

## Darnet Fort

<b>Commenced</b>	March 1861	<b>Armament</b>  <b>1869 Proposed</b> 8 x 9inch RML 3 x 9inch RML unmounted
<b>Completed</b>	September 1875	
<b>Cost</b>	£ 78,221	
<b>Map Reference</b>	TR 807707	
<b>Position</b>	Island in Medway	
<b>Type</b>	Sea Front : casemated	
<b>Ditch</b>	Dry	
<b>Guns</b>	11	
<b>Barrack Accom.</b>	3 Officers 69 NCOs & men	
<b>Present use</b>	Now owned by local authority	
<b>History</b>	In care and maintenance until c.1920. Observation post WW2	
<b>Disposal</b>		
<b>Condition</b>	Good	
<b>Access</b>	Yes but boat needed	
<b>Sources</b>	Gulvin, 'Chatham's Concrete Ring'	

### History and Description

Hoo and Darnet Forts were commenced 1861. In 1867 they were reduced from the planned three tiers to two, after severe problems with subsidence, and they were commissioned in 1871. They are constructed on islands that lie either side of the main channel of the River Medway, down-river of Chatham Dockyard.

The forts are circular giving all-round defence. Accommodation casemates and magazines were on the ground floor with gun casemates above, all casemates being built around a circular parade ground. Early in 1863 the design was changed, moving the magazines from a central location to the sides. This caused a shift in weight resulting in cracks in the masonry at Hoo, then Darnet. This was arrested with iron bands round the masonry and iron tie rods into the concrete. When the fort was completed in 1871 the shield frames had been fitted at an additional cost of £2334 but the shields had not had not been supplied. The forts were disarmed before WW1 but remained in care and maintenance until 1920. In 1930 experiments were carried out at Hoo Fort, and to a lesser extent at Darnet Fort, *'to ascertain the likely damage to underground magazines caused by accidental explosion of stored cases of cordite'*.

In WW2 they served as observation posts, with small brick structures built on their tops. Both forts remain in reasonable condition apart from some flooding to the basement magazines. Darnet was owned by Medway Ports Authority who flooded it to prevent vandalism but in 2015 the 'English Heritage At Risk Register' reported it to be privately owned.

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