

# Southend

## Through the Ages

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*This article will offer the reader a brief encounter with the wonderful world of Southend roadtripping – a favourite pastime of increasing numbers of people.*

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### **Prologue**

To many, the word “Southend” is synonymous with fish-and-chips by the seaside, fairground rides in the rain, and a pier battling between fire and cold Thames Estuarian waters. To a few, however, “Southend” means so much more than that. There are in fact 107 Southend locations in the United Kingdom alone, Southend-on-Sea included. With such a large number of locations all holding a similar name, it is no wonder that people have become interested in charting the locations on maps and researching the differences between them. As you will discover later on in this article, the differences are both cultural and physical.

To those who have become spellbound by the magic of Southends, visiting such a named location is heralded as a magnificent feat and the settlement or road is held in high regard for being named thus. A website is devoted purely to document these achievements of human exploration, and to celebrate the amenities in the settlement. This article will follow the travels of the early pioneers, and commemorate their bravery and momentous achievements over the many years.

But what is a Southend, or “*wtf is a south (sic) end,*” as one curious guest to the website asks? Well...

### **What is a Southend?**

For the following section, I will be referring to the ASDA Board Southend Classification Ranking which was officially implemented on October 7<sup>th</sup> 2008. For a more in-depth history of the development of the Southend Classification Ranking system, please read the section entitled “Problems and Solutions of the Classification Crisis ‘08”.

A Southend is a **settlement** or **road** which explicitly has the word “Southend” in the title. Minor variations on this theme are often unanimously accepted amongst the Southend roadtripping community, and certainly the ASDA Board allows certain specific variations. These variations include a gap or hyphen between the word “South” and “End” making “South End” and “South-End” respectively, or an additional word following “South End” with some notable examples being “South End Road” and “South End Green.” The rules stipulate that the word “South” must be followed by the word “End” with no words in between.

Over the years, debate has been growing on how to classify Southends. The official classification system is thus:

#### **1.1 Southend (settlement)**

#### **1.2 South End (settlement)**

2.1 Southend (settlement with additional word(s) in name or road)

2.2 South End (settlement with additional word(s) in name or road)

#### **3.1 Southend (road with additional word(s) in name)**

#### **3.2 South End (road with additional word(s) in name)**

- 4.1 Southend (no sign, but physical evidence on or near location)
- 4.2 South End (no sign, but physical evidence on or near location)
- 5.1 Southend (only vocal and 2 cases of map evidence)**
- 5.2 South End (only vocal and 2 cases of map evidence)**

As one can see, the system ranges from 1.1 (being the highest possible classification) to 5.2 (being the lowest). A Southend settlement, with a sign to indisputably confirm its existence, is held in the highest regard. Without a sign, a settlement or road must rely on vocal confirmation from a local who lives in or near the settlement along with 2 cases of map evidence to back up its case. From previous experience, it is known that maps can be incorrect and contradictory to one-another. While a map may state that a settlement called “Southend” is present, it may simply be an error made in bygone eras and actually refers to the physical *south end* of a village or road.

### **The Pioneers of ‘04**

The date was 16<sup>th</sup> July 2004. It was a beautiful midsummer day. A driving test had been passed, and friends had met up. Little did they know, this group of friends were due to make history. On that very same day the first Southend roadtrip was made. Over the years many questions have been asked about why they did it, why they drove down that particular road, and in answer to those questions many stories have been made up and many myths have been created and built upon. 95% of those stories are nothing more than urban legend. It is firmly believed by many members of the roadtripping community that one of the friends was actually born in Southend-on-Sea in Essex. It is said that the friends saw a settlement named very similarly on a map charting the local area.

As legend would have it, the group made an epic expedition down narrow country lanes and up steep hills to eventually make it to the fabled Southend, Buckinghamshire – a majestic 1.1. For the majority of the group it was their first Southend experience - but for one member, it was his second. Although it can never be fully confirmed, it is still held in some circles that there were as many as five members of the group which probably included Random Rob, Colonel Splaffy, Doublechaireverytime, Chinquary, and Clemmie. The supplies of the trip were provided by ASDA, which included squawker blowouts and party poppers. This is speculated to be the origin of the popularity of party poppers on a Southend roadtrip.

