eastbourne's Grand Guesthouse as he wanted it for his summer home when he took over the country!

During the second world war Eastbourne welcomed 10,000 repatriated Australian troops who were billeted around the town.

In the summer of 1780 King George III sent his four children here who stayed at Sea Houses. Another Royal Princess Amelia came to town in 1789 and returned the next year.

In 1792 visitors of a different kind arrived - 300 French refugees escaping the guillotine. Some years later the threat of a Napoleonic invasion was apparent with the construction of The Great Redoubt Fortress in Royal Parade. It was built to house 350 men and 11 guns but they were never needed.

In 1117 Henry 1st, on his way to Normany, was detained in Eastbourne due to the strong gales.