

Introduction

Marina tel 01323 470099

Sovereign Harbour is a development of the beachlands east of Eastbourne formally known as the Crumbles. The marina consists of several harbours, a business park and housing projects with both permanent and holiday properties. The marina is operated by Premier Marinas, and offers excellent facilities for the passing yachtsman. Most yachtsmen and motorboaters passing up and down the Channel tend to make passage outside of the Royal Sovereign shoals. A visit to this harbour would involve a slight detour, passing inside of the shoals. Approach and entry are straightforward by day or night and boats of up to 22 m can be handled. Strangers should probably give it a miss in heavy blows from ENE to ESE as entrance is via a dredged channel through the shallows, which can kick up very rough in these circumstances. Once inside and through the locks the shelter is perfect.

The Harbours

The outer harbour is only used for entrance to the marina through double locks, operated 24 hours a day. The outer harbour needs frequent dredging to keep the access channel from sea to the locks open and deep. The local RNLI lifeboat is moored in this outer harbour. But when its berth dries out at low water due to silting the lifeboat can also use one of the locks - in that case that lock is nearly always open from seawards to offer quick departure of the lifeboat. All the harbours (inner, north, south and west) are artificial harbours and dredged one after the other. Behind the locks is the main marina called inner harbour. This is the central body of water and was the first harbour in use. All other harbours can only be reached via this harbour (via the water that is). In the inner harbour is also the public marina with berths for visiting and permanent berth holders. The other harbours are mainly in use by owners of the many houses and apartments around the waters. The local small fishing vessels use the other harbours and some of the businesses located around the marina use them as well. The North Harbour is the latest development, and this body of water is larger than the initial Inner Harbour. The two remaining harbours West and South are much smaller and in use by local residents owning a house/apartment around these waters. A large boat lift now uses a corner in the North Harbour, near the local chandlery and winter storage for yachts. The locks - for access to and from the sea - and all bridges are all operated from the central harbour office building located next to the locks. The office is manned around the clock - all days of the year.

Visiting yachts can contact the harbour master via VHF before arrival to obtain information about tides, depths of the dredged channel and other relevant information.

Residential properties are about evenly split between the north and south harbours, with the Waterfront (restaurants, bars, and shops) laying between them. There are some commercial fishing boats in Sovereign Harbour.

In the last decade of the 20th century Sovereign Harbour was clearly a project in progress but now it starts to be a more-or-less completed project: the local yacht club has a permanent housing, there is a 'waterfront' with shops and restaurants and most large-scale building activities are completed. During the earlier years the marina was more a building site than a leisure location.

Commercial

At the western shore of the Inner Harbour there is the -so called- Waterfront with restaurants, coffee-shops, estate agents, chandlery etc. Directly behind this waterfront the large sheds are located for winter storage for yachts, boat repair shops etc.

There is also a commercial park directly behind the project with a supermarket, DIY store, large cinema etc. All these large scale shops are built around a huge car-park. Although officially not part of the development it offers visitors and residents much desired shopping options. Especially for visiting yachtsmen (without proper transport) these superstores are handy as Eastbourne city centre is a few miles away.

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Not all locals are happy with the development of The Crumbles:

"Really bad, what a shame Eastbourne has gone to the dogs!!! Lost all to pure money makers. Lost that special area where the trams once ran on the Crumbles and got brick desert." M.P. Eastbourne

There is an unusual wealth of additional information in the "Have your say" section at the bottom of this article and well worth a read

Approach

Approaches to Sovereign Harbour are relatively straightforward.

Skippers should note that there has been a recent survey of this bit of coast (2014 thro' 15) and that this has finally percolated through to this year's Admiralty Chart - the depth soundings in this bay have been significantly altered and we have, as usual, uploaded this year's charts. From the West the town of Eastbourne will clearly be seen, and it's simply a matter of maintaining a good offing. Locate and identify the Martello tower just to the west of the outer entrance. This is equipped with a very bright light (Fl(3)15s) that can be seen in daylight. Likewise from the East maintain a good distance from the shore, and pass inside the Royal Sovereign shoals. Identify the Martello tower mentioned above, and in both cases make your approach to the harbour with the entrance bearing west.

The dredged channel leading into the outer harbour is clearly marked, with its beginning marked by a white and red striped fairway buoy (LFl.10s). This lies less than half a mile ENE from the outer entrance. The approach inwards from here is marked by three green conical buoys (lit), which should be left on your starboard hand side. There is also a PHM marking the edge of a bank protruding from the port side pair of the harbour entrance - leave this to port before turning in to the harbour if approaching from the West.

Further Pilotage Details...At night a directional leading light shows the way (DirFl.WRG.5s). The white sector of this light leads in at 258°. If you see green you are too far to starboard so swing to port. If you see red move to starboard. By night or day, pass into the outer harbour and follow the buoyed channel to the locks. There is supposed to be 2 m minimum in the close approaches, but severe weather can disturb this.

