

City that Walks on Water Southend Stories



Title:	<u>Happy Harry</u>
Date:	1910 to 1963
Location:	Southend Seafront
Image:	
Headline:	Rev George Wood a.k.a Happy Harry preaches the gospel on Southend Seafront.
Fact 1	There is a plaque on the wall opposite the Las Vegas arcade on Southend Seafront dedicated, 'In Memory of the Reverend George Wood (known as 'Happy Harry') who preached the gospel on this seafront from early in the 1920s to 1963.' Erected by the Southend Society.
Fact 2	The Reverend Wood stood on a soap box in all weathers preaching to the crowds from a position across from the Kursaal, and was ironically named Happy Harry for the evangelical message he preached.
Fact 3	Happy Harry began his evangelical preaching at Southend in about 1910. Crowds of holidaymakers and locals alike would stop to listen, heckle and throw pennies.
Fact 4	During the 1930s Rev. Wood would preach near the rallies of Oswald Mosley's Union of British Fascists in Southend.

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Fact 5	Harry always wore his dark suit and dog collar, and became very enthusiastic in his preaching and would burst into a hymn singing "It's rolling in, It's rolling in, The sea of love is rolling in."
Fact 6	According a local legend, once Rev Wood was finished for the day he would gather up all of the pennies thrown, and make haste to the now demolished Foresters Arms for a well deserved pint, pie and chips.
Close:	Happy Harry was reportedly subject to physical abuse on occasions even though he was a well loved local figure. Rev Wood retired in 1966, and died aged 86, in 1974
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