

# **SOUTHEND**

**THE STRATENDE OF ROMAN, SAXON  
AND VIKING INVASIONS  
A SPECULATIVE CHRONICLE:**

**NOVEMBER 2018**

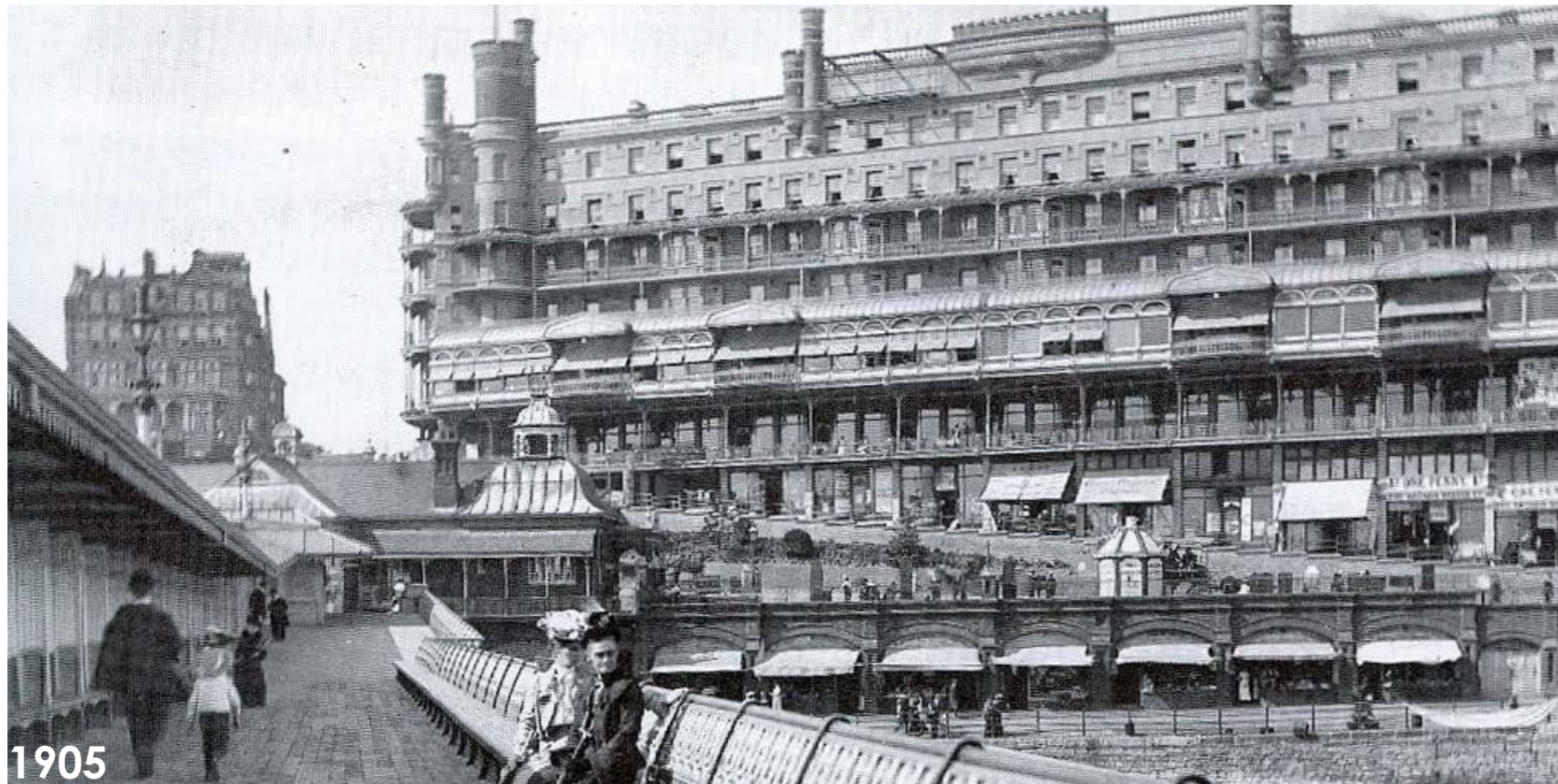
# Southend, the Stratende of Roman, Saxon and Viking Invasions



1920

## PREMISE

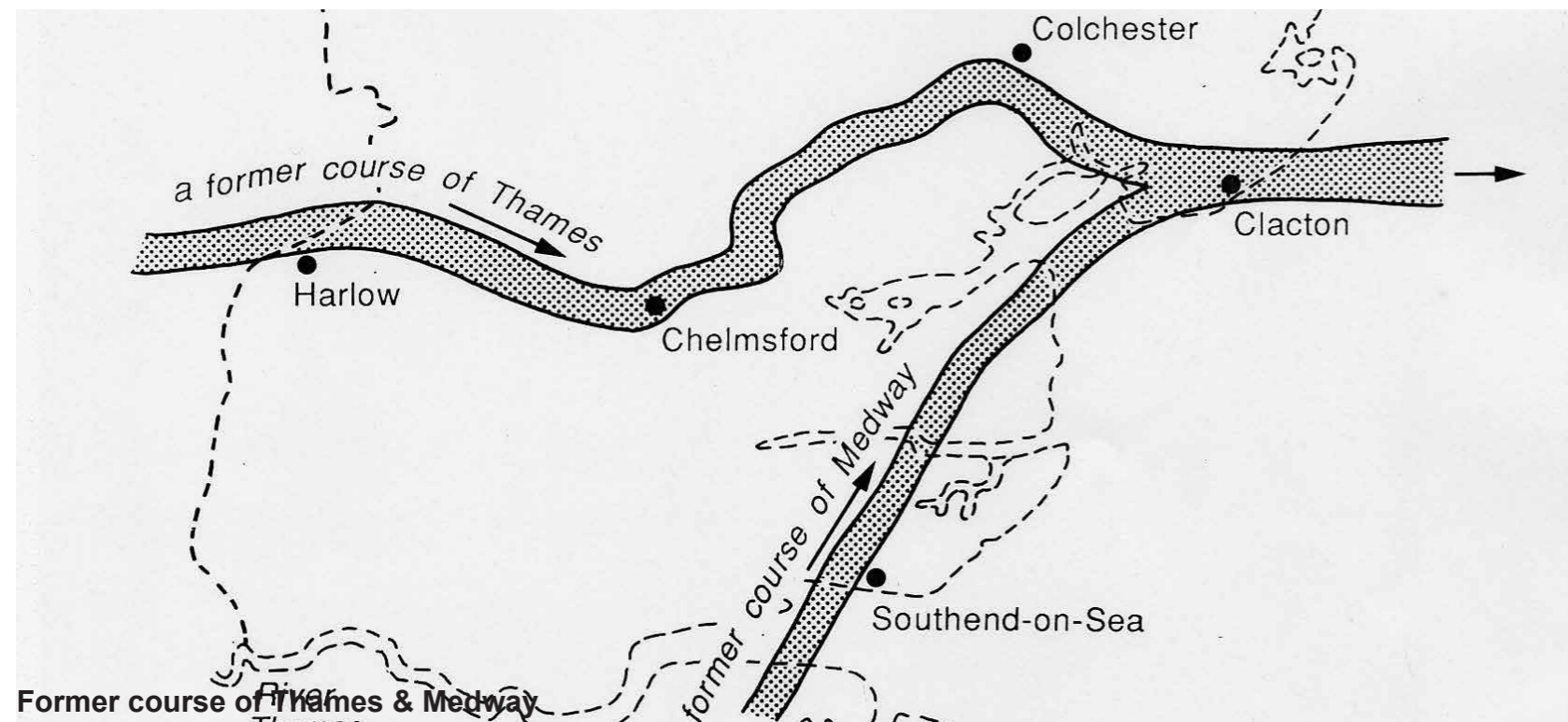
The invasion of Southend-on-Sea by Bank Holiday day-trippers from London in the 19th and 20th centuries, important though that is to the development of the conurbation we find there today, has tended to obscure the series of earlier invasions on the north side of the estuary that have played a profound role in the development and history of Britain. The high ground of Southend-on-Sea on the north bank of the estuary was the head of the road inland for these invasions.



1905

# Prehistoric

12000BCE - 20BCE



Iron Age hill fort excavation Shoeburyness 2013

## PREHISTORIC

### 12,000BCE

End of the last Ice Age when the current course of the Thames is pushed further south by the ice sheet across Britain that deposits the banks forming the hills on the north side of the Thames Estuary. The sea levels rise resulting in substantial North Sea transgression.

### 10,000BCE

Mesolithic Age; the first hunter-gatherers settle in the region. The transgression continues. Even without transgression the meandering tideway of the Thames Estuary is continuously changing as witnessed by the chalk cliffs at Cliffe, now two kilometres from the shore.

### 4,000-2,500BCE

Neolithic Age: development of farming, domestication of animals and the formation of settlements; a period when the Essex forest starts to be cleared from coastal regions. The on-going transgression starts to be offset by the increased run-off and sedimentation caused by agriculture. Migrations from the continent to Britain follow the route around the coast and inland along the Medway and Thames estuaries, with higher ground on the lower reaches providing the first landings.

### 2,500- 800BCE

Bronze Age and the development of metalworking with increased use of charcoal, which accelerates clearance of the forests, development of agriculture and the sedimentation forming the estuaries and creeks around the coast. Trading routes from the continent to Britain are established around the coast and up the Medway and Thames estuaries with the higher ground of the lower reaches again providing the first landings. The east coasts of Kent and Essex become extensive areas of farmland.

### 800-500BCE

Late Bronze Age: Prittlewell Camp, 500m east of Sutton Crematorium, is a circular, univallate enclosure, on a low hillside overlooking the Roach marshes. The function is uncertain but probably included stock enclosure, redistribution centre, place of refuge and permanent settlement. A square, double-ditch crop mark in a golf course some 1,800m east-south-east of the Prittlewell Camp, close to the former site of Southchurch Wick farm on the prow of the hillside overlooking the estuary is also thought to be Late Bronze Age.

### 500-20BCE

Iron Age: Another slight univallate enclosure by the shore at Shoeburyness is possibly more defensive in character and related to Iron Age trade with the continent, which encourages further development along the eastern seaboard with Camulodunum at Colchester emerging as the leading settlement. To the west of Prittlewell the hillside site of the Mucking Excavation, overlooking the estuary along the axis of Sea Reach, becomes the main settlement and crossing-point of the Lower Thames Estuary, between Cliffe Creek below Cliffe on the south side to the Benfleet Creek below Hadleigh and South Benfleet on the north side of the estuary. However, with a lower sea level, less sedimentation as a result of agriculture and the unwinding of two millennia of coastal erosion the Lower Thames Estuary would have been narrower and shallower and the high ground on the north bank from South Benfleet to Milton would have been more accessible from the tideway than today.

# The Roman Occupation

20BCE - 410CE



**20BCE- 410CE The Roman Occupation**

The Roman Occupation. The historian Cassius Dio describes the Roman invasion of 43CE and the defeat of the Britons at Colchester. From his account there is general agreement on a main advance of the invasion from landings in Kent to a crossing of the Medway at Rochester but after a raid across the Thames in the region of Mucking and a pause at Rochester most reviews take the invasion up the Thames for a crossing of the ford near the tidal head at Westminster from where forces advance northeast across Essex to defeat the Britons at their stronghold of Camulodunum near Colchester. However, a strong case can be made for a crossing of the Thames below Mucking over Sea Reach to landings on the high ground of the north bank, where the forces could muster for advancing north into Essex, with a western flank advancing from South Benfleet across the Crouch between Battlesbridge and Wickford, towards a crossing of the Chelmer at Chelmsford and thence northeast to Colchester. The invasion followed preliminary reconnaissance required for logistical support of the advancing forces and led to the subsequent development of the Roman road network. A route for the main advance of the invasion that heads north from the crossing of the Medway at Rochester, to cross the rivers Thames, Roach, Crouch and Chelmer before turning northeast to Camulodunum, avoids the long detour upstream to a crossing near Westminster and the long march back again through the Essex forest to the crossing of the Chelmer and on to the crossing of the Colne by Colchester. The more direct route north is much shorter, passes across farmland rather than forest, and maintains close contact between the legions and the fleet advancing north along the coast, enabling fleet transports to provide supplies to the legions on the tides of the estuaries.

