

Your Local Heritage

A Guide to
Researching the
Local Heritage of
Southend on Sea



Discovering Your Local Heritage

This advice contains guidance and tips on how to set about researching you local heritage in Southend on Sea.

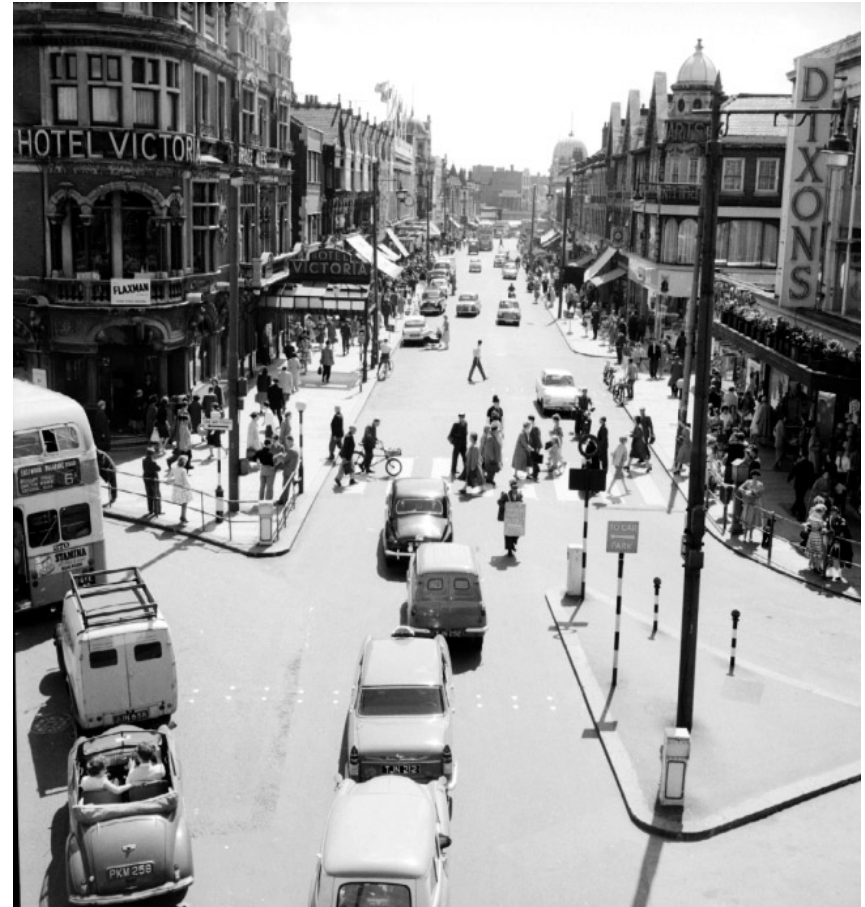
It has been produced to support people in Southend to discover more about their town and their home.



Southend Museum Archives

The Southend Museum archives store hundreds of local images from the last century and beyond, from houses, streets and neighbourhoods to local attractions, promenades, parks, high street scenes and panoramas.

The images can be viewed on [SID](#), the Southend Image Database. SID is free to use and is open to the public during museum opening hours. The museum also houses social history exhibits from the last century, which are on permanent display.