### **Southend Roadtripping – the Early Years**

A Southend Roadtrip is nothing without a means of transport, and certainly during the Early Years (July 2004 – June 2006) a car provided such a means. At this time, efforts of getting large amounts of people to Southends were hampered by having only two available drivers – who go by the name of ToM and Colonel Splaffy. However, both of these drivers were absolutely outstanding with their efforts, especially Colonel Splaffy who still plays a major role in the roadtripping community today.

Many return visits to Southend Bucks, in the footsteps of the pioneers of ‘04, were made and new roadtrips even went as far as Southend Garsington on July 16<sup>th</sup> 2005. It is not known whether the group actually knew whether it was a year anniversary since the Pioneers, or whether it was pure coincidence. As one member wrote on a forum, documenting the event, *“There was a brilliant moment sitting in the car outside Kate's house when the question was asked: ‘Left or right?’ Left would take us back to Southend, and the roadtrip would last half an hour like originally planned. Right, however, would take us on a journey never attempted before- to Southend, Oxford.”* Of course, the trip to Southend Garsington wasn’t the first of its kind – Southend Hampshire and then Southend Bradfield were the first two Southends to be

visited after the Southend Bucks trip of '04. In the summer of 2005, two members even returned to the motherland of Southend-on-Sea to pay homage to the largest and most celebrated Southend the World has ever seen.

To document the visit to a Southend, the visiting party would typically take a photo of themselves (often a timer on the camera was required to get every person in the photo) in front of the Southend sign. If a sign was not available, this would bring great disappointment to the group. Photos of the settlement or road would then be taken to document the facilities and local amenities available to any future visitors. Services such as a shop, pub, or post box are held in high regard. For more information on this and how this relates to Southend classification, please read the section entitled "Problems and Solutions of the Classification Crisis '08."

On July 29<sup>th</sup> 2005 it was announced by Random Rob that a new Southend-themed board game had been created and tested, and was ready for play. For more information on this, please read the section entitled "Southend – this is not a game! The Game!"

In January 2006, a new driver Memily came on to the scene. She was followed shortly by a landslide of test passes including Doublechaireverytime, Katey Kate and Chinquary. From having only two available drivers, on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2006 the community now had six. Summer '06 had come and for the roadtrippers times were changing. The potential for something spectacular was massive.

### **Southend Roadtripping – the Later Years**

While the Early Years were dominated by the car, the Later Years (July 2006 – July 2009) saw the introduction of different forms of transport – most notably the railway train. July 12<sup>th</sup> 2006 saw the first ever Southend Railtrip. This controversial deviation from the normal **roadtrip** took the visiting group of Colonel Splaffy, Random Rob, Chinquary, Clemmie and Doublechaireverytime to the heart of London. The group explored leafy Hampstead to uncover the gem that is South End Green, and later took the underground to marvel at South End Kensington. This railtrip was to revolutionise the traditional approach to roadtripping, and set a precedent to allow for a further railtrip of London on December 27<sup>th</sup> 2008. A more detailed account of this railtrip can be found in the section entitled "Southend Campaigns – A Novel Approach to Roadtripping."

The Later Years also welcomed the introduction of the annual Southend-on-Sea summer weekend trip. Of course, while a visit was made in 2005, it was not until September 2006 that it was made a tradition. A music video was made to the song "Southend-on-Sea" by Mark Eitzel and, while this archive footage may have been mislaid for the moment, if you bug Doublechaireverytime enough about it he may manage to unearth it from the bowels of his old C drive. Further returns to S-O-S, as it was named, were made in the summers of 2007 and 2008 where further mock music videos were filmed (for 'Glorious' by Captain and 'The Boys Are Back in Town' by Thin Lizzy respectively).

With such an availability of drivers in the Later Years, the group found themselves able to visit Southends in greater numbers and a greater distance away (since drivers were able to swap en-route). An epic voyage was made to Southend Great Rollright, which each member of the visiting party fondly remembers as taking an "epically long time" but obviously being "well worth it". A large number of different Southends were visited during the busy period of the Later Years. Southend Bucks found itself the centre of the Southend Olympic Games, and also boasted a curious new running track christened the 'RP'. Contestants would have to run round the 'RP' mown in to the Common, with rewards for the fastest lap. The fastest lap time is

currently held by Colonel Splaffy at 16.6 seconds. To the uninitiated, the mention of the ‘RP’ in conversation may be confusing, but this is the origin of term.

