

Southend-on-Sea: legendary pier, impressive fair grounds

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Southend is a seaside resort of contrasts: the town's historical icon the longest pleasure pier in the world, with its glorious 1.33 miles has a quiet, dignified atmosphere conducive to contemplating the sun lit sea below. The seafront nearby is a mass of fun fairs, adventure playgrounds, greasy fish and chip shops and cafes filled with families enjoying the summer sun.





state-of-the-art Pier sewage system, fire mains were installed, and work took place to re-deck the 1976 fire damaged areas.

A new entrance was built at the shore end of the pier and new shelters, toilets, along with a CCTV and public address system.

Unfortunately in October 2005 a fire devastated the pier head destroying the station, gift shop, amusements, takeaway, and part of the restaurant. By 1st December 2005 a temporary platform had been built allowing the first mile of the pier to re-open.

At the beginning of August 2006 a permanent walkway was completed allowing pier visitors to access the pier head. Visitors can now once again visit the lifeboat station and gift shop. Temporary toilets have been installed at the pier head and the fire damaged restaurant has been refurbished for the sale of light refreshments.

After the walk (or train ride) along the pier its time to head for the beaches. Southend-on-Sea has seven miles of sparkling

seafront from Shoeburyness to Leigh-on-Sea. Along this unique stretch of coastline you will find six very special beaches. Jubilee Beach, winner of the prestigious ENCAMS Quality Coast Award 2008, is among the most popular. It was created in 2002 from the construction of the improved flood defences, and stretches from Southend Pier to Thorpe Bay. The Marine Parade section is filled with cafés, restaurants, beach goods shops, amusements and car parking close by.





Southend is also the place for riding stables, trotting track, parks. Widely regarded as the flagship green space for the area, Belfairs Nature Reserve - also known as Hadleigh Great Wood - has been managed, through coppicing to create a perfect home for a diverse range of wildlife. Belfairs Park is home to two bowling greens, tennis courts, football, basketball, BMX area, children's playground, 18-hole golf course, pitch and putt, riding stables, trotting track, woodlands and cafe.

There are many fine leisure facilities, ranging from the five Leisure Centres (including three pools at Warriors and Belfairs Swim Centres, and Shoeburyness Leisure Centre) to football and rugby pitches, cricket squares, bowling greens, croquet lawns and netball and basketball hoops.

Southend is certainly the place for shopping and dining in many of the tasteful restaurants in the high street en route to the pier or on the way back to Southend Victoria station. It is in fact one of the most popular shopping areas in the south-east with a choice of nationally famous stores and exclusive and specialised boutiques, providing a comprehensive range of shopping facilities. Stretching over half a mile and boasting an array of shops including WH Smiths, Waterstones, Monsoon, Hennes and Marks and Spencers. Providing even greater choice for the shopper, the High Street is anchored at either end by two major shopping centres; The Royals and Victoria Plaza.





Southend is easily reached from London's Liverpool Street Station. The train ride through the Essex countryside is only 80 minutes. Next to the station, based in the original library building of 1906, the museum houses displays on local archaeology, wildlife and local history.