# The Roman Occupation

20BCE - 410CE

## TRINOVANTES (ESSEX) CAMPAIGN



A Roman road from South Benfleet to Chelmsford is identified in archaeological databases as route 119n. Another Roman road in south Essex includes an east-west one rising from Great Wakering on the coast to cross the high ground of Prittlewell, Hadleigh and South Benfleet. This road, identified as route 119m, would have secured the landings on the north side of the Thames Estuary while supervising the hostile shallows of the Roach further north. The square, double-ditch, crop mark in the golf course beside Royal Artillery Way some 1,800m east-south-east of the Prittlewell Camp is close to the former site of Southchurch Wick farm on the prow of a hillside overlooking the estuary and is aligned orthogonally with route 119m that passes nearby to the north, suggesting the crop mark is Roman rather than late Bronze Age. Close to the site the road crosses a small brook and makes a slight change of alignment. The location suggests this is a Roman look-out set up to supervise approaches on both the Thames and the Roach estuaries soon after the initial landings.

From Great Wakering another road headed northeast on the foreshore beside Foulness Island, this probably related to a Roman fortified settlement in the vicinity of Shoeburyness perhaps where half the Iron Age fort has been lost to coastal erosion. Midway between this fortified settlement near the mouth of the Thames and the predecessor of the Broomway heading northeast along the coast and route 119n north from Benfleet Creek another Roman route 119r heads north from the highpoint on the cliffs at Milton to a crossing of the Crouch near South and North Fambridge to continue north as route 119j to Maldon and 107a to Witham. Thence, like 119n, the route turns northeast along the main road (Margary 3b) to Marks Tey and Colchester. There is a case for considering that these two routes north from the Thames Estuary, 119r and 119n, were the eastern and western flanks of a broad advance for the invasion across Essex with the subsequent tracks providing logistics from landings on the coast, making use of the tides on the estuaries.

# The Roman Occupation

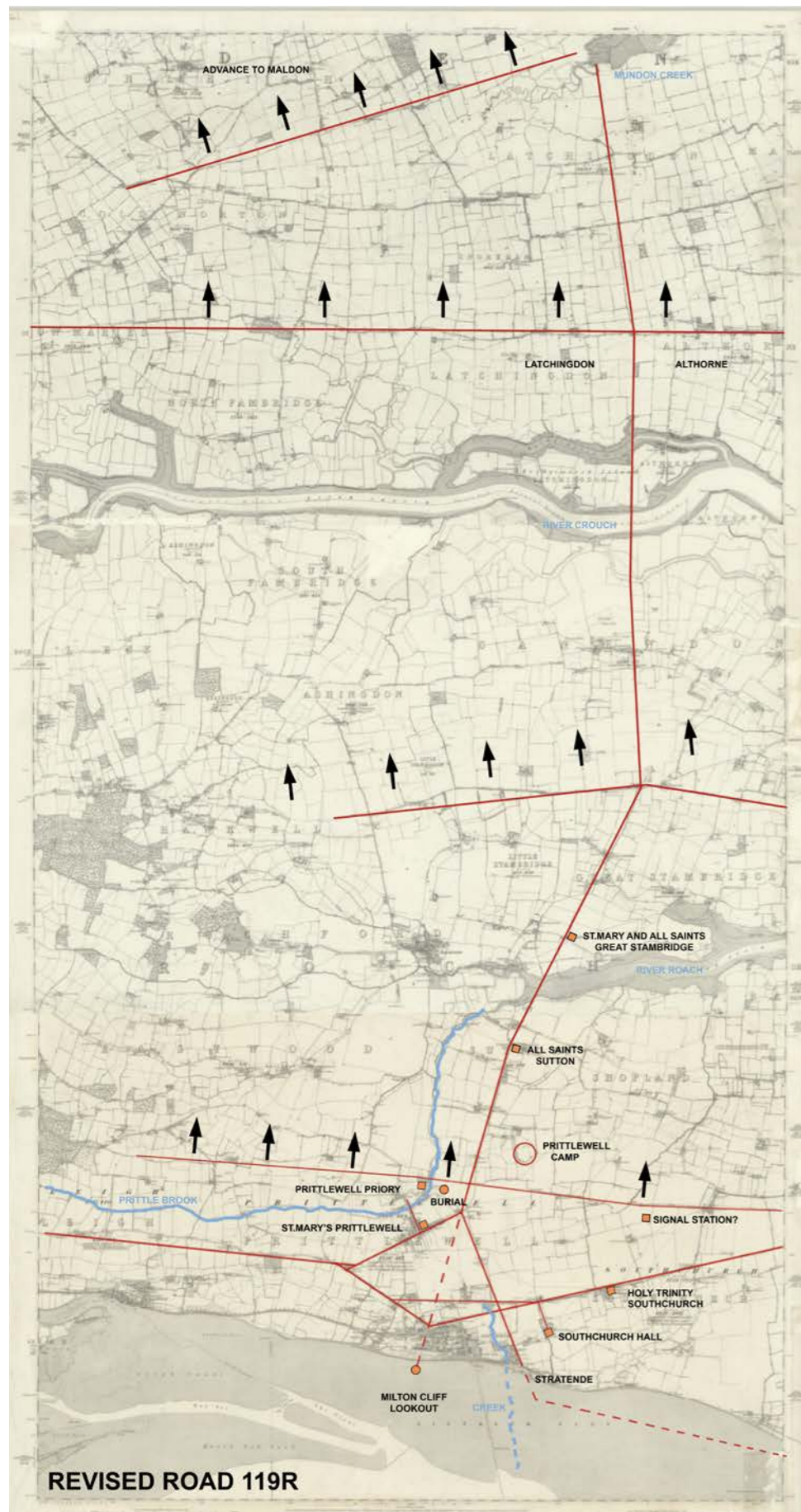
20BCE - 410CE



For the invasion of Britain, Aulus Plautius applied a strategy developed from the campaigns into Germania when legions advancing east on tributaries of the Rhine worked in tandem with the fleet advancing south on the estuaries from the coast. For the invasion of Britain, the legions and fleet under Plautius worked in tandem advancing north around the coast and west on the estuaries. The growth of trade between the east coast of Britain and the Rhine had provided pilots for the invasion fleet who were familiar with negotiating the shoals and estuaries around the coast and knew how to make best use of the tides. After crossing the Medway at Rochester, Plautius had paused for several weeks to await the arrival of Claudius and had plenty of time to prepare for the crossing of the Thames. With his forces gathered around the crossing of the Medway and his fleet of transports moored in the tideway the most convenient and secure route for crossing the Thames would be to embark on the transports and ride an ebb tide down to the Nore and then take the flood tide up the Thames to landings on the north bank at Shoeburyness and below the cliffs at Milton. To secure another look-out on the clifftop at Milton would have been a useful target for his invasion fleet approaching from the Medway in preparation for landing forces and transporting supplies across the Thames. The high ridge overlooking the estuary between Southend and South Benfleet was ideal for landing and mustering forces on the north bank before the advance north to Camulodunum (Colchester).

# The Roman Occupation

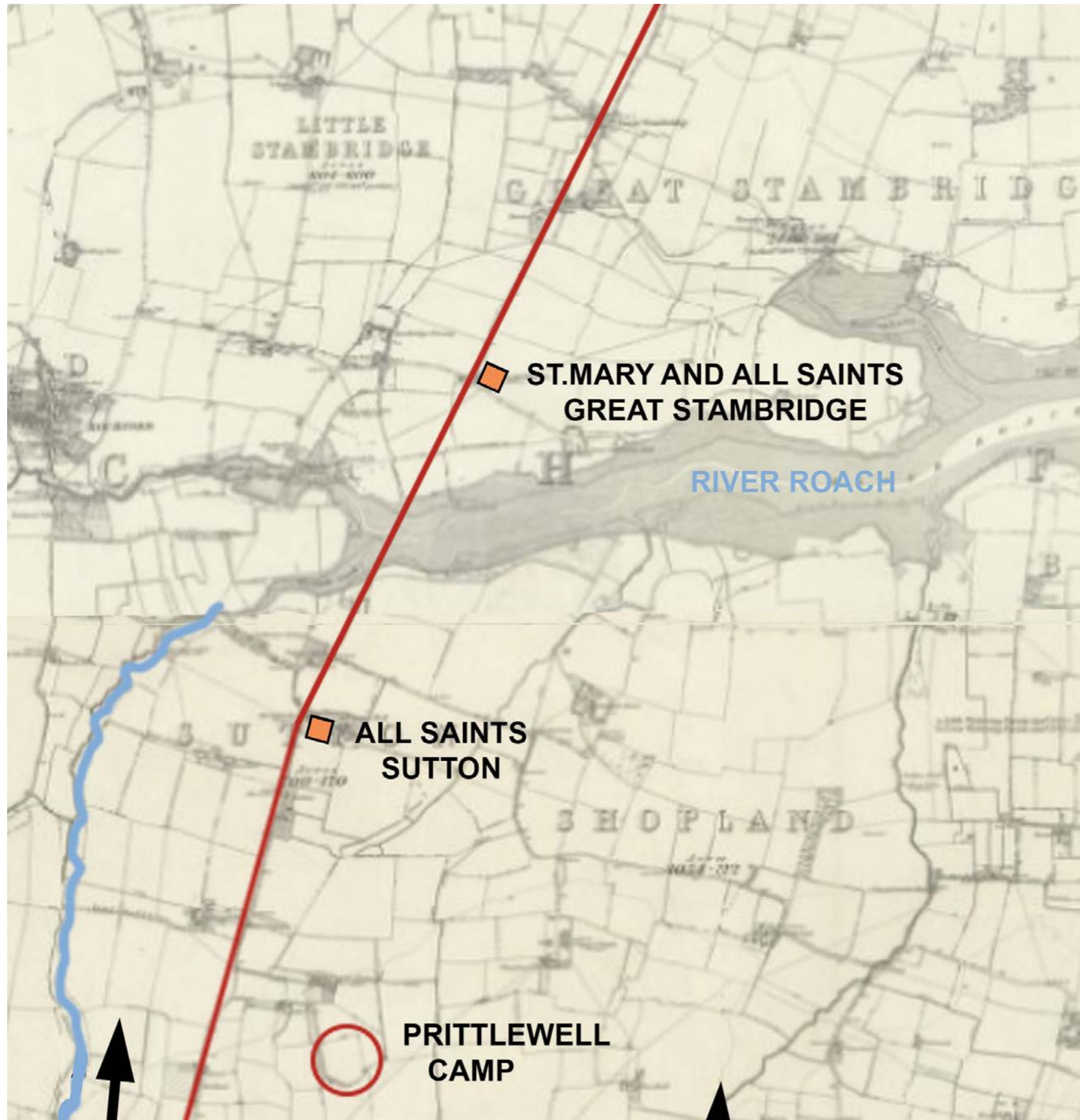
## 20BCE - 410CE



As in Germania the Roman invasion can be seen to follow the estuaries and rivers inland from the coast. They were the established trading routes that defined the pattern of settlements and even on their upper watersheds, where transport was no longer a consideration, the brooks and streams provided men on the march with a ready supply of fresh water. Though Prittle Brook is modest and of no use for transport, the advantage of its route heading directly north from the landings at Southend to the Roach would have encouraged the formation of an eastern flank and tactical route on the high ground immediately east of the stream. With a lower sea level, the Roach and the Crouch to the north could be forded at lower points than today. A variant of route 119r can be traced from the cliff top at Milton, now in Cliff Town, heading north through central Southend and along Sutton Lane on high ground to the east of Prittle Brook, following this down to a ford of the Roach downstream from Rochford and on through Great Stambridge and Canewdon to a ford of the Crouch over Bridgemarsh Island, where the route on the north bank rises to meet the orthogonal east-west Roman route 119b heading along the ridge of high ground above the Crouch. A strategic pattern emerges in which east-west routes 119m and 119b follow high ground immediately above the north banks of the Thames and the Crouch respectively, to secure the landings for mustering forces advancing north along routes 119n and 119r with the fleet using the Roach and the Crouch to bring in men and supplies on the tides. Plautius had made good use of his time at Rochester to plan an efficient campaign. Claudius spent only sixteen days in Britain, arriving on the imperial flotilla from Richborough in Kent through the Wantsum to meet Plautius on the Medway, accompanying the campaign north across the Thames and Essex, landing his elephants to defeat the Britons at Camulodunum, receiving tributes from the eleven captured tribal leaders, settling the new administration and returning, across the Thames and Medway estuaries, through the Wantsum to Richborough. There was not the time to march up to Westminster, cross the Thames where the Britons had prepared defences, and march all the way back through the Essex forest to the Chelmer before advancing on Camulodunum. Only by the close co-ordination of the legions and the fleet advancing north along the coast with transports entering the estuaries of Essex to land men and supplies could Claudius and his elephants have achieved his sixteen-day itinerary.

