


## City that Walks on Water Southend Stories



Title:	<b><u>Southend was the earliest settlement in Essex</u></b>
Date:	600,000BC
Location:	Westcliff-on-Sea
Image:	 <p>Photo © Francis Wenban-Smith, Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton</p>
Headline:	Life in Southend 600,000 BC
Fact 1	In 2005 excavations on the games fields at Westciff High School for Girls revealed evidence for a very early human occupation of Britain. The evidence came from gravel that underlies the school known as Canewdon Gravel, which was laid down by the River Medway when it flowed north across East Essex about 600,000 years ago. The excavations were carried out by the University of Southampton.

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Fact 2	In an article in the school newsletter, the leader of the project, Francis Wenban-Smith, described the excavation and speculated about the people that lived here before the Anglian glaciation, 600,000 years ago.
Fact 3	“These hunter-gatherers would have had no houses or huts, no fire, and probably no clothes, relying instead on their fur and body fat to keep them warm.” (Wenban-Smith and Marshal 2008).
Fact 4	The 3.8 millimetre long flint flake from Westcliff shows clear evidence of human workmanship. The artefact is the earliest record of humans so far found in Essex and may be as much as 600,000 years old.
Fact 5	Southend Museum’s Ken Crowe told the Southend Echo: “The flint is very small, only about an inch or so long. It’s the earliest evidence we have of occupation in Essex. So it’s very exciting for the museum and the town that we have evidence early humans were living here in that distant period of time. The discovery means early humans were living here before the River Thames took on its present form.”
Fact 6	
Close:	The humans living in Britain at that time were not modern humans, but a species called <i>Homo heidelbergensis</i> , or Boxgrove Man, whose remains have been found in Sussex
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