



## **The European Dimension of Isaac Butler's Dublin Weather Diary 1716-1734**

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The European Dimension of Isaac Butler's Dublin Weather Diary 1715-1734.

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### Abstract

Isaac Butler (c1691-1755) was a remarkably colourful character with a wide variety of scientific and other interests including the weather. He was also parish constable for Dublin city in the area around St. Patrick's Cathedral. Remarkably his daily weather diary from December 1715 to December 1734 came to light in 2012. Although the diary is mainly concerned with Dublin for which he records daily weather entries over this time period with the odd small block of days missing, he also records international weather disasters over this time period in the form of a monthly entry. This appears to be based on a combination of early newspaper material and letters although both are barely hinted at in the diary.

This paper assesses the international entries of this diary (in excess of 150) and will focus on a number of periods for which there are an unusually high number of weather disasters recorded e.g. July and August 1723 when there are numerous large-scale and damaging thunder and lightning storms recorded across Europe. In all Butler records disastrous weather events for 28 modern countries outside Ireland, predominantly in Europe but with a few entries from North Africa and the Americas. Most entries are recorded for England followed by Italy, France and Germany. The main type of events recorded are exceptional thunder and lightning events with heavy downpours of rain and hail (some of exceptional size) the resulting flooding and even a few tornadoes. In some respects this may be a reflection of his role as a parish constable, one of his tasks would have been the co-ordination of fire fighting and he would have been interested in the role of lightning strikes in generating fires. He also records a wide variety of other weather disasters and atmospheric phenomena including gales and coastal flooding, cold spells, heavy snows, droughts and heatwaves. Material from supplementary sources will also be used.

As a result this paper will also give an insight into the climate of Europe in the period immediately after the Maunder Minimum (1645 to 1715) and it is surprising how few entries there are for extreme cold spells and snowfalls and thus emphasises the episodic nature of the so-called 'Little Ice Age'