The Later Years also saw a greater emphasis made on eating a pie, especially a Mr Kipling Bramley Apple Pie, although any variety of pie is widely accepted. If a photo could be taken of a person or group eating a pie in a Southend, this would bring great joy to the visiting party. The specific origin of this pie-craze is not wholly known. However, the Southends Rock website provides us with some fascinated pie trivia – the only Southends where a savoury pie has been consumed (as opposed to a sweet pie e.g. apple) are Southend-on-Sea and Southend Bucks.

In these Later Years, Southend roadtrippers have found themselves faced with the unenviable task of visiting what seems to be an ever-expanding catalogue of unexplored Southends – some of these not only in the furthest reaches of Scotland but also in foreign lands such as South Africa and Canada. While the glory of reaching a Southend still remains, the lengths the roadtripping community have to go to visit a new Southend is increasing. For more information on this, please read the section entitled “Southend Roadtripping – the Future Years.”

### **Southend Roadtripping – the Future Years**

Certainly even the most devoted Southend roadtripper could be forgiven for not making that extra effort to travel a ridiculous distance to a Southend with no other purpose. In this day and age of climate change and low oil reserves, we must be respectful to our environment and responsible with our fuel consumption. For these reasons, the new ‘fad’ is to incorporate a Southend visit in to any journey that coincidentally takes you within ‘sensible’ roadtripping distance of a Southend.

With such a large pool of Southends still undiscovered, one must ignore the potential ‘stigma’ of visiting a Southend alone. Although the Early Years and much of the Later Years focussed on group visits and friendly banter, it is forecast that the Future Years may focus more on achieving the seemingly-impossible task of visiting all 107 potential UK Southend locations. The glory of visiting the most far-flung Southend is there for the taking, and will allow the victor to regale his friends with stories and photos of this distant settlement.

Of course, the Future Years will certainly not be without the group trips to Southends. Discovery whilst amongst friends is the true value of Southend roadtripping. It is how the Pioneers began in that warm summer of 2004, and it is how the descendents of the great explorers of the Early Years should continue. The Southend roadtripping community are alive and well, and ready to explore this nations sublime selection of Southends whilst revisiting the glorious previously-visited gems time and time again!

### **Southend – this is not a game! The Game!**

On July 29<sup>th</sup> 2005 it was announced by Random Rob that a new Southend-themed board game had been created and tested, and was ready for play. Echoing the true spirit and ethos of the forum, Random Rob crafted this magnificent sentence: “*So, when I get round to it, I’ll post up the rules that we decided on.*” Inevitably, the thread has remained barren of any board game rules. However, we are left with a few nuggets of information on this hugely popular game – the game involved rolling dice to move your car (a bit of laminated paper) around a track. Each car had only a certain amount of fuel, which meant that only one circuit of the track was possible before refuelling.

The aim was to pick up a person and transport them to Southend, all the while contending with the randomness of the chance cards and the fixage of the dice. The first person to transport all of the five people (modelled on the Pioneers of '04) to Southend would be the winner. The game was once played in its entirety in a caravan, and thoroughly entertained everyone who had the pleasure of playing it. The game sadly gathered dust for a while before it was replayed at some point in the Later Years.

### **Southend Campaigns – A Novel Approach to Roadtripping**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2008, Southend Tourist Advisor Doublechaireverytime announced the introduction of a new section to the website. This was known as Southend Campaigns, and for the first time allowed visitors to see where there were clusters of Southends suitable for visiting all at once. This was partly the inspiration to a trip to London on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2008, known as the London Spectacular. Although the whole London Spectacular route was not completed, in this mammoth undertaking 47 Southend signs were unearthed, and 3 new Southends were documented.

Many of the Southend Campaigns are still to be attempted, but no doubt the Future Years will see the completion of many and the creation of many others. Indeed, the theory nowadays is if you want to go to one Southend, why not go to all the other ones nearby? It is considered to be the most environmentally-friendly and time-efficient way to visit as many Southends as possible.

