


## City that Walks on Water Southend Stories



Title:	<b><u>Dunkirk, the Endeavour</u></b>
Date:	1940
Location:	Leigh-on-Sea
Image:	 <p>Endeavour with other cocking boats in 1934</p>
Headline:	The Endeavour and 5 other boats take part in the Dunkirk Evacuation
Fact 1	On 14th May 1940 the Admiralty, on behalf of the Government, made an order requesting all owners of self-propelled craft between 30ft and 100ft in length to send all particulars to the Admiralty within 14 days if they have not already been offered or requisitioned.
Fact 2	On 30th May 1940, the Endeavour's owner, Harry G Robinson, was informed that she was being requisitioned by the Admiralty.
Fact 3	Also requisitioned from the Leigh fleet were the Defender, Letitia, Reliance, Renown and Resolute. They were all ordered to gather at Southend Pier head at 9am on 31st May 1940.
Fact 4	Skippers were given the option of having the Royal Navy crew their boats, or enrolling themselves and their crew for duty. Most skippers chose to sail their own boats as they believed that if they gave them over to the Royal Navy then that would be the last they saw of them.

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Fact 5	All crew were signed on by the Navy as Naval Auxillary Personnel, Skippers were paid £4 and crew members £3, boats were provided with fuel and corned beef sandwiches.
Fact 6	The Leigh Little Ships were gathered into a flotilla under the charge of Sub Lieutenant Solomon. Each boat had a Royal Navy Rating on board, thus being officially under the official command of the Royal Navy - but in reality most of the boats were so unique that their original captain and crew were the only ones capable of sailing them.
Fact 7:	The Endeavour and her sisters first embarked soldiers from the beach and then, as the tide went out and threatened to strand them the Leigh boats began rescuing men from the north-eastern side of the Mole (a wooden structure in Dunkirk harbour) and from here they operated a shuttle service, collecting men and ferrying them to the larger ships out at sea. The boats operated throughout the night, until the final ferry at 6 am when they were ordered to return to Ramsgate with a full load of soldiers. 180 men were brought back on the Leigh boats to Ramsgate. Records indicate that 1,000 men were ferried out to the larger ships by the Leigh cockle boats.
Close	Not all of the Leigh boats returned, the Renown was lost to a mine with skipper Noakes and her crew - Frank and Leslie Osborne and Harry Noakes - all cousins - and Harold Porter, a naval rating from Birmingham.
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