# Roman Occupation

20BCE - 410CE



On revised route 119r traced through Milton-Great Stambidge-Canewdon the sites of the Norman churches of All Saints at Sutton and of St. Mary and All Saints at Great Stambidge are suitably located to have been founded on earlier shrines that controlled a direct ford east of Rochford when the Roach and the Crouch were shallower during the period of the Roman occupation. Stamford in Lincolnshire derives its name from being the site of the stone or “stane” ford of Ermine Street across the River Welland. While the sources of place names are uncertain it is nevertheless notable that Great Stambidge is north of the old ford while Sutton, meaning “Southtown”, is to the south. Furthermore Canewdon, the hill of Cana’s people, rises directly south of Stamfords Hill with Bridgemarsh Island between them on the route of the road across the River Crouch. The parish boundary between Latchingdon and Althorne runs north-south across the Bridge Marsh Island on a projected route of the old road. As the ford of the Roach has moved upstream from Great Stambidge to Rochford with the rise in sea level since the period of Roman occupation, so the crossing of the Crouch has moved upstream to South and North Fambridge and then to Hullbridge, shown as a bridge on 17thC maps of Essex. Route 119r of the archaeological databases traces a crossing just east of the South and North Fambridge crossing, a location that could be a Late Roman, Saxon or early mediaeval response to the rising sea levels. In 43CE a broad advance north across the Crouch would best be achieved by forces on the western flank fording the river somewhere beyond the tidal head on a route north from South Benfleet accompanied by fleet transports landing and securing Bridgemarsh Island beside the north bank for a crossing of the Crouch by forces on the eastern flank advancing from Southend. The name Bridge Marsh is shown on 17thC maps of Essex, predating the causeway and ford when the island was protected by sea walls following a flood in 1736. A landing and crossing at Bridge Marsh Island would outflank whatever defence the Britons had prepared around the Iron Age ford upstream. The western and eastern flanks once across could then secure the ridge of high ground above the Crouch, on route 119a and 119b, in preparation for the next stage of the advance north. The eastern flank of this next advance followed the route of the Althorne parish boundary, north from route 119b to Mundon Creek at the head of Lawling Creek, where the fleet could supply the advancing forces from the River Blackwater. Hence, we can trace a road from the landing at South End heading directly north to a landing at Lawling and Mundon Creek, which could be used to secure the East Coast from the Thames to the Blackwater. From Mundon Creek the advance turned northwest to form a new front through Cold Norton to Woodham Ferrers from where the advance, supplied from the Crouch and the Blackwater, headed directly for the crossing of the Blackwater in the vicinity of Maldon, these advances indicated by the subsequent routes of the roads and centuriation of the farmland.

**c1150CE**

Map indicating historic features related to the revised route for Roman road 119r heading north from the landing at Stratende across the Roach and the Crouch to a crossing of the Blackwater in the vicinity of Maldon.

# Roman Occupation

20BCE - 410CE



St. Mary & All Saints at Great Stambridge

A similar strategy for the legions working in tandem with the fleet would apply to the final assault on Camulodunum, where the Britons, without a fleet, might have hoped to hold Mersey Island and prevent landings on the Colne estuary at Fingringhoe and Wivenhoe. However, with complete command of the sea, a Roman invasion force could have mounted a broad assault to take Mersey Island and once secured used that as a base for the final assault on Camulodunum, accompanied by separate advances northeast from the crossing of the Chelmer and southwest from landings on the Stour estuary at Mistley and Manningtree. The resulting Roman road network lends support to this strategy.

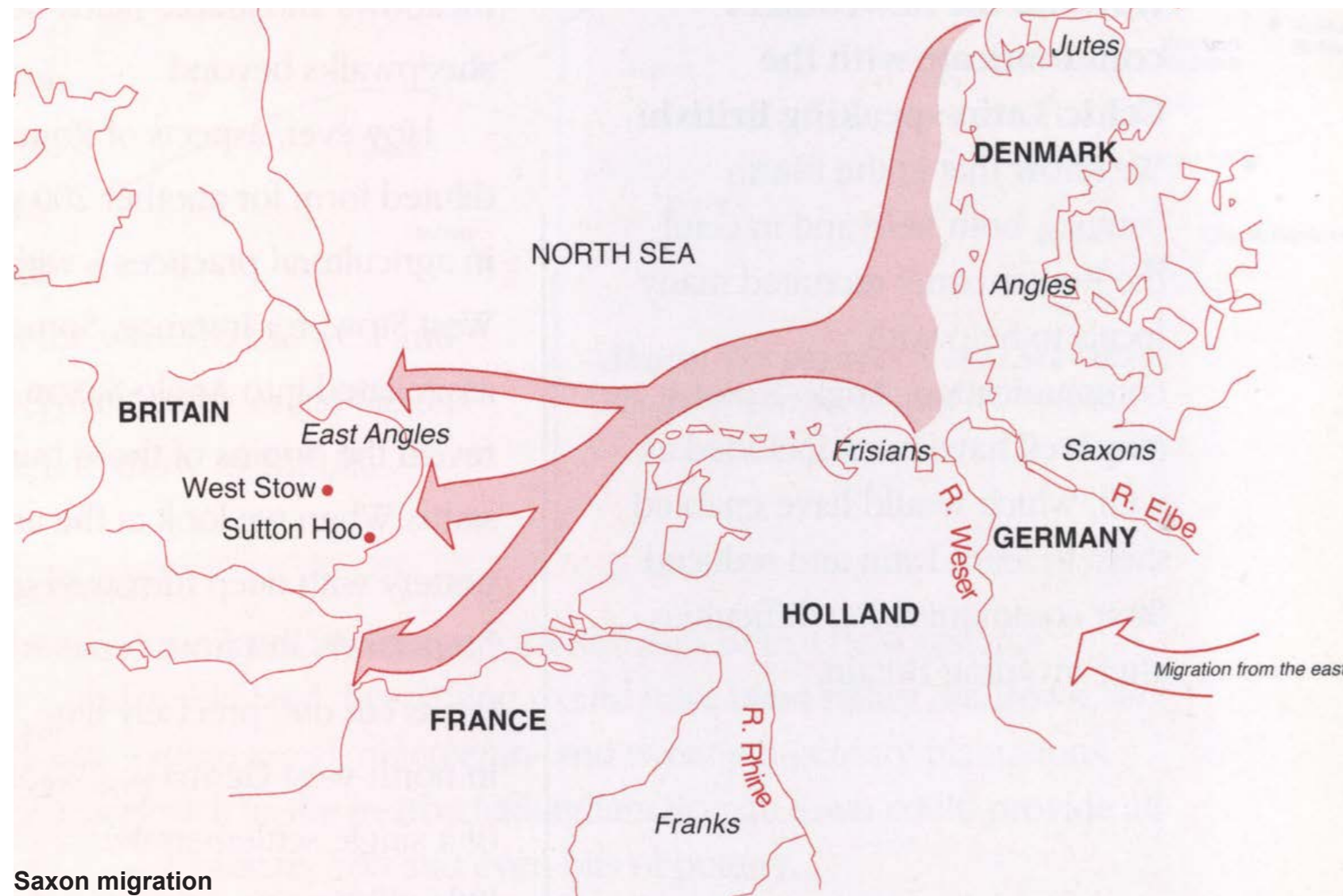
The route of Sutton Lane from Southend passes midway between the Prittlewell Camp and the site of a Roman villa and settlement in Priory Park beside the Prittle Brook. The orthogonal crossing of the east-west route 119m and south-north route 119r on high ground by Prittle Brook and the cadastral centuriation of agricultural land in the vicinity determine the subsequent landscape and geography of Southend.



All Saints Sutton

# The Early Saxons

500CE - 700CE



## CE 500-700 The Early Saxons

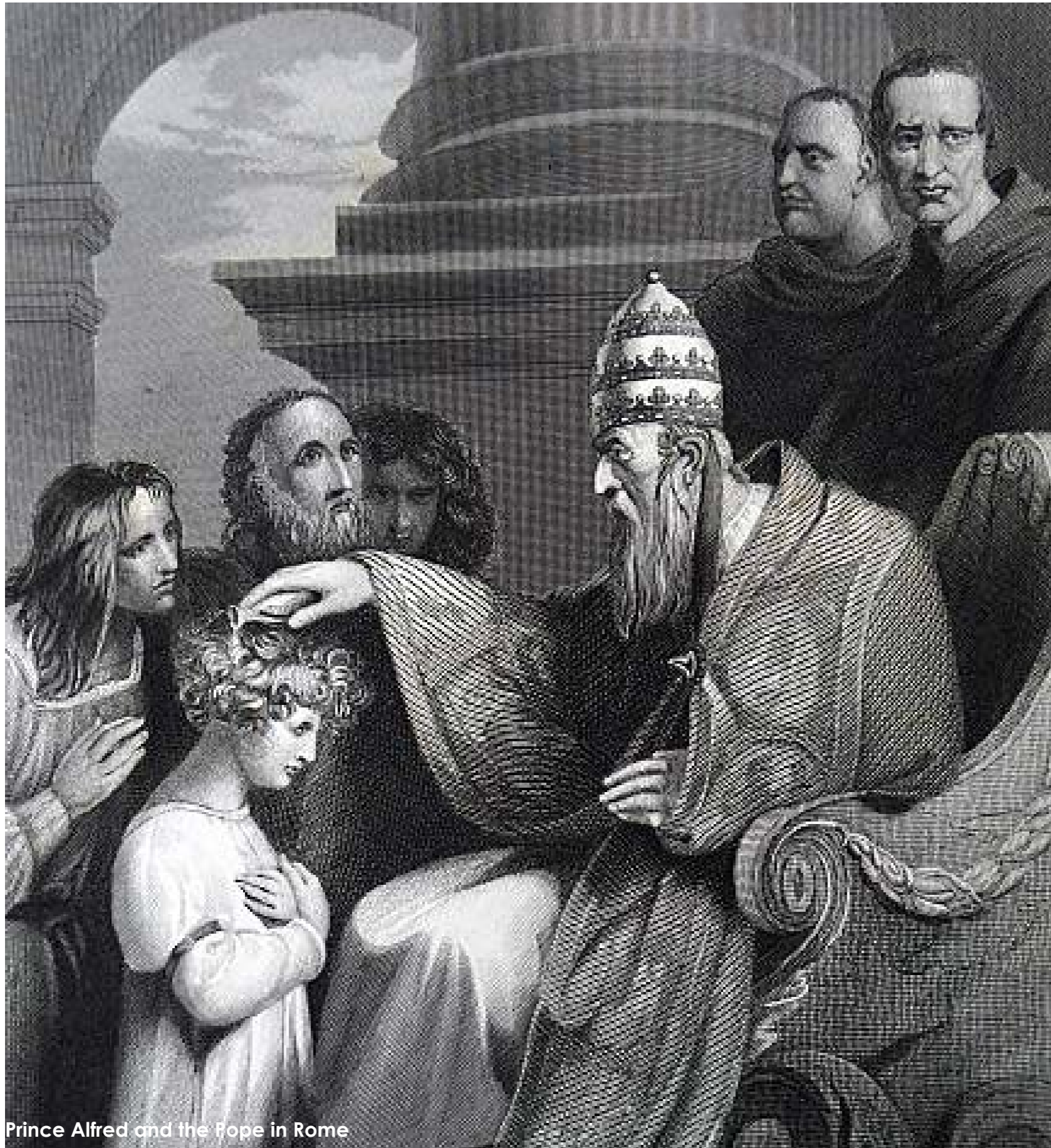
The Saxon migrations and settlement after the withdrawal of Roman administration can be seen to follow a pattern on the East Coast similar to that of the Roman invasion and subsequent occupation. The Saxons re-establish a settlement at Shoeburyness in the 6thC close to the former Iron Age camp where there may be been a Saxon Shore Fort now lost to coastal erosion. The settlement of a Roman villa beside Prittle Brook becomes the Anglo-Saxon and Early-Christian settlement of Prittlewell, where traces of a 7thC church founded on the site of St. Mary the Virgin, Prittlewell include the reuse of Roman bricks and an archway in the north wall of the nave. A high-status Anglo-Saxon burial discovered nearby to the east in 2003 is possibly that of Saeberht or his Christian grandson Saegberht the Good. The burial site on high-ground overlooking Prittle Brook is not far from the orthogonal intersection of Roman roads 119m and 119r. The settlement upriver at Mucking remained the main settlement and crossing of the Lower Thames Estuary, with evidence of continuous occupation from the Bronze Age through to the Anglo-Saxon period.