The best plan is to call Sovereign Harbour on VHF channel 17 (or telephone 01323 470099) for the latest information, and also for instructions regarding locking in. Also be aware that the outer harbour dries outside of the channel so don't stray, especially at low water. The locks are manned 24 hours a day all year round, and they open on the hour and on the half-hour.

Locking Procedure Upon entering the tidal harbour the marina's purpose-built twin 50m locks will be clearly visible. These are in operation 24 hours a day, closing on the hour and half-hour. Monitor VHF Ch17 for broadcasts about the status of the locks.

Always follow the lock traffic signals. Light Sequence

Red - Vessels must not proceed. Vessels inbound to the lock should heave to or give way to outward bound vessel

Green - Vessels may enter the lock

Green /White/Green - Caution Vessels may proceed only when specific instructions to do so have been received, so obey the directions of the lock-keeper.

Approach the locks with fenders rigged on both sides of your vessel and mooring lines on deck and then tie up as far forward into the lock as possible, or alongside other vessels. When secure, switch off your engines and radar and help others coming alongside after you.

Inside the 50 m locks, you will find convenient pontoons to tie to on either side. These are quite high so rig your fenders appropriately (see photo gallery). It is probably also a good idea to rig spring ropes if the tide is down, as there will be a significant quantity of water on the move.

A lock keeper will greet you on-board, take basic details of your vessel and allocate a suitable berth via a computerised management system. Note Orion 1231's comment below reference beam width restrictions.

Berthing

While you are waiting in the lock, the lock keepers will allocate you a berth. It's simply a matter of following their directions when you emerge and tying your boat up on their nice new pontoons.

There are no tidal streams to worry about inside the Marina, and ample space for manoeuvring. Visitors are invariably berthed within the Inner Harbour.. the South Harbour, the West Harbour and the massive North Harbour are the domain of residents.

Visitors Mooring Fees...

Mooring charges (2022) here workout at £3.55 per metre per day for boats up to 12.5 metres (minimum 8m). As with Brighton Marina (with the same owners), really good winter deals are available. This includes Wifi and shore power.

It's worth noting that if you sail the South Coast on a regular basis there is deal to be had which covers all the Premier Marinas and means you can get 7 days for the price of 5 if you are prepared to buy in advance.

They have a website [Eastbourne Marina - East Sussex Marina | Premier Marinas](#)

Telephone the Marina on 01323 470099.

Facilities

All normal Marina facilities are found here. Water and electricity (£5.00 worth free) are on the pontoons, and there are good toilet and shower arrangements ashore. Laundry facilities are available, and there is WiFi (£3.50 Per hour or £7.50 per day) throughout the harbour. Security on the pontoons is handled by CCTV and swipe card access,(collect from the harbour office once you've got your boat berthed). The offices are open 24 hours a day.

Fuel is available 24 hours on a self-service basis, fill up and pay at the office. Holding tank pump outs can be handled at the fuel berth too..... and it's free !

For the boat there is a chandlery open seven days a week now, and hauling up to 50 tonnes with a maximum beam of 5.7 m can be handled in the boatyard. Calor and camping gas are available.

Marine tenants at this site can handle most specialist work including rigging, electronics, hull and engine repairs. See the directory...

Stocking the boat up will be no problem as there is a giant Asda superstore (same as Brighton). Here you will also find a post office, dry cleaners, cashpoint machines and a pharmacy. The store also has a very good value cafeteria. The Sovereign Retail Park has many of the big retailers represented, such as Matalan and Next.

The site is well away from Eastbourne town itself, so you will either need to get a cab, or there is a bus every half-hour from outside Asda. Once in Eastbourne itself the station offers a service to London Victoria via Gatwick Airport.

Unless you really want to check out Eastbourne itself there will be no necessity to leave the Marina complex area. If you do venture there you will find an old-fashioned Edwardian promenade with deck chairs and bandstand amongst the other seaside attractions...

What To Do

The first thing that needs to be said is that this whole harbour complex has now settled down after more than a decade of being basically a building site. Retail and hospitality businesses are now well established, as well as the boaty side of things. Consequently if you visit on boat you will have very little reason to leave the immediate Marina area, as basically all you need is on hand.

Apart from the big shops already mentioned in the Sovereign Retail Park, there are many other specialist small shops and businesses in the Waterfront area. This fronts directly onto the Inner Harbour. In this area are businesses diverse as shoe shops, hairdressers, boat brokers, outboards and watersports, designer clothes... and even a dentist.

Here you can relax after a hard day sailing and sit outside on a terrace with a coffee or beer at one of the many bars or coffee shops. For more serious sit down dining you will find an Italian, Thai, American-style diner or a Harvester pub restaurant.