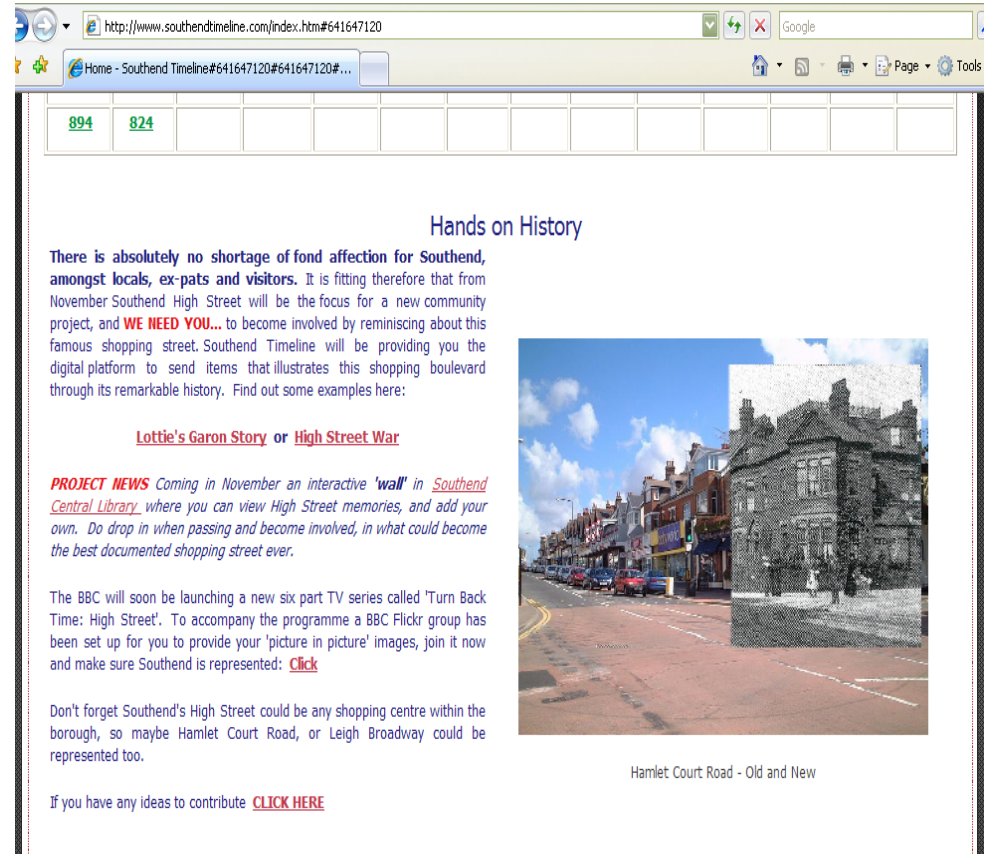
SouthendTimeline.com

‘Bringing Your Memories to Life’

SouthendTimeline.com is an online resource dedicated to the history and heritage of Southend. Attracting large numbers of online visitors and residents new and old, it serves as a local ‘hub’ for information, archives and memories of Southend on Sea.

As well as visiting the site, you can also request to have your finds added to the timeline as your own research of the town progresses. For details;

Visit www.southendtimeline.com



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.southendtimeline.com/index.htm#641647120>. The page features a timeline at the top with two visible entries: 894 and 824. Below the timeline is a section titled "Hands on History" with the following text:

There is absolutely no shortage of fond affection for Southend, amongst locals, ex-pats and visitors. It is fitting therefore that from November Southend High Street will be the focus for a new community project, and **WE NEED YOU...** to become involved by reminiscing about this famous shopping street. Southend Timeline will be providing you the digital platform to send items that illustrates this shopping boulevard through its remarkable history. Find out some examples here:

[Lottie's Garon Story](#) or [High Street War](#)

PROJECT NEWS Coming in November an interactive 'wall' in [Southend Central Library](#), where you can view High Street memories, and add your own. Do drop in when passing and become involved, in what could become the best documented shopping street ever.

The BBC will soon be launching a new six part TV series called 'Turn Back Time: High Street'. To accompany the programme a BBC Flickr group has been set up for you to provide your 'picture in picture' images, join it now and make sure Southend is represented: [click](#)

Don't forget Southend's High Street could be any shopping centre within the borough, so maybe Hamlet Court Road, or Leigh Broadway could be represented too.

If you have any ideas to contribute [CLICK HERE](#)

Below the text is a photograph of Hamlet Court Road, showing a modern street scene on the left and a historical black and white image of the same street on the right. The caption below the image reads: "Hamlet Court Road - Old and New".

Essex Record Office

The Essex Record Office collects and preserves the written, oral and visual heritage of the County, ensuring that it remains available to both present and future generations. You can use the collections to research your family history, house history, community history and local geography.

You can bring all the information you have gathered with you to the record office. Staff are trained to advise you on which records to use.

There is no need to make an appointment to visit the Essex Record Office. The Search room is large enough to accommodate all of our visitors. You should note, however, that when the office is very busy you may have to wait to use a fiche reader.