Archaeological evidence indicates that Romano-British settlements were abandoned in the 5th and 6th centuries while agriculture across the estuary was maintained and the vici beside the sheltered Roman landings continued as coastal trading centres. These were the first points of arrival for the migration of pagan Saxons. The simultaneous revival of these landings in the 7thC as sites for Christian missions suggests a conscious effort by the Church to re-open the coastal connections that had once served Rome. For Pope Gregory, Augustine and Paulinus the management and function of a Roman fort could have been as much an inspiration for the planning and development of the Church as the Crucifix. The fort had projected the power of Rome across the world. The fort Praetor or commander receiving imperial edicts at his fort became the Bishop in the basilica, receiving the word of the Lord beneath an apse admitting the light of the Sun rising in the East. The Praetor standing on the raised platform of the tribunal with the legionary eagle and standards in an apse facing the entrance issued the imperial edicts to his men and to the administrators of his province beyond the gates. The bishop on his pulpitum beside the altar within the apse brought the word of the Lord to his clergy and the congregation gathered before him in a nave aligned with the cardinal points.

For the East Saxon Britons, the ruins of the Roman forts recalled their ancestors first encounter with Christianity on their arrival as ship hands, traders or adventurers in the closing decades of the empire. The ruins of forts once administered by Constantine expressed a scale of power beyond their reach. The attraction of the Church was perhaps for them less a matter of faith than the promise of restored power.

# Late Saxon & Viking Period

700CE - 900CE



Prince Alfred and the Pope in Rome

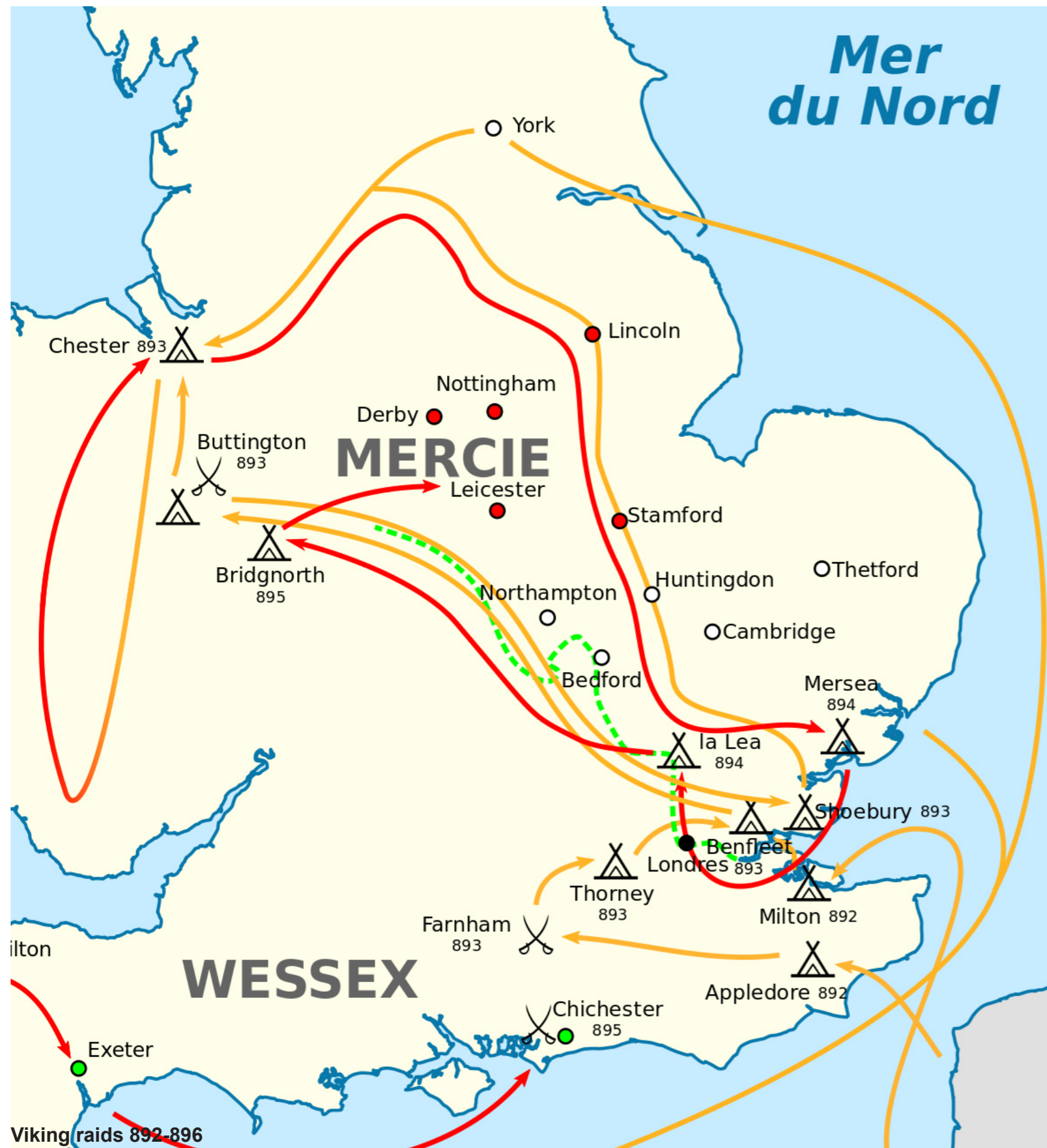
## CE 700-900 Late Saxons and Vikings

The Councils of Clovesho held from 742-825 brought together representatives from the whole church south of the Humber. One gathering, held at Cliffe on the south side of the Thames Estuary, suggests the connectivity associated with the Roman coastal system of control endured into the 9th century. The distance of Cliffe from Topsham on the Roman coastal chain of ports (559km) was similar to that from Selby (483km) and York (513km) so for journeys by sea Cliffe would have been a convenient choice for gathering the Council members. Through these Councils the Church attempts to find and back the strong man who from the chaos of the heptarchy and Viking invasions will forge and reunite England. In due course, King Alfred the Great is raised as a protégé of the Pope in Rome who declares him to be, when still a child, a Roman consul. Alfred restores to England the rule of law, the navy and aspects of Roman administration. In the 9th C the pattern of Roman infrastructure that would later become obscure was for him still clear. The heptarchy can be reviewed as a period when strong men attempted within their limited sphere of influence to revive an imperial economy supported by parts of the infrastructure they controlled within the former structure of the Roman province. On this view the Late Roman reforms that fragmented Britannia to deliberately weaken provincial governors can be seen to have precipitated the collapse as the sub-regions had prevented the island from becoming re-united. Alfred, with his re-application of Roman administration under the Church, the law, the burh hidage defence system and the re-founding of the navy, succeeded in re-uniting England and establishing Lundenburh within the abandoned walls of Londinium as the trading and in due course administrative centre. Under the treaty of 879/80 with Guthrum Alfred takes control and subsequently occupies Lundenburh in 886. Wessex and Mercia agree a boundary from Lundenburh that followed Watling Street. Rome is the power behind the reunification of Wessex and Mercia and the key agent in the re-organisation of Britannia. Pope Marinus sends as a gift a piece of the True Cross to Alfred c883. When Alfred translates Pope Gregory's Pastoral Care he alludes to Roman precedents in the preface: -

"Our Ancestors. Who formerly maintained these places, loved wisdom, and through it obtained wealth and passed it on to us. Here one can still see their track, but we cannot follow it." Therefore, we have now lost the wealth as well as the wisdom, because we did not wish to set our minds to the track.

# Late Saxon & Viking Period

700CE - 900CE



Though referring to ecclesiastical precedents the physical outlines of Roman infrastructure in Alfred's time would have been very apparent. His opponents the Vikings also followed the routes of the Roman network. The Viking chief Hastein was familiar with Roman infrastructure from his widespread campaigns across Europe. He invades Britain with a fleet from Boulogne, divided into two groups one landing at Romney Marsh and another at Milton Regis on the Swale. Only by Alfred separating these two forces is the attack held off and Hastein then regroups to strike north from Shoebury and Benfleet on the Thames Estuary, intending to follow the Roman routes 119r and 119n north into East Anglia, the route of the Roman invasion. However, Alfred and the West Saxons manage to defeat Hastein at South Benfleet in 893. Hastein withdraws to re-establish a base possibly at or close to the old fortified settlement on the shore at Shoeburyness from where he continued his invasion campaigns until eventually defeated and driven back to the continent by 896. The old Roman roads would have been easily traced and some would still have been quite serviceable at this time. Hastein's choice of South Benfleet and Shoeburyness indicates the north bank of the Thames still provided accessible landings from the estuary in the 9thC. The pattern of Hastein's landings and campaigns from the East Coast reflects the pattern of the Saxon landings and settlement which had followed the pattern of the Roman conquest and occupation. The period of the heptarchy had been one of successive strong men rising to power and attempting to retake wider control using the Roman infrastructure. The clear knowledge of a once efficient well-organised international infrastructure the traces of which could be seen at every turn, was one of the darkest aspects of the Dark Age.

## 824CE

Southchurch Hall, built c1321-1364 some 500m northeast on a ridge of high ground overlooking South End, probably stands on the site of a much earlier Saxon hall in a manor given to the monks of Canterbury in 824CE. The orientation of the 14thC hall and the surrounding field boundaries aligns with a route from Prittlewell that descends on the east side of the small stream from Porters down to South End on the sea shore.

## CE 959

The manor of Milton between Leigh and Southchurch is given by King Edgar to the monks of Christchurch, Canterbury.

# The Normans

1066CE - 1154CE



Prittlewood Priory

## CE 1066-1154 The Normans

The Norman Invasion of 1066 followed by the Domesday Survey of 1086 continues the strategy, endorsed and inspired by the Pope, to re-establish across Britain the infrastructure and administration of Rome, this time under the control of the Church and the Normans. As with Alfred, the Normans through the Church re-establish the rule of law and re-impose Roman taxation, setting up their control points within the walls of the former Roman fortifications. The Domesday survey, for re-imposing the administration and taxation, records the manors of Prittlewell and Milton. Prittlewell, including the valley of the Prittle Brook and land south to the estuary, is placed under the control of Swein of Essex. Milton, a hamlet of 24 families, is owned by the Priory of Holy Trinity, Canterbury, this becoming Canterbury Cathedral. The ownership of Milton reflects the established access across the estuary to the ridge of high ground on the north bank of the Thames. The name Milton is derived from Middle Town and is the settlement midway between Leigh and Southchurch. Swein was given the rest of the area in South Essex and chose to set up a motte-and-bailey at Rayleigh, located midway between Benfleet Creek and the Crouch estuary where he would have direct control of the peninsula between the two, including the Roach estuary.

## CE1110

Prittlewell Priory, a lesser house of 18 monks under the Cluniac Priory of St. Pancras at Lewes, is founded by Robert Fitzswein on land beside Prittle Brook to the northeast of the settlement at Prittlewell. The foundation charter included the church and manor of Prittlewell, which extended down to the sea shore.

# The Plantagenets

1154CE - 1485CE



## CE1154 – 1485 The Plantagenets

Richard I sells the fishing rights on the tidal Thames to the City of London to raise funds for the Third Crusade. Marker stones were erected in 1285 on the Thames to indicate the limit of the City's rights, with the tidal limit upstream then at Staines-upon-Thames and the lower limits marked downstream in the vicinity of the current marker stones by Chalkwell on the north bank and Yantlet Creek on the south bank.

## CE1215-1380

Hubert de Burgh is given the honour of Rayleigh by King John in 1215 but instead of improving the motte-and-bailey there he builds a new castle at Hadleigh on a prominent site above Benfleet Creek overlooking the Thames Estuary. Permission to crenellate the castle followed in 1230 under Henry III. Built of Kentish ragstone cemented by mortar containing cockleshells from the beds of neighbouring Canvey Island the castle on high ground could be conveniently reached from London on the tides of the Thames and by 1235 included woodland, a fishpond and a park lodge. Beside a wharf and landing stage for the castle, a valuable tidal mill was built by 1249 and terraced gardens were laid out on the hillside above. By 1239 Hubert de Burgh had fallen out of favour and for the rest of the century Hadleigh was retained as a royal castle. After a period of neglect Edward II and Edward III undertook extensive improvement works to the castle and though defensive in nature, as a look-out for mustering the fleet to protect the Thames Estuary from a French invasion, current opinion places equal emphasis on the castle as a place of royal resort that was conveniently accessible by river from London. The Cobham family of Kent builds Cooling Castle on the south bank a little upstream from Hadleigh in the 1380s, to guard against a French invasion and join in the fashion for a resort on the Thames. The siting of Hadleigh and Cooling again suggests that the shallower and narrower estuary with lower sea levels provided greater ease of access across Sea Reach in the mediaeval period than today.



