**January 2024 Storrington Horticultural Society meeting report Web copy**

The meeting welcomed Ian Currie from Frosted Earth who gave us a fascinating insight into the Sussex Weather over the past 300 years.

There are two main factors that are responsible for our weather one being the earth’s position and distance from the sun which produce our seasons and more specifically the jet stream which changes the weather patterns we receive as it moves north to south from the British Isles.

Although these have remained basically unchanged we have had some severe weather which we often refer to as unseasonal weather, examples of which Ian took us through.

Starting with the Thames freezing over in 1683/84 which was one of the coldest winters recorded for the South East the Tideway of the Thames froze over for two months so thick was the Ice that they managed to roast an Ox on the ice and hold an Ice Fair. The last time the Thames Tideway froze was in 1814.

Ice Fairs were a popular distraction during the winter and many were held in the 16th, 17 and 18 centuries gradually declining so that there are now only a few retaining the title of Ice Fair remaining in Sussex, there also has probably over the course of time been a change in title from Frost Fair to Christmas Market adding to this.

One of these is the Fair held in Chichester who received its charter to hold it from Henry 1st in 1107 and traditional held at the end of October.

While on a cold note Storrington had one of its heaviest snowfalls in December 1836 with snow drifting to over 20 feet in some places.

Although we have stormy weather now the famous Edistone lighthouse named Winstanley’s tower and built in1696 was destroyed after only 6years in 1705 due to a great storm with very high winds.

Its cost and maintenance for this period of time was £7814 7s 6d during which dues totaling

£4721 19s 3d had been collected at 1d per ton from passing ships.

More recently on Derby day 31st May 1911 the rapid change in the weather from warm sun to a violent thunder storm which led to the deaths of two spectators being hit by large hail stones the storm finally killed a total of 17 people in the surrounding areas.

Also in 1911 a well known building ‘The white mill at Sullington Warren was burnt down after 100 years service due to the very hot weather creating a grass fire which got out of control the site is marked today by relics from the of the mill.

Ian gave us many other examples of weather conditions over the past 300years, all together a fascinating insight into the weather over the past centuries.

The meeting closed with light refreshments and a raffle. Our next meeting is on February 16th at Storrington Village Hall commencing 7.30pm when Professor Tony Brooker will be presenting a talk about ‘Hunting for Medicinal Rhodiola Rosea on the Tibetan plateau’.

For full details of meetings etc please visit our web site: **storringtonhorti.org.uk**

Michael Webber.