



TRANSFORMED BY WAR 1939 - 1945

Would the requisitioned coastal land and property be returned?

Government wartime requisition for all purposes (airfields, factories, military training and accommodation) totalled 14.5 million acres or roughly 25% of the UK land area.

Compensation arrangements were established but there was no certainty of return – the “national interest” could justify its retention and Government introduced legislation to extend the disposal timetable in 1945 and again in 1948.

Many properties were damaged and areas unsafe – it took until the 1970s for the last UK beach clearance of mined areas.

One benefit of peace was the disposal at bargain prices of large numbers of Government commissioned vessels – of every size - small cargo vessels, lifeboats, fast launches and small motor boats for the leisure sailor. Passenger launches were adapted from Fairmile craft and surplus large landing craft were to enable the first roll-on, roll-off cross channel ferry services. Launches became cheap houseboats at a time of acute housing shortage.



An example of large scale acquisition for a great range of military and naval use, which took much time and negotiation to return, is Bucklers Hard and the Beaulieu River.

With its close proximity to the Solent and the naval base at Portsmouth, Bucklers Hard and the Beaulieu River were used for shipbuilding of wooden minesweepers; construction of sections of the Mulberry Harbour; as a marshalling point and maintenance base for landing craft; and as a Motor Torpedo Boat base.

The **Bucklers Hard Heritage Harbour** provides a good history of these uses and the site's earlier maritime history and has done much to restore the environmental and heritage value of the site.

The wooded areas provided cover for tented encampments of some of the forces being assembled for D Day.



Buckler's Hard village & the Beaulieu River
Image: Wikimedia_(45839182332) Mike McBey

MV Western Lady
Image: MV_Western_Lady_(34940266270) Hugh Llewelyn