The Search Room at Essex Records Office

To look at original documents you must have a reader's ticket. The Essex Record Office is part of the County Archive Research Network (CARN) and you can be issued with a readers ticket at the records office. CARN tickets issued by other offices are also accepted.

To obtain a reader's ticket you must bring some proof of your identification that shows your name, address and signature. A driving licence is ideal, but a combination of documents is also acceptable. You will need to keep your reader's ticket with you at all times as you will be asked to show it to the staff when leaving and entering the Search room.

Essex Archives Online

'**Seax**' is an online service which contains the complete text of all the Essex Record Office catalogues and its indexes. You can use Seax to search for any documents relevant to your research.

What is not in Seax

Seax contains the catalogue descriptions of the documents, but it does not contain the text of the documents themselves. For example, it will tell you that there is a 1665 hearth tax assessment for the County, or a parish register for Fyfield dated 1754-1812, but it will not show you the content of those records.

Using Seax

You can search for a word, a combination of words or a phrase, such as place or institutional names, personal names, subjects or document types. You can refine your search further by adding dates – for example, maps of Maldon between 1650 and 1700. You can also read complete catalogues or go to a specific reference, if you know which collections of records are of interest to you. By logging in with your reader's ticket number when you have found the items you want, you can order the documents for study simply by pressing the Order item button and entering your CARN reader's ticket number.

To Access Seax;

Visit... <http://seax.essexcc.gov.uk>

Archive Access Point at Southend

Southend-on-Sea Library holds copies of parish registers for the whole of Essex. The original records are still held at the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford, but the Archive Access Point at Southend allows people to see copies which may hold enough information to save them travelling to Chelmsford.

More Resources Available in Southend

The Library and Museum in Southend both hold a wide variety of information which may be of interest. For a full list of what is available, see the table on the last page of this advice or call into Southend Central Museum and Library for more information.

Southend Central Museum

Victoria Avenue,
Southend on Sea
SS2 6EW

01702 434449

www.southendmuseums.co.uk

Southend Central Library

Victoria Avenue
Southend on Sea
SS2 6EX

01702 215011

www.southendlibrary.com



Researching Top Tips

Follow these rules to get the most from your research

Take your time

Researching the past can be time-consuming. It will take more than one visit to the Record Office to look through all the possible sources that could shed light on your property or local neighbourhood.

Be patient

Records will often not be indexed, but you will stumble upon things as you search which may be interesting. The more you explore, the more you could find.

Start with what you know

This means starting from the present day, and working your way back in time.



The History of Your Home

Where to Start

Begin by collecting as much information as you can on your property. The key things to find out are: who holds the deeds, who lived in the property before you, an approximate date of the building, was the property built for a specific purpose i.e. school, public house, vicarage, shop

Neighbours may be able to supply information on previous owners. If you have a Local History Recorder in your parish they may hold information on your property. Your bank, solicitor or building society may hold the current deeds. Modern deeds and abstracts will give a short description of the property, its position, dimensions and names of previous owners. Original deeds have often been lost or destroyed, but provide valuable information if they have survived. If they are not with the present deeds, they may have been lodged in the Record Office, or they may remain with the solicitor who acted for the vendor when you purchased.



Dating Your Home

Evidence which will precisely date the building of your property is rare for buildings older than a few decades.

From written sources you can find out what the building was used for and who owned it. It's easier to find information on the people that lived in your home and from that you can form an idea about the life of the property itself.

Look at the architecture. What can it tell you about when the property was built? The library holds books on architectural style which may be helpful and interesting to look at.

Comparing Old Maps can give you an idea of when your property came to exist. You can start with the large scale Ordnance Survey maps.

Tithe maps and apportionments were produced between 1835 and 1848 and provide information on the size of site, owners and occupiers, field names etc at the time of the survey.