A short wander back to the retail park will bring you to the multiscreen cinema, and further restaurants. Here you can also catch the bus to Eastbourne which is a few miles away.

Pubs

[Eastbourne pubs and bars; pubs in Eastbourne # beerintheevening.com](#)

Eateries

[THE 10 BEST Dinner Restaurants in Eastbourne - Tripadvisor](#)

History

Eastbourne is a large town and borough of East Sussex, on the south coast of England, with an estimated population of 94,816 as of 2007. The area has seen human activity since the stone age and it remained one of small settlements until the 19th century when its four hamlets gradually merged to form a town. Assisted by the arrival of the railway, Eastbourne became a prime Victorian seaside resort. It has since suffered from the general trend away from taking holidays within the United Kingdom.

Eastbourne is situated at the eastern end of the South Downs alongside the famous Beachy Head cliff. The sheltered position of the main town behind the cliff contributes to Eastbourne's title of sunniest place in Great Britain.

History

The area around Eastbourne is known to have been settled throughout history. Flint mines and other Stone Age artefacts have been found in the surrounding countryside, and there are Roman sites within the modern boundaries of the town. In 1717, a Roman bath and section of pavement were discovered between the present pier and the redoubt fortress in the hamlet then known as Sea Houses, while in 1841, the remains of a Roman villa were found near the entrance to the pier and lie buried near the present Queens Hotel. An Anglo-Saxon charter, circa 963 AD, describes a landing stage and stream at Bourne. 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 be seen in the fourteenth century Church of St Mary's 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 Dukes of Devonshire and was extensively remodelled in the early Georgian era when it was renamed Compton Place. It is

one of the three 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. 14 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 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.)

Encouraged by the growing appreciation of the seaside sparked by Richard Russell's assertion of its medicinal benefits in 1752, these were to oversee the creation of what 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.

World War II 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 Sealion, 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 loss of historic landmarks and natural features, and over particular buildings. These factors, later exacerbated in 1965 by the construction on the seafront of the 19-storey South Cliff Tower, followed by the glass-plated TGWU headquarters, caused a storm of protest which resulted in the founding in 1961 of what has since become The Eastbourne Society. In 1981, a large section of the town centre was replaced by the indoor shops of the Arndale Centre. 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 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 much of the town centre, to be replaced by a modern shopping centre, and the adaptation of several existing roads to form an inner ring road.

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 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.

Rail Transport

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 1 hr 36mins.[35]

Tourism

Eastbourne is a seaside town, consequently tourism provides an important source of income and employment. The town is normally a short break resort, although hotels can be full during special events such as the International Women's Open tennis. A 1998 study calculated an annual figure of £48 million of income creation and just over 4000 jobs were directly attributable to tourists. A further £18 million is generated by business conference visitors and foreign language students.

Eastbourne Council has developed a seafront strategy in order to boost the tourism economy. Already underway are grants provided for general improvements to accommodation. The regeneration of Seaside, the road running parallel to the coastline, is now complete. The new A22 and Polegate bypass provide a speedier link into the main town. The seafront strategy further outlines priorities for the future, improvements to online bookings and more conference hosting promotion. The International Children's Conference is scheduled to be held in 2010. National marketing campaigns, some based on Eastbourne as a gateway to the South Downs National Park, are in progress.

Harbour

The Sovereign Harbour development is a recent source of revenue for the town with an influx of visitors arriving via the harbour. The locks have recorded rates of up to 315 boats per hour.

Media

The seafront and the iconic cliff at Beachy Head has been used for many scenes in feature films. The 2006 Academy Award-nominated film *Notes on a Scandal* includes scenes filmed at Beachy Head, Cavendish Hotel and 117 Royal Parade. One of the Harry Potter films also filmed scenes at Beachy Head. Scenes from *Half a Sixpence* (1969) were filmed on the pier and near to the bandstand. The seafront area was also used for the upcoming film *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging* directed by Gurinder Chadha.

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.

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 & 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. An ITV Christmas drama premiere entitled *Christmas at the Riviera* was also set in and around Eastbourne. BBC South East Today and ITV Meridian are the two regional news channels.

Local radio station Sovereign Radio broadcasts to Eastbourne from nearby Hailsham. There are two other regional radio stations, Southern FM which broadcasts across Sussex from Portslade and BBC Southern Counties Radio which covers both Sussex and Surrey, as well as a large part of north-east Hampshire. Capital Radio afternoon presenter Chris Brooks started his career on Eastbourne Hospital Radio.

Music

Eastbourne is home to some modern bands such as Toploader, Easyworld, Rooster and The Mobiles. The classical composer Claude Debussy and his young lover Emma Bardac, the wife of a Parisian banker, resided in Eastbourne in 1904 after fleeing France to avoid scandal. Whilst in Eastbourne he completed the Orchestral piece *La Mer*. 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.

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