### **Southends Rock – The Website**

Although this author is unfortunately unsure on when the Southends Rock was first created, it was certainly before November 23<sup>rd</sup> 2005 since the website is mentioned in discussions on the forums at this time. The purpose of this site was to provide visitors with written reviews and personal accounts of Southends, including photographs of the points of interest and visitors in front of the sign. The website currently holds reviews for Southends as well as a map, created by Colonel Splaffy on July 26<sup>th</sup> 2007, displaying the 107 Southend locations in the UK. The map is colour coded according to whether it has been visited or not, and what classification the settlement is. This is a fabulous addition to the website and provides potential roadtrippers with an easy way to see which Southends are near their location.

Currently, the website is undergoing a major overhaul since geocities is shutting down. As such, the whole content of the Southends Rock website must be moved to its new host and domain name [www.southendsrock.co.uk](http://www.southendsrock.co.uk). Due to the urgency of the matter, this activity must unfortunately take priority over potentially visiting other Southends – thus slowing down the progress towards the 107. However, on completion, it will be a great asset to the roadtripping community.

### **The ASDA Board**

Despite the similarity of its name and logo to a large supermarket chain, the ASDA Board actually has absolutely no affiliation to this chain of shops selling domestic and food items. The ASDA Board actually stands for the Association for Southend Decisions and Activities. This board was formed on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2006, and is a non-profit organisation which governs all Southend-related affairs. It is not known whether the five members of the board are salaried.

The motto of the ASDA Board, “We do the equipping so you can do the tripping” refers to the aim of the Board to provide information and equipment to those who wish to partake in a Southend roadtrip. The ASDA Board has the authority to introduce new systems of

classification, and will often provide funds to the community to allow for the purchase of new websites or digital handheld video cameras. The community have great respect for the Board and will accept the decisions made by the Board as final.

## **Southend Songs – From Roadtrip Classics to Fan Recordings**

An important part of every good roadtrip is a roadtrip CD that includes classic anthems that the roadtrippers can sing along to. Notable examples include 'Southend-on-Sea' by Mark Eitzel and the American Music Club, 'Stacey's Mum' by Fountains of Wayne, and 'Glorious' by Captain. On October 7<sup>th</sup> 2008, Colonel Splaffy released his debut song 'This Isn't Just a Southend' which was to be sung to the tune of Flight of the Concorde's 'A Kiss is not a Contract'. This was followed by Random Rob's take on 'Most Beautiful Girl in the Room' by Flight of the Concorde, with 'Southend Song For Garsington'. Doublechaireverytime has reportedly written lyrics for 'Southend-on-Sea' to the tune of KT Tunstall's 'Suddenly I See'. We are incredibly proud to have the lyrics to all three songs here, for your reading pleasure.

First up is Colonel Splaffy's masterpiece, 'This Isn't Just a Southend':

This isn't just a Southend,  
Its a special one,  
Very special one,

Just because the sign is not exactly clean  
Doesn't mean its not the most important sign I've ever seen no,

This isn't just a Southend,  
Its a special one,  
Its a one point one,

The local and us aren't exactly best of friends,  
But that doesn't mean I'll only go to other Southends no,

Just because it doesn't have its own pub,  
Doesn't mean you can't just bring your home grub,  
So come on and open up those Mr Ks,  
Eating on the bench you know its happy days,

You can run around the green and set a record time,  
In the corner there's a tree that's always good to climb,  
But don't you touch that last pie 'cos I think its mine,

Stick a pie in your mouth end' cos we're on our way to Southend ohoooh,  
Its got a post box, a red one, for your letters,  
Its got a notice board, we'd us it, but they won't let us.

© Colonel Splaffy 2008

The following lyrics are from Random Rob's *magnum opus*, 'Southend Song for Garsington':

Looking 'round the roads  
I can tell that this  
Is the most amazing Southend, In Oxfordshire  
In the whole of Oxfordshire  
And when you're on that street  
It's definitely the street  
That you would go for a summer retreat  
It's a 2:1 voted street  
And that you can't delete!  
And when I went to Southend for a trip  
I thought wow, this is amazing, flip!  
How had we missed, a Southend like this  
On a Roadtrip before?

