



TRANSFORMED BY WAR 1939 - 1945

Threat of invasion

In 1940 the Chiefs of Staff concluded that, in terms of a possible landing, the coast from the Wash to Newhaven was the priority.

Major ports such as the Thames, Harwich and Dover could be defended, but small ports had to be closed or "immobilised" using booms, wires and any remaining craft made inoperable as on the River Blackwater - [Maldon Heritage Harbour](#)

Admiral Sir Frederic Dreyer, a leading expert on naval gunnery, made recommendations on the most vulnerable locations. His report on the River Colne, comments:

"Tanks could be landed at high tide opposite Brightlingsea and also on the opposite side between the Stone and North Farm but there is only one exit from Mersea Island, namely the road and this should be destroyed at the Crossing. It is recommended that the beach opposite Brightlingsea be mined and the entrance to River Colne should be mined opposite the Stone. The Mersea Flats at low water form an excellent landing ground for heavy aircraft and should have obstacles dotted about on it."



Thames estuary boom defence
Image: IWM A2027

Dragons Teeth anti-tank obstacles
Image: Michael Coppins CC by SA 4.0



Sailing barge and boarding party
Image: IWM H 022251

