

## Fort Luton

|                       |   |                               |      |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------------|------|
| <b>Commenced</b>      | 1876  | <b>Armament</b>               |      |
| <b>Completed</b>      | 1892  | <b>Never Armed</b>            |      |
| <b>Cost</b>           | £ Not known   |                               |      |
| <b>Map Reference</b>  | TQ 763660   |                               |      |
| <b>Position</b>       | South of Chatham overlooking Luton valley                                 |                               |      |
| <b>Type</b>           | Land front/ polygonal   |                               |      |
| <b>Ditch</b>          | Dry   |                               |      |
| <b>Guns</b>           | Never armed   |                               |      |
| <b>Barrack Accom.</b> |   |                               |      |
| <b>Present use</b>    | Unknown   |                               |      |
| <b>History</b>        | Siege operations 1907, A.A. Command WW2, used by T.A. and cadets post-war | <b>Caponiers</b>              | None |
| <b>Disposal</b>       | Sold 1961   | <b>Counterscarp galleries</b> | None |
| <b>Condition</b>      | Poor  | <b>Haxo casemates</b>         | None |
| <b>Access</b>         | Unknown   | <b>Moncrieff Pits</b>         | None |
| <b>Sources</b>        | Gulvin, 'Chatham's Concrete Ring'   |                               |      |

### History and Description

Fort Luton was commenced 1876 and completed 1892, after a halt from the early 1880s until 1886. It overlooks the Luton Valley, one of the main approaches to Chatham. The original plan was similar to Borstal with a caponier at the rear over which the access bridge was to run. The Rolling bridge consisted of three parallel girders with trucks on the ends and in the centre of the two outer girders. On this was laid planking with chequered plates at the ends. The bridge was hauled into the fort when necessary by block and tackle fixed to the inner end of the bridge by chains and anchored to holdfasts set into the roadway also by chains. A similar bridge was fitted at Fort Borstal and at Whitesand Bay Battery, Plymouth. The original plan also called for two counterscarp galleries, main magazines just behind the single row of eight casemates to the rear and flanking arrangements at the gateway similar to Bridgewoods. The completed design was somewhat altered. The fort was reduced in size by slicing off the rear left-hand portion. The caponier, magazines and counterscarp galleries were omitted. The four intended expense magazines and their serving rooms were retained. The ditch is revetted in concrete and was completely unflanked. During the 1907 siege operations part of the ditch was blown in and the fort overrun.

The casemates were used as barrack accommodation during WW1 and in WW2 the fort served as A.A. Command for the Medway area. It was handed over to the Kent Education Authority in 1961 and subsequently sold for a reputed £100,000 to a developer. In 1990 it was bought by a new owner who ran it as a model museum. In 2001 it closed and the current use is unknown.

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