Good work Multimap!  
Ooh, you're a legend, Multimap!  
I asked the lads are you gonna eat a pie or 2?  
They said sure  
I say, "Lads do you mind if I do?"  
They say they don't mind  
I can tell they don't mind  
'Cos we all do it anyway  
I see you eating pies by the sign right there  
We much all night  
all the locals start to stare  
Southend Garsington  
You've got a lovely brown sign  
Southend Garsington  
You even have an old church and an opera  
Southend Garsington  
You're the most amazing Southend in Oxfordshire  
And then I celebrate  
I eat a pie, I eat a whole pie!  
It's 8:02  
So much more to do  
With all of us eating  
Pies on the hillside  
We all decide  
We should go inside  
Let's all head to  
The three horseshoes!  
I can't believe  
That I'm enjoying a pint  
In the most amazing Southend  
In the whole of Oxfordshire, Ooooh  
We won't ever leave  
We can stay here all day  
And eat pies and while the summer away  
Oh no, don't forget to take a photo!  
O-o-o Yeah  
'Cause it's Southend Garsington  
You can eat a pie  
Or go to the local KFC  
Southend Garsington  
There are at least 2 roadsigns to find  
But you'll probably find a lot more in Southend-on-Sea

Southend Garsington  
You're the best Southend road with a brown sign that I have ever s-e-e-e-e-en  
It's where I'll spend my summer months for sure!

© Random Rob 2008

Finally, previously unreleased and still unrecorded, Doublechaireverytime's work of lyrical genius 'Southend-on-Sea':

This place is the best in the world  
It's the best in the world  
Beaches the colour of pearl  
The colour of pearl  
There's Adventure Island for a rollercoaster fright  
The arcades that line the seafront gladly take all your 2ps  
The sea is calm  
Everyone will fall for it's charm

Southend on Sea (Southend on Sea)  
It's where I wanna be  
Southend on Sea (Southend on Sea)

Oh you know it means so much to me

If you feel like walking the pier  
You can walk the pier  
Though the end of it isn't near  
No it's not near  
It's the longest pier in the world at 1.34 miles  
It becomes all worth it when you suddenly remember  
Where you are  
Yes in the Thames Estuary:

Southend on Sea (Southend on Sea)  
It's where I wanna be  
Southend on Sea (Southend on Sea)  
Oh you know it means so much to me

And it's sunnier than most  
Playing crazy golf  
You can do the fast food crawl down the high street  
Oh it's got it's own administrative borough  
Ad-bo yeah  
It's got pies to eat  
Take a seat  
Down at Dinos

Southend on Sea (Southend on Sea)  
It's where I wanna be  
Southend on Sea (Southend on Sea)  
A 1.1, it means so much to me

© Doublechaireverytime 2008

## **Problems and Solutions of the Classification Crisis '08**

Classifying Southends has never been an easy task, and the system described in the chapter "What is a Southend?" was not devised in a day! In fact, it is the result of months of studying the figures, visiting Southends, and trialling the system. Only with the experience gained from real roadtripping could such a classification method be honed and perfected to what we take for granted today. As one can see from the table below, the first attempts at a classification method were far from the modern achievements:

### *ASDA Board Classification System – July 20<sup>th</sup> 2006*

- 1.1 Southend
- 1.2 South End
- 2.1 Southend (without a sign)
- 2.2 South End (without a sign)
- 3.1 Southend (joint settlement/road\*)
- 3.2 South End (joint settlement/road\*)
- 4.1 Southend (joint settlement/road\*, without a sign)
- 4.2 South End (joint settlement/road\*, without a sign)
- 5.1 Southend [...]
- 5.2 South End [...]
- 6.1 Southend [...] (without a sign)
- 6.2 South End [...] (without a sign)

In this version, two years before the release of the modern system, the rankings spread from 1.1 to 6.2. In comparison to the modern version, this original system severely penalised settlements with additional words in the name. In fact, by simply having an additional word in the name, a settlement would be ranked lower than a road without a sign. While the idea of having such a system was revolutionary at the time, the primitive nature of the early attempt

was clear for all to see. Critics were outraged by such an arrangement, and one angry protester explained that “*any type of southends/south ends with their own individual signs should be ranked higher than those without. This is simply because they bring so much more...*”. The ASDA Board had a lot of thinking to do if they wanted to regain the confidence of the roadtripping community.