Southchurch Hall

# The Plantagenets

1154CE - 1488CE



Hadleigh Castle

Also, in the 14thC, within the manor of Prittlewell on the Thames shore to the south of the priory, a fishing settlement develops with the name Stratende (1309), Sowthende and in due course by the 18thC South-End. By the Late Roman period most roads in Britain were probably known not as “via” but “strata”, referring to a built-up road with a paved or gravelled surface and thereafter the word enters the Anglo-Saxon language to become “streat”, resulting in place names such as Stratford, Stratton, Streatham and Street. Other early names such as Stanford, Stanstead, Stanwick, Stane Street and Stone Street, also relate to paved Roman strata. Accordingly, if Anglo-Saxon, the earlier name “Stratende” refers to the end of the Roman route 119r running north from the Thames to Maldon and Witham. The southern end of this route in archaeological databases heads north from the clifftop at Milton. This would be a suitable location for a look-out over the estuary and for surveying the route of the road to the north but for convenient access the road would also need to run down to the shore at some point. A suitable route can be traced south from the intersection of Roman roads 119m and 119r by Prittlewell, descending on the east side of a small stream, down to the shallow bay of Stratende that becomes South End. It was here that the cliffs of Milton descended to the shore by the mouth of a small valley formed by the stream and the higher ground of the cliffs turned inland before descending to the marshes, leaving low-lying saltmarshes east from Stratende to Shoeburyness. The age of this route is confirmed by the alignment with the field boundaries and ancient parish boundary of Southchurch, nearby to the east.

In the middle ages the hamlet of Milton became a port famous for its oysters and was a well-known point of embarkation for the continent. Three ships of 50-100 tons and five ships under 50 tons were recorded there in 1571. The area of the port has since been lost to coastal erosion. The remains of a church, presumably beside the port, were still visible in the tideway until the 1840s. Accounts of the loss of farmland to the sea and the name Middle Town between Leigh and Southchurch indicate the port of Milton was located off-shore on a projection of Hamlet Court Road where a shallow valley reached the shore. The existence of a port at Milton suggests that the main channel of the Thames ran closer to the shore in the middle ages with Mill Gut and Rye Gut, the creeks draining from the valleys in the cliffs were navigable to the shore, including “Rye Gut”, serving the small stream and fishing settlement of Stratende.

## 1250-1450CE

Climatic changes lead to a greater frequency and severity of storm surges from the North Sea resulting in particularly damaging floods of the Thames Estuary in the late 1280's, 1320's, 1334-35, the mid 1370's, 1404 and the 1420's. Other less severe incidents occurred more frequently. In 1334/5 it was predicted that the damage to land in Essex around Great Wakering would take seven years to recover. Flooding of Barking in 1380 caused alarm in London, scoured out a lake with sediment in the tideway diminishing the subsequent tides and led to the abandonment of land. A combination of the resources spent of sea defences and taxation receipts in the Late Mediaeval period indicate that land subject to inundation in the Thames estuary became less productive or was lost to the sea. (Marine flooding in the Thames Estuary and tidal rive c.1250 – 1450: impact and response, by James A. Galloway and Jonathan S Potts 30 March 2007). The effects of rising sea level since the period of the Roman occupation are compounded by the many cases of inundation through the Late Mediaeval period to result in the configuration of the Thames Estuary tideway and shoreline we find today.

# 16th Century



## 16thC

Rochford Hall in Essex, at the crossing of the Crouch north of South End, is said to be where Henry VIII first set eyes on Anne Boleyn, meeting her there in secret. On 14 November 1532 they marry in secret, to be formally married on 25 January 1533, following which Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury newly appointed on 23 May, declares Henry's marriage to Catherine null and void and five days later Henry's marriage to Anne valid. The Pope promptly excommunicates Henry and Cranmer leading to the break with the Church of Rome and the threat of invasion. Anne is crowned Queen on 1 June and gives birth to Elizabeth on 7 September, the future Queen Bess.

## 1539

Henry issues an order to defend the realm following which blockhouses are built each side of Gravesend Reach, at Gravesend, Milton and Higham on the south side opposite Tilbury and East Tilbury on the north bank. The blockhouses support platforms for cannons that could fire across the Thames to prevent a fleet advancing on London. The tideway broadens from 840m between the Tilbury and Gravesend blockhouses to 1440m between the Coalhouse and Higham Blockhouses. The cannon crossfire was a concept derived from the defeat of Christendom in the East when Mehmet the Conqueror built Rumeli Castle in four months during 1452 on the European shore beside the narrowest part of the Bosphorus opposite Anadolu Castle, 900m across the channel, providing both with cannons to prevent ships approaching Constantinople from the north, resulting in his successful siege of Constantinople in 1453.

## 1570

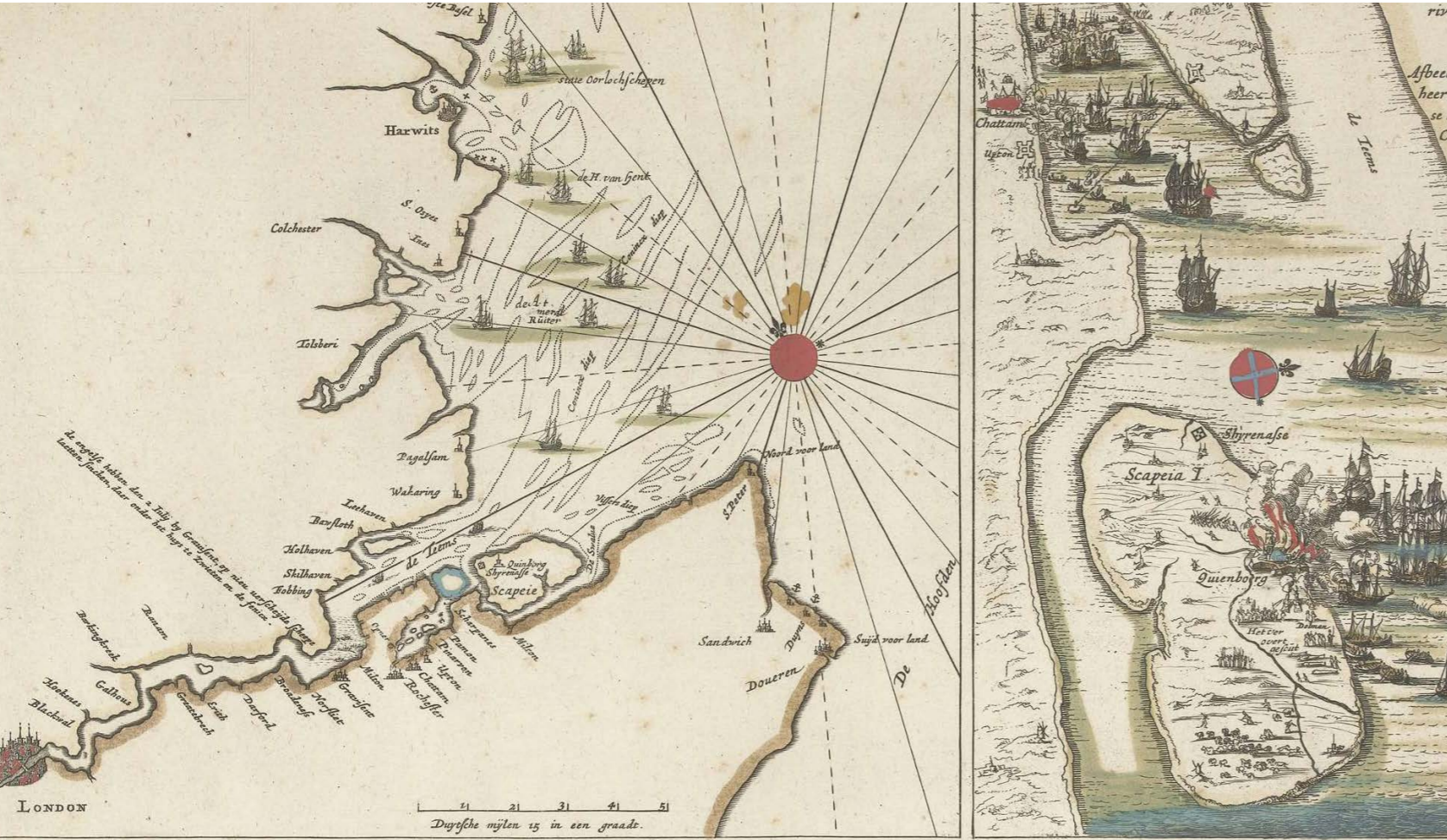
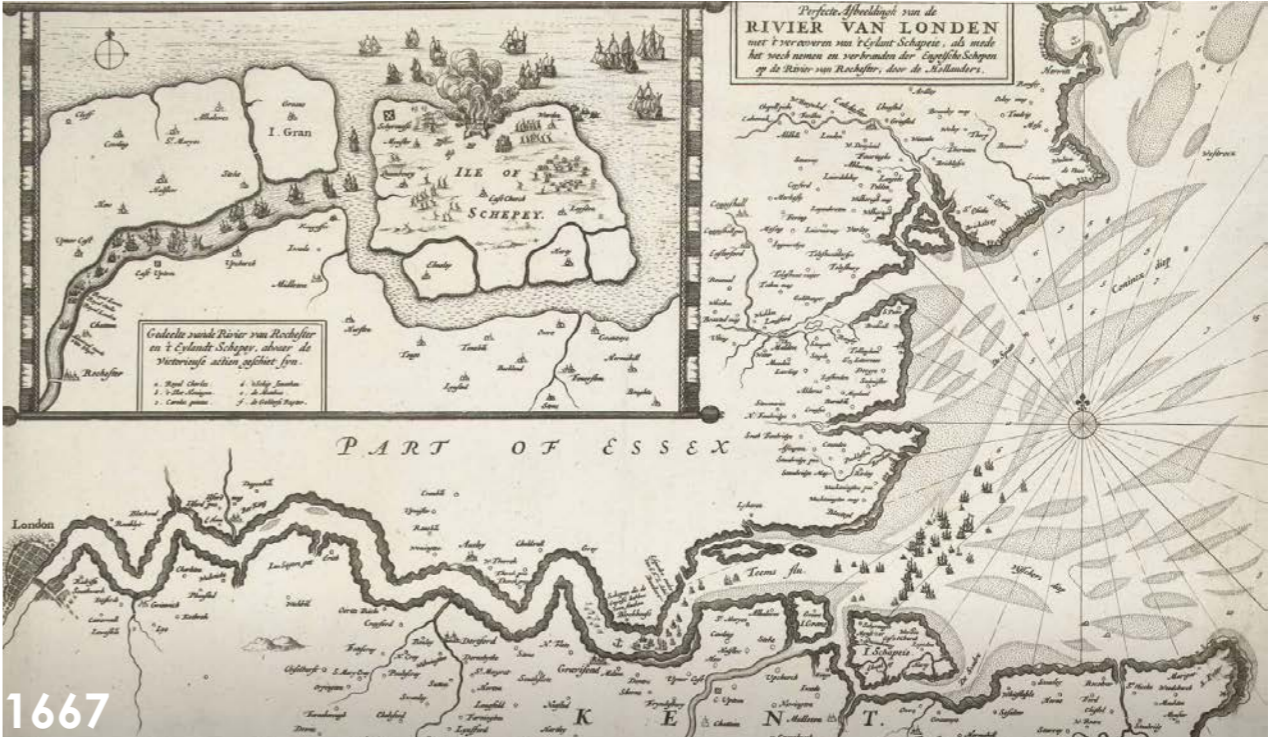
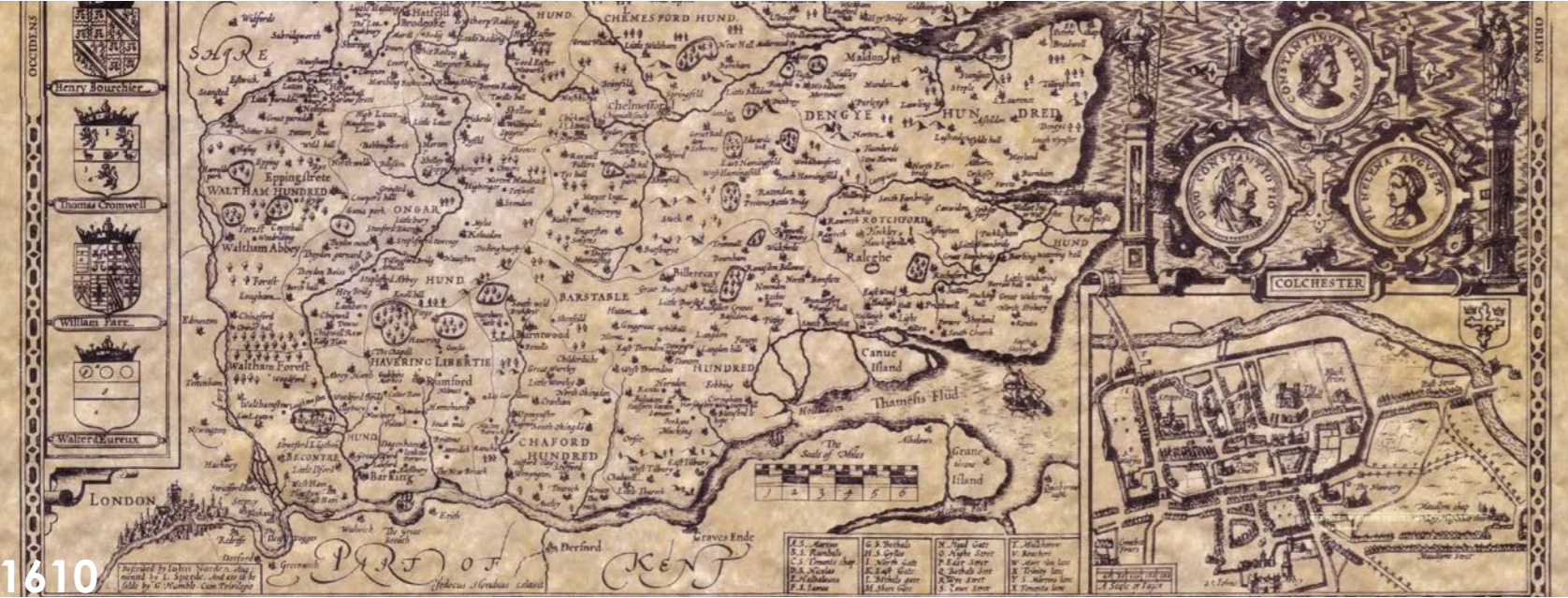
Pope Pius V issues a papal bull on 25th February declaring "Elizabeth, the pretended Queen of England and the servant of crime," to be a heretic and excommunicating ay who obeys her orders.

## 1588

In support of the Spanish Armada Pope Sixtus V renews the bull of excommunication. Henry's blockhouses on the Thames had been disarmed in 1553 but Tilbury is re-armed in 1588 during the Spanish Armada when troops mustered on the Thames at Tilbury, again in fear of invasion, and Queen Elizabeth makes her rousing speech on 9th August.

# 17th Century

## Dutch Raid

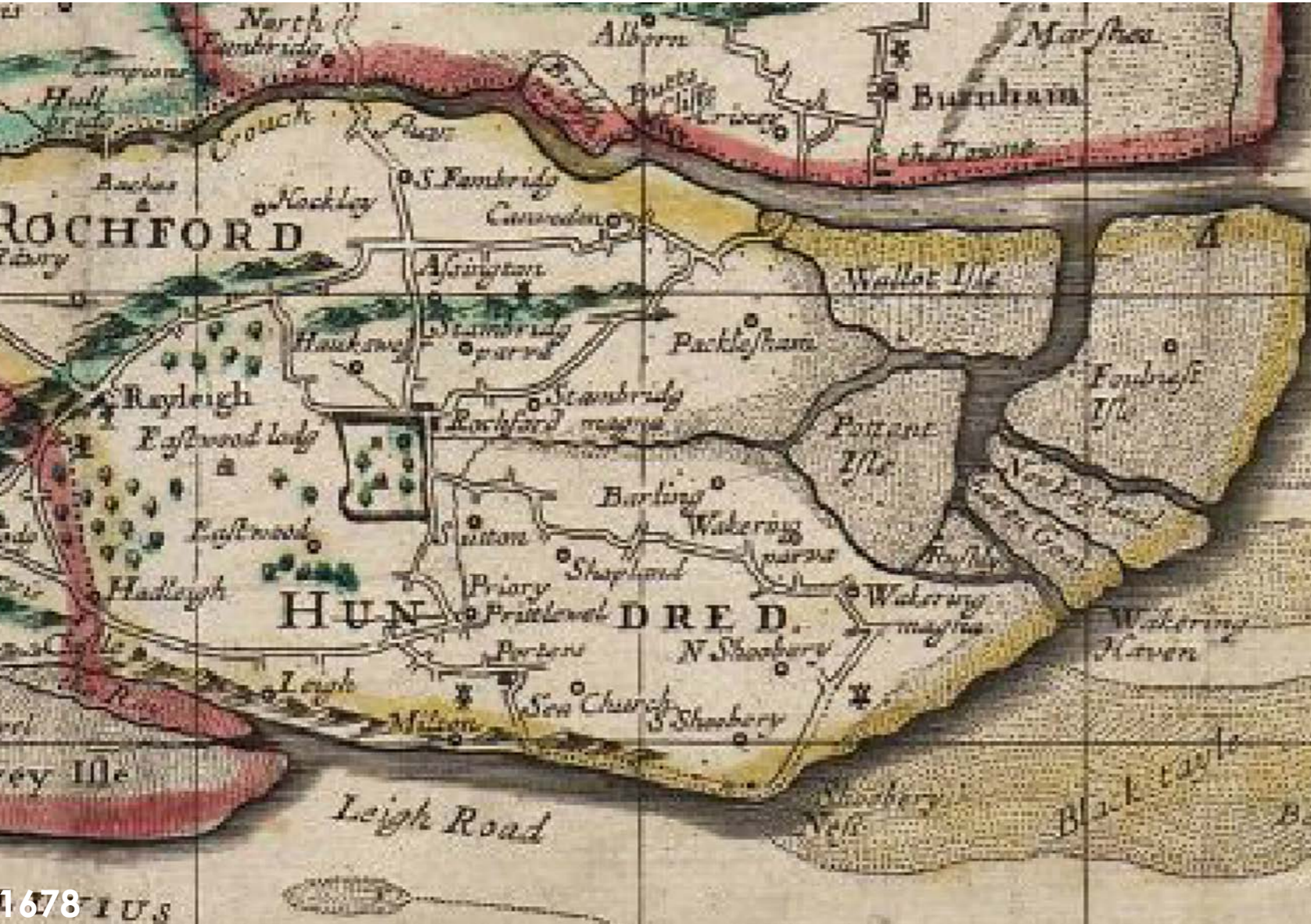


Kort en bondigh Verhael / van al het geen op de  
Rivier van Londen, en in de Haven van Chattam, Scapei

**17thC**  
In 1623 the Lord of the Manor from South Benfleet, Sir Henry Appleton, organised a Dutchman to construct dykes, seawalls and a drainage system of sluices to reclaim and protect land on Canvey Island from repeated flooding. Dutch refugees from the Spanish Catholic persecution started to settle on Canvey Island and elsewhere on the Essex coast leading to tension in the build up to the Dutch Wars. In 1667 the Dutch fleet entered the Thames and a raiding party landed on Canvey Island near to the Lobstersmack Inn by Holehaven and set alight to local farms. The raiders withdrew and on return to their ship were reprimanded for their foolhardy and hazardous adventure following which the Dutch fleet directed their attack on the Medway. Nevertheless, the incident again demonstrated the vulnerability of the Lower Thames Estuary to invasion.

# 17th Century

## Dutch Raid

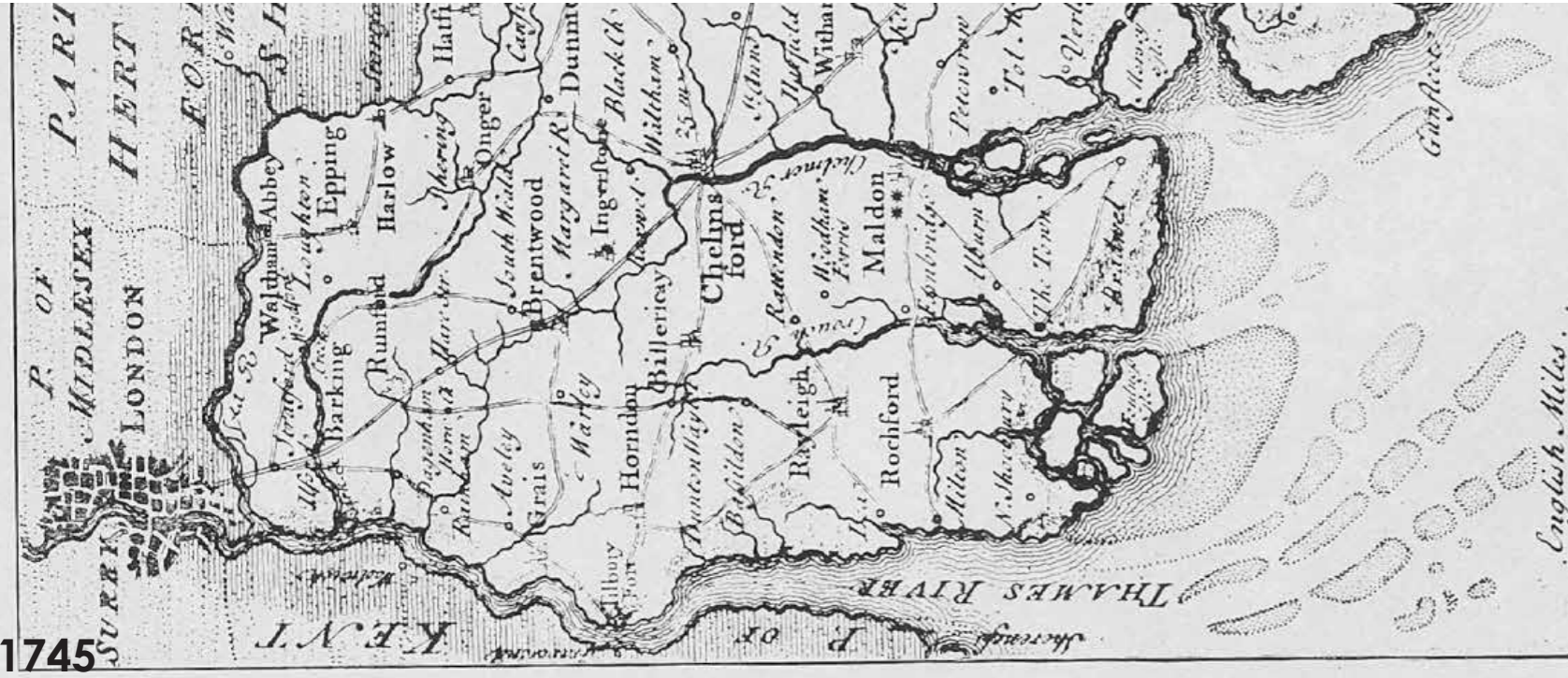


**1678**  
A map of Essex published by Francis Lamb, William Morgan and John Ogilby, indicates the road at South End continuing east along the shoreline of the marshes to Shorebury-ness, where mudflats extend into the tideway. Whether for access or defensive in nature following the Dutch raids, the continuation of the track east from South End indicates that the stretch of low-lying coast east of the cliffs at Milton provided an accessible landing from the tideway.

# 18th Century



1777 Chapman and Andre map



1745

## 18thC

### 1777 Chapman and Andre Map

The map indicates the villages of Prittlewell and Southchurch, with the mediaeval road running along the ridge of high ground above the Thames Estuary, successor to Roman route 119m, and the prominent high point at Milton. The map also indicates at South End the only road down to the coast between Leigh and Shoebury. The road rises to the road on the ridge of high ground and from Porters, a 16thC house on route 119m, a lane continues inland to Sutton. Later maps show a small brook running down from a spring at Porters to a shallow bay at the foot of the cliffs that descend from the west. From here marshlands extended along the shore to the east the first area of which had by the late 18thC been reclaimed as common land for the small fishermen's settlement of South End. Here in the first years of the 18thC a fisherman named Outing claims to have rediscovered that the foreshore was suitable for oyster beds. By the mid-18thC the shore from Hadleigh to Shoeburyness was developed for breeding oysters. In 1767, a row of fishermen's cottages, the first brick buildings of South End, were built to become Pleasant Terrace (demolished in the 1960's).