Resource List - Southend Central Museum

Resource	Date/Range	Description
Borough Engineers Photos	1955 – 1980s	c.3000 of which several hundred of High Street area. Particularly important series showing High Street in 1950s, and another important series showing changes to centre of town in late '60s-early 70s. Some aerial photos.
Miscellaneous LH photos (incl postcards)	1870 – 1930s	c. 1000 of which approximately 150 are images of Southend High Street
Goodale Collection	1939-1945	c. 150 including several of High Street and other shopping areas
Guidebooks	1880s – 1970s	c. 30, will include some useful stuff about High Street, including many adverts for shops. Excellent Guide to Westcliff (1909) good for Hamlet Court Road.
Borough Planning booklets	1960s	c. 5, detailing plans and thoughts regarding major reshaping of High Street/Victoria Circus area
Scrap Books	1930s to 1960s	Scrap books from Tourism Dept. mainly about seafront and events, but probably some info relating to High Street.
R.A. Jones Archive	c. 1900 to 1970	Many photos, receipts, etc relating specifically to this one business
Ephemera	c. 1880-1930	Includes many receipts from local businesses, but not all in High Street.

Resources - Southend Library

Resource	Date/Range	Description
Kelly's Directories for Southend	1900/01 – 1973/74 Gaps btwn 1916 & 1920. 1940, 1948	The High Street listing of all commercial properties from the period
Kelly's Essex	1846 -1937	Arranged by town gives owners of commercial premises
Official guide to Southend	1908 to date	Useful for adverts
Standard guide to Southend	1921 – 1962	Useful for adverts
Council minutes	1892 to date	Indexed until 1984
Local newspapers	1873 to date	Variety of local newspapers mostly useful for adverts & shop openings etc
Postcards, photos & other illustrations	1880's to 1970's	c2,800 some of which cover the High Street area
Ordnance Survey sheets	1870's,1890's, 1920's, 1950-1990's	25" to 1 mile & 1:2500/1:1250 series Most detailed map series useful for both the growth & change in layout of the High Street
Goad plans	1983 – 2002 1981 – 2001	High Street, Hamlet Court Road, Leigh Broadway Detailed maps, all commercial premises with names & function
Chamber of Commerce diary	1952/3 – 1991	Listing of all Chamber members

Resources – Southend Library Cont.....

Resource	Date/Range	Description
Chamber of Trade/Commerce journal	1931 – 1990	Most useful for the adverts
Newspaper cuttings	1920 to date	Wide ranging but most useful for opening & closing of shops
Development plans	1964, 1994, 2001	1964 particularly covers the town centre area
Tithe map & award Prittlewell (copy)	1841	Shows ownership & occupier of buildings & land & usage. Have
Census	1841 to 1901	Ten yearly intervals, lists all residents
Thomson directory	1982/3 to date	Classified listing of commercial firms
Telephone directory	1938, 1944, 1951, 1953, 1957, 1968 to date	Useful for dating existence of firms
Yellow pages	1976 to date	Classified listing of commercial firms
Books		Large local collection containing amongst other things shopping studies, trade directories, general histories, cuttings books, Glennie Our Town an encyclopaedia of Southend on Sea & district is particularly useful to 1947

BBC
**HANDS ON
HISTORY**

As part of an exciting new BBC Learning Hands on History project and landmark BBC One series, libraries and other organisations across Essex are 'Turning Back Time' to explore the history and collect memories of High Streets in the county

BBC Learning is working with local history partners right across the UK to develop engaging, hands-on events to bring the history of their local area to life and encourage Britain to fall in love with its high streets again

You can find all the details on the BBC website at
bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory



bbc.co.uk/history

The BBC has provided the workshop materials for this event. This event is not run by the BBC.

Southend on Sea

The Council are working with partners in the Borough to run a project over the forthcoming weeks which will give opportunities for local people to get involved with High Street History

During November

From the 8th of November Southend Central Library will be hosting displays showcasing images and details on the local high street from decades gone by

An interactive 'memory wall' gives visitors the opportunity to post their memories to the wall next to archived photographs of the town's main high street from the last century

From the 11th of November the Library also hosts the work of a local artist, which uses a detailed layout of the high street and descriptions of the local shops and its attractions to help stir memories from the recent past for people to add to

For further information and opening times
Contact Southend Library on **01702 215011**
www.southend.gov.uk/libraries