In the few days following the posting of this classification system, the forums were alive with suggestions from various members of high stature in the roadtripping community. The suggestions all seemed to lead towards the implementation of a system, coined by Colonel Splaffy as the Placement Increment Examination System (P.I.E.S.), which would allow the ASDA Board discretion in moving a settlement up or down a ranking on the basis of merit. Each Southend would be judged on an individual basis, and early proposals for the criteria included how friendly the residents were, how many benches were available for public use, are there suitable storage places for party poppers, and so on. However, these were merely ideas and no simple and robust method for recording and analysing these seemingly random criteria existed. That was until, on August 17<sup>th</sup> 2006, Chinquary created the first form which was to provide a platform for later developments. We are fortunate to have a copy here, by kind permission of the ASDA Board.

Placement Increment Examination System Official Southend/South End Ranking Form

Name of Southend/South End:

Sign		No	0			Yes	1	
Number of signs		0=0	1=1	2=2	3=3	4=4	5+=5	
Largeness “	None = 0	Small	1	2	3	4	5	Large
Cleanness “	None = 0	Southend?	1	2	3	4	5	Spotless
Photoness “	None = 0	Hard	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
Residents	N/A = 0	Nasty	1	2	3	4	5	Friendly
Grass	N/A = 0	Mud	1	2	3	4	5	Green
Recon potential	N/A = 0	Hard	1	2	3	4	5	Great
Entertainment	N/A = 0	None	1	2	3	4	5	Lots
Enjoyment	N/A = 0	None	1	2	3	4	5	Lots
Randomness	N/A = 0	Straight	1	2	3	4	5	Crazy
Apple Pie enjoyment	N/A = 0	None	1	2	3	4	5	Lots
Location	N/A = 0	Easy	1	2	3	4	5	Hard
Revisits	Never again = 0	Few	1	2	3	4	5	Many
Benches		0=0	1=1	2=2	3=3	4=4	5+=5	
Gift Shop/Pub		No	0			Yes	1	
ASDA/McD		No	0			Yes	1	
Farm		No	0			Yes	1	
Storage		No	0			Yes	1	
Monument		No	0			Yes	1	
Post-box		No	0			Yes	1	
No space in name		No	0			Yes	1	
Not a joint settlement/road		No	0			Yes	1	
Nothing added to name		No	0			Yes	1	

Total =

Circle grade of Southend/South End:

0 - 10 = Grade 8      11 - 20 = Grade 7      21 - 30 = Grade 6      31 - 40 = Grade 5

41 - 50 = Grade 4      51 - 60 = Grade 3      61 - 70 = Grade 2      71 - 80 = Grade 1

This system gave rewards to Southends that were particularly random, with large but clean signs, local ASDAs and McDonalds, and other specific criteria. It was certainly deemed a spectacular achievement by the community, and was met with rapturous applause by all who read it, but it was still not the perfect solution to an age-old problem. It was felt that the system still did not penalise a Southend enough for not having a sign.

On August 18<sup>th</sup> 2006, the ASDA Board announced that a bi-system system may be implemented, whereby a Southend would receive two scores. One score would refer to how the settlement was named, on a scale for 1.1 to 6.2, and the other score would be based on a system very similar to that of Chinquary's. Random Rob suggested that the overall score, rather than being out of 80, be tweaked so that it was given as a percentage. This forward thinking is something that has been carried forward to the modern day system.

After two years of discussion and debate, particularly helped by some very pertinent questions by Colonel Splaffy, Random Rob and Doublechairevertime, on October 7<sup>th</sup> 2008 the ASDA Board announced that a new system was to be implemented. This system ridded the categories 6.1 and 6.2, condensing the scores down to between 1.1 and 5.2. It was deemed necessary that, for a Southend without a sign to be classed as a Southend there needed to be absolute proof. This new scoring system is still in place today, and can be found in the section entitled "What is a Southend?".

However, this was by no means the end of the Classification Crisis. A final solution was drawn up in the form of the Miscellaneous Relevant Knowledge Indicating Potential Local Interest to Newcomers and Groups (M.R.K.I.P.L.I.N.G.) Percentage System\*<sup>1</sup>, a name devised by Doublechairevertime on October 14<sup>th</sup> 2008.