The Crow Stone erected in 1755 to re-mark the extent of the City of London's fishing rights is shown on the map. The Yantlet Line between this stone and the London Stone by Yantlet Creek was used to mark the former limit of the Port of London Authority jurisdiction.

By the mid-18thC the development of the oyster beds was joined by a new form of invasion stimulated by the fashion for bathing at seaside resorts. Resorts first developed elsewhere but local landowners started to provide accommodation in lodging houses and small inns to attract the trade to South End. Their success led to proposals in the 1790's for the development of a New South End on the clifftop at Milton to the west above the established Old South End down by the shore, as shown on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey maps c1806. Building of The Terrace and Grand Hotel at New South End started in 1791 and Nos.1-15 were substantially complete by 1794 but access by road from London was difficult by stage coach and little more was achieved, while Old South End on the river continued to thrive, doubling in size through the 1790's, including the opening of the Minerva Hotel on the seafront in 1793 and the Princess Caroline Baths in 1795.

# 18th Century

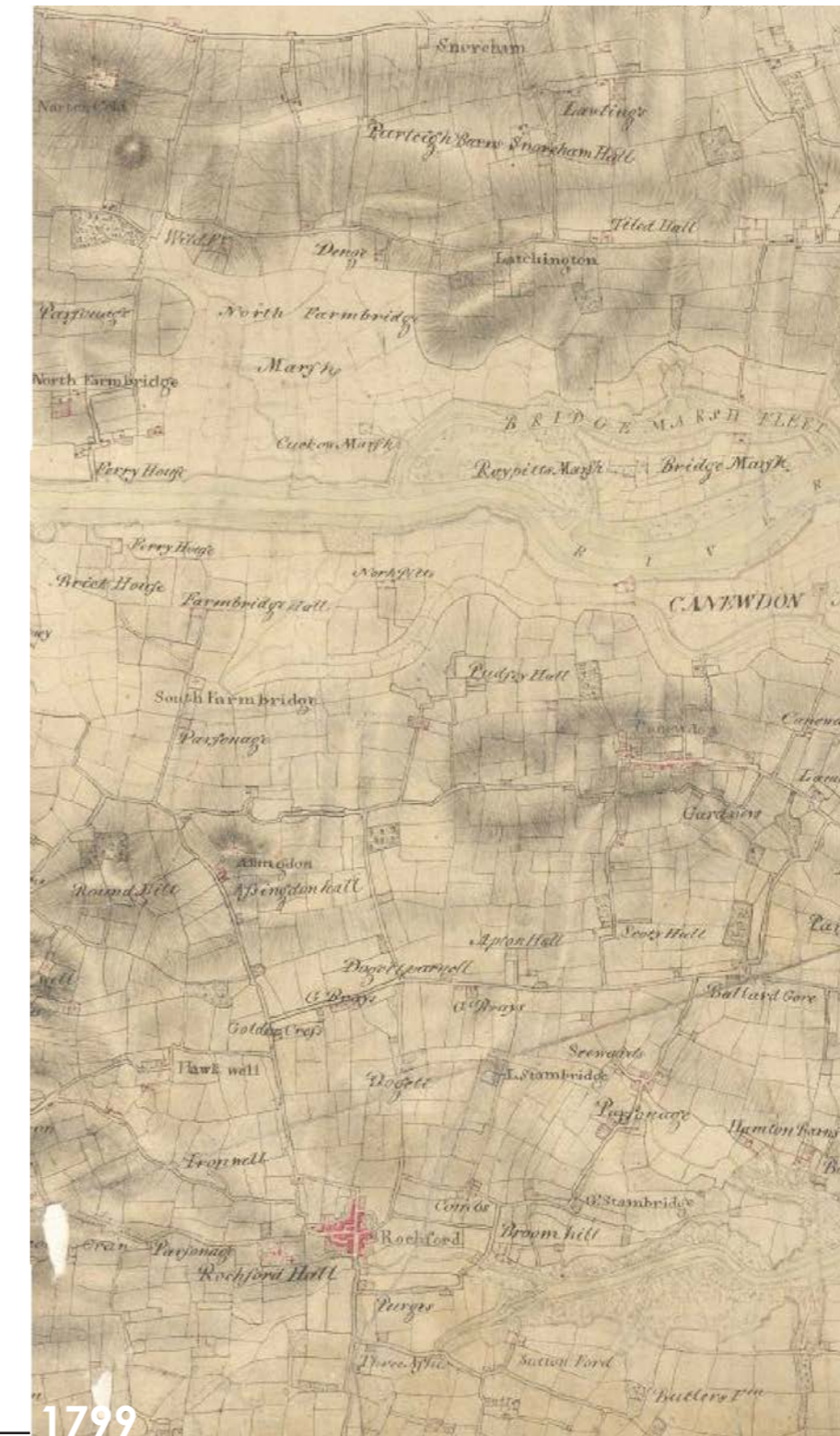


**1798**

A map of South Essex indicates the development of New South End and the location of the Rye Gut creek from the tideway towards Old South End.

**1799**

The Charles Budgen map of the Crouch in the vicinity of Althorne including the Bridge Marsh



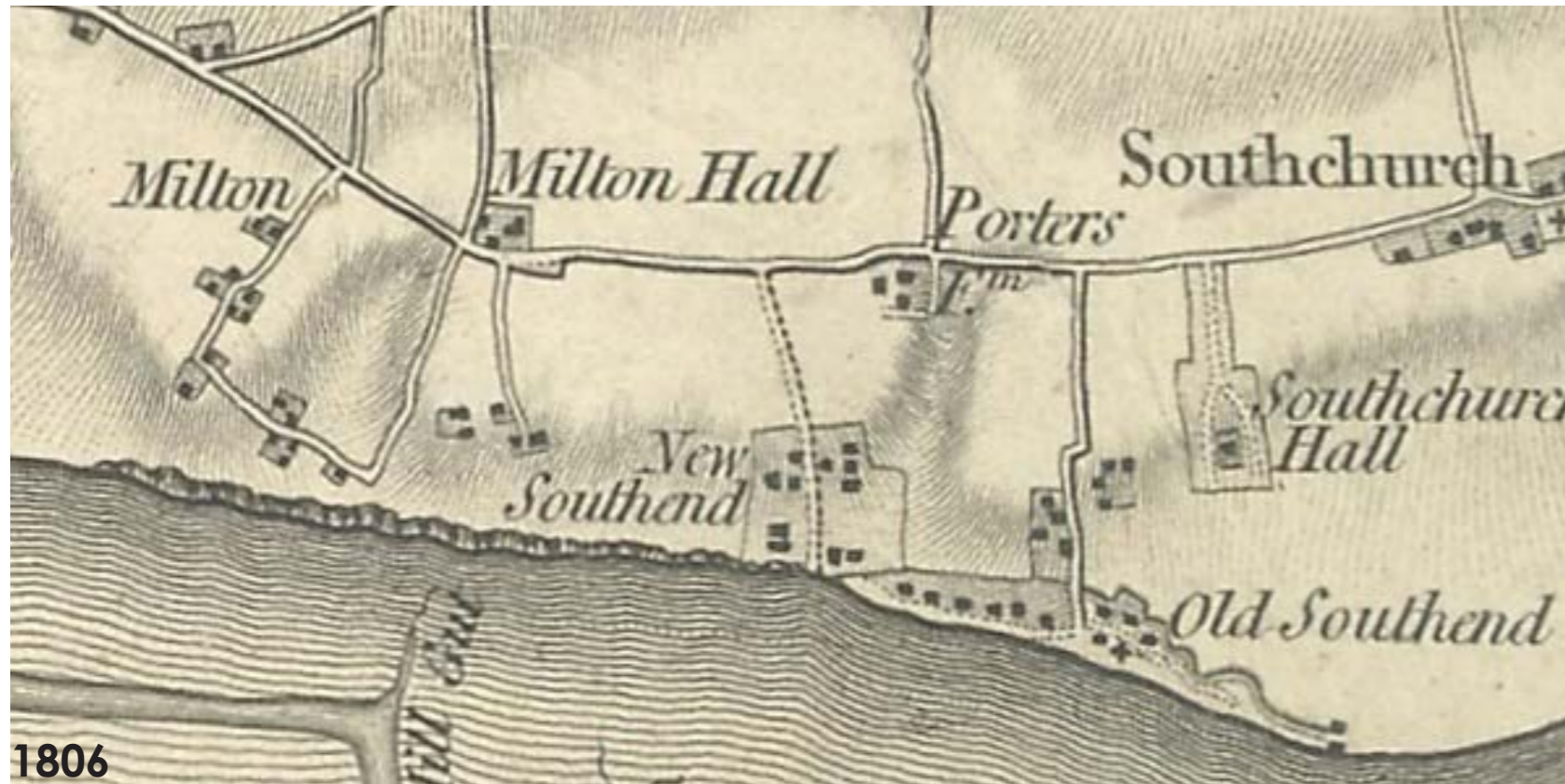
# 19th Century



**1801**  
A Map of South Essex from 1798 and “An Entirely New & Accurate Survey of the County of Kent, With Part of the County of Essex” is published by William Mudge in 1801 also shows the development of Old and New Southend, with the Rye Gut creek branching from the main tideway and heading towards South End.