The following questions, devised by Random Rob, must be answered on visiting any Southend to achieve a percentage score known as the MRKIPLING:

Is it a settlement? YES – 10%

Does it have a sign? YES – (1>20% depending on quality of sign, no of signs etc)

How easy is it to take a photo at the sign? (1>10% depending on ease)

Does it have a shop selling pies in/nearby? YES – (1>7% depending on locality/quality)

Does it have a Fast Food Restaurant in/nearby? YES – (1>3% depending on locality/quality)

Is there a pub in Southend? YES – (1>5% depending on locality/quality)

How good is it for entertainment? (1>10% depending on entertainment)

How random is the place? (1>10% depending on amount of randomness)

How enjoyable was the journey there? (1>10% depending on enjoyment of journey)

Are there adequate facilities for a party? (1>5% depending on ease of party)

Is it worth another visit? (1>10% depending on worthiness of repeat visit)

The MRKIPLING Percentage Score was to stand beside the settlement score (1.1 to 5.2) to give an all encompassing rating system and finally allowed for the easy ranking of visited Southends. Some critics have said that the MRKIPLING system was devised purely to allow for 'fixage' of the results since it allowed visitors to allot extra points to or dock other points from a settlement purely for banter. However, the ASDA Board has denied all of these claims.

The MRKIPLING Percentage Score, and the settlement score, are still in use today.

\*<sup>1</sup> Please note that the acronym MRKIPLING bears absolutely no relation to a well know pie manufacturer. Any resemblance of the name or logo is purely coincidental.

## Protection of Idyllic English Signage – P.I.E.S.

Every roadtripper knows that a Southend sign is an important symbol. The Protection of Idyllic English Signage Trust was set up to care for the Southend signs around the United Kingdom. Although PIES has not been hugely active in its role, there have been known instances of the cleaning of the Southend Bucks sign by chief PIES executive Chinquary. A main purpose of PIES is to write letters to relevant local authorities regarding the current state of the Southend signage, and campaigning for the placement of any missing Southend signs or restoration of neglected Southend signs. PIES was most upset at the recent introduction of a new Neighbourhood Watch sign directly above the Southend Bucks sign. The Trust felt that it diminished the charming appeal of the sign to visitors, and intruded on any photographs that visitors took of the sign.

PIES also has interests in the conversion of reflective signs to non-reflective signs. Although there have been no successful attempts at such a conversion, since relevant local authorities would need to be contacted and persuaded to do so, PIES hopes it has highlighted to authorities the importance of a non-reflective sign for night-time flash-photography purposes.

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## Epilogue

I hope you have enjoyed reading this article, Southend Through the Ages. It was written in commemoration of the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Pioneers of '04. I hope you have found it an informative journey through the history of our pursuits, and that it has answered any questions you had about Southend roadtripping. If you still have further questions and want to know more, there is an educational FAQ section on our website [www.southendsrock.co.uk](http://www.southendsrock.co.uk).

I hope you have seen that Southend roadtripping is not without its troubles, but once our minds are put together as one we can overcome any obstacle in our way. There are many exciting times ahead, particularly with the developments of the new website, and there are still many, many exciting roadtrips to be had to Southends scattered all through the UK and the World.

Discovery, invention, friendship and banter. These are the values which were held by the Pioneers, and this is basis upon which all Southend roadtrips should be performed.

To the edge of the UK, and beyond! Wishing you all the best with your Southend endeavours...

*Doublechaireverytime*

21<sup>st</sup> July 2009.

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*This has been a Southends Rock production, as part of its 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations. All facts were considered correct at the time of going to press, and appropriate sources were mentioned when deemed necessary. Southends Rock accepts no responsibility for any harm or legal matters which result as a consequence of the actions of any of its Community or Followers. Southends Rock does not condone trespassing or any other illegal activities, and expects its Community to act responsibly and with due regard for their own and others safety at all times. Southends Rock accepts no responsibility for any damage to health due to excessive pie eating or dangerous party popper-firing. Party poppers contain an explosive, and as such are not a toy. Do not allow young children to be in reach of party popper without adult supervision. Please remember to drive with due care, and always abide by the Highway Code. Speeding on a Southend roadtrip is not permitted and any team which does not observe the speed limits in order to complete a challenge in an allotted time will be deemed to have cheated. Please ensure that your car is able to complete the journey before you leave, and is equipped with all relevant safety devices. Always ensure that you have a map to hand, and GPS is recommended. Ensure that you have a competent navigator, perhaps one with a geography degree, and appropriate food and drink supplies should a disaster emerge. Above all, make sure you have 'hours of fun and safety'!*