**1806**  
First edition of the Ordnance survey map

# 19th Century



1806



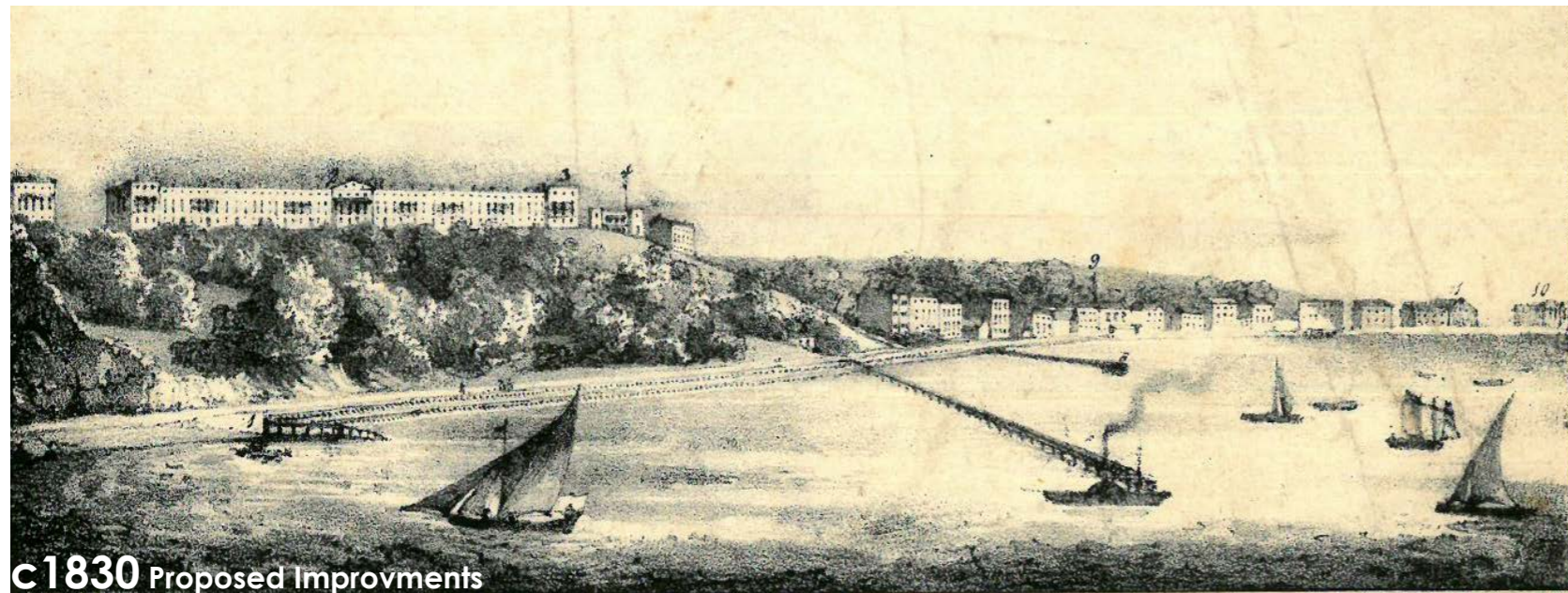
1810 Southend

1825

An action for trespass is heard at Essex Assizes for the collection of stones from the shore and cliffs. Coastal erosion from Leigh to South End had been accelerated by the collection of septaria or pudding stones for the manufacture of Roman cement through the late 18th and early 19thC before the advent of the cheaper and more stable Portland Cement. There was a factory for the manufacture of Roman cement at Leigh. The stones were first collected from the foreshore but with this source soon exhausted they were dug from the cliffs. Evidence at the hearing indicated that over the last forty years the sea had encroached by some 30 to 60 feet all along the shore of the two manors. Some of this would be due to natural erosion though evidently at the time it was felt that the excavation of septaria from the cliffs had made a significant contribution. An old resident of South End recalled trees either side of the old shore road noting that the road had now gone to the sea and the trees with it. This may be the road shown on 17thC maps of Essex along the shore from South End to Shoeburyness. The cliffs of Sheppey today are eroding at a considerable rate, without the excavation of septaria. If a quarter of the erosion along the Southend shore witnessed in the early 19thC over the previous forty years had been due to natural erosion and the rate had been constant since the Roman invasion the shoreline might be expected to have retreated by over 200 meters. For a wide range of reasons this estimate based on simple scaling is unlikely to be reliable, but it does illustrate how the shoreline could have been quite different and more accessible from the tideway, as demonstrated by the loss of the port at Milton from a part of the shore affected by the gathering of septaria. Though speculative it is worth noting that the alignment of the Roman road south along the Stambridge Road, from St. Mary and All Saints, Great Stambridge across the Roach to All Saints Sutton, if projected further south without turning to Sutton Lane, runs within a few meters of the high-status grave of Saeberht or Saegberht the Good and reaches the shore beside Shorefield Road, Milton, the route running parallel to and between Hamlet Court Road and Milton Road/ Westcliffe Avenue, the two 18thC roads of Milton that are aligned with the ancient field boundaries and presumably led down to the port. This alignment if carried across Sea Reach heads directly to the high ground of the Hoo near Allhallows, a suitable spot for scouting and surveying across the Lower Thames Estuary.

During the Napoleonic Wars there was renewed fear of an invasion from France. With Dover and Chatham quite well defended attention again falls on the precedents and vulnerability of an invasion on the Thames Estuary. From 1801 Lord Nelson is given the task of defending the Thames Estuary and East Coast. With his flagship moored by the Nore he visits South End with Lady Hamilton. Sir Thomas Wilson, an owner of one of the houses in the Terrace builds a short jetty below the hotel in 1802 to aid landings, this New Jetty being the breakwater seen in the "Improvements" print. Jonas Asplin of Great Wakering and John Lodwick of Southend raise and command in 1803 a troop of volunteer cavalry and a company of infantry to resist any attempted invasion. The men based in Southend agree a scorched earth policy of burning crops and buildings, slaughtering animals and destroying bridges and roads should the enemy land. Princesses Charlotte and Princess Caroline of Brunswick stay at New South End and the terrace and hotel are renamed in 1805 the Royal Terrace and Royal Hotel. The Southend Theatre opens in 1804 between the Minerva Hotel and the old Castle Pub in Old South End. In 1818 a new pub, The Castle, is built beside the shore at Old South End and a year later steamboats start providing access to Southend, requiring ladies to be manhandled into flat-bottomed rowing boats to be towed ashore by horse or man.

# 19th Century

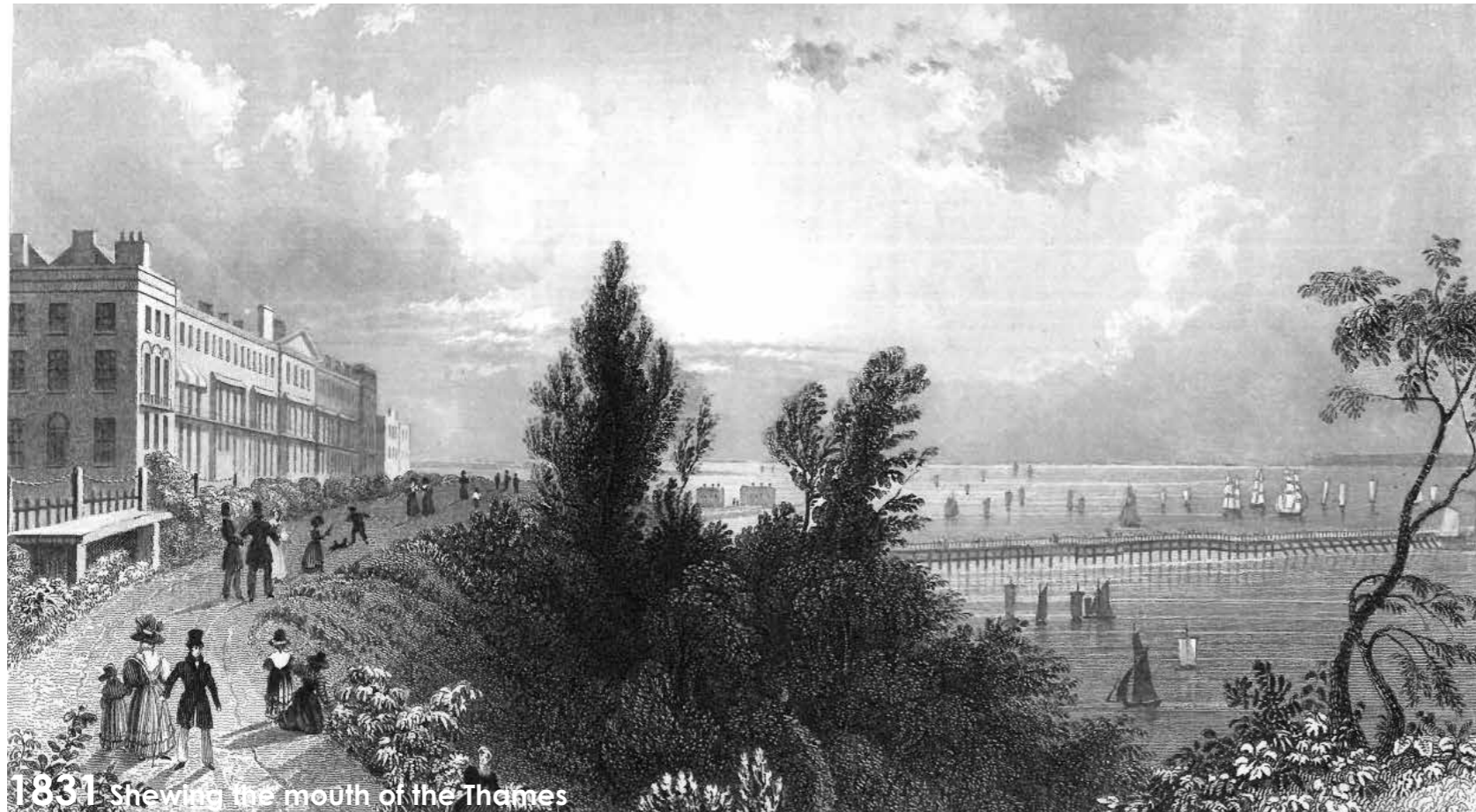


Though considered all part of a visit to Southend-on-Sea, the difficulties of landing on the north shore from a steamboat underlined the need for better access. Journeys from London by sail had been co-ordinated with the tides but the steamboats could arrive at any time, high or low tide. By 1829, Major William General Strutt, who lived at Rayleigh House on Marine Parade, South End, working with the leading promoter Sir William Heygate, Lord Mayor of London for 1822-23, who resided at Porters in South End, obtained royal assent for an Act to build South End's wooden pier. The first stone of the pier embankment was laid on Saturday, 25th July 1829, a year when once every seven years the Lord Mayor of London also visited the Crow Stone. The wooden pier opened in June 1830 and at 600 feet long was too short to provide direct access at low tide. It was extended to 1,500 feet when a toll gate was also erected at the entrance in 1833, the year that Disraeli visited South End and stayed at Porters. Apparently, funding was inadequate, resulting in compromises on the required length of the pier and a staged reduction in width as it extended from the shore. The original five-year period for construction had to be extended by the Pier Act of 1835. The pier was extended in 1835, 1845 and 1848 to become the longest in the world, enabling steamers to moor at the pierhead through all states of the tide.



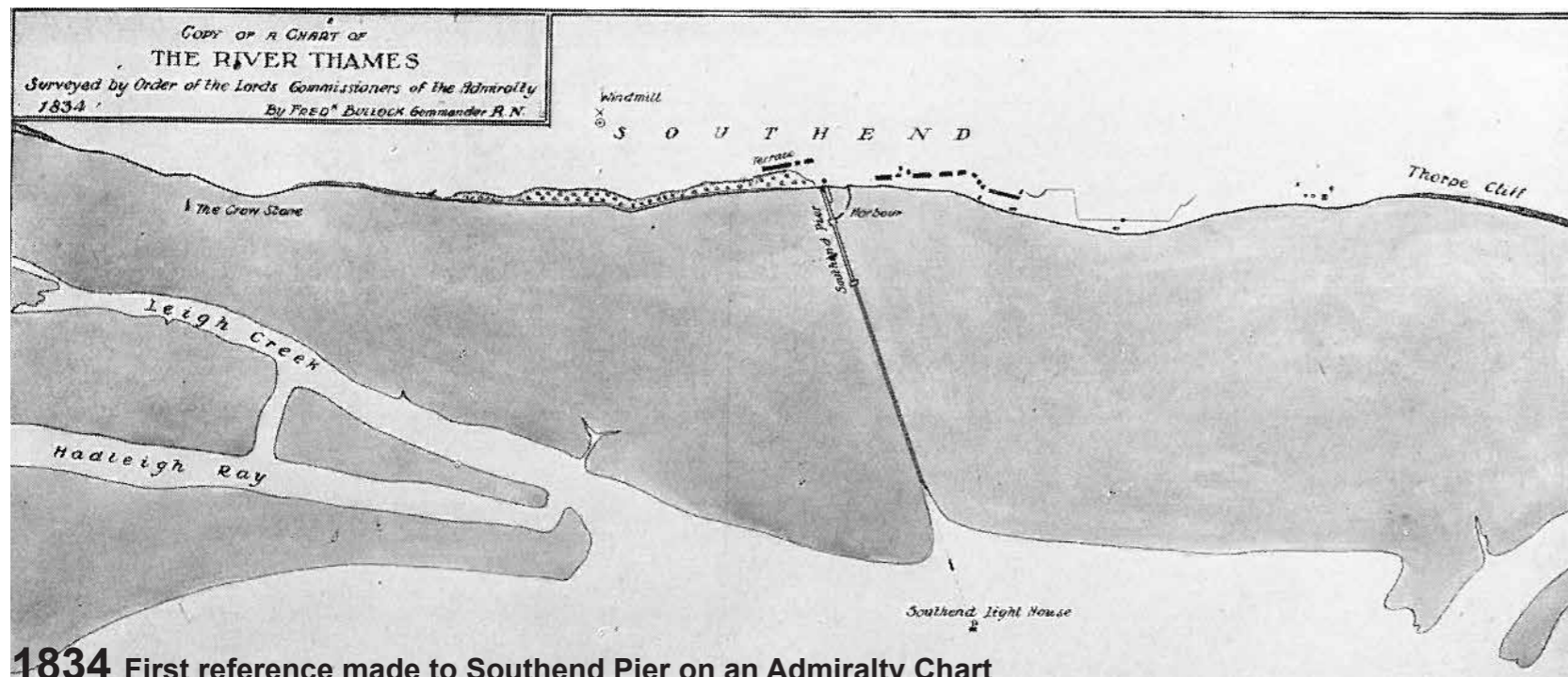
A curious aspect of the pier is the alignment from the shore directly towards Garrison Point at Sheerness. Celebrations on laying the first stone concluded in the evening, when the company separated after drinking to the "auspicious commencement of a work so long wanted and so likely to be advantageous to the proprietors as well as useful to the trade and shipping of the river, the convenience of the Naval and Military Services at Sheerness and the Nore, the agriculture of the adjacent country and the more commodious landing of passengers and goods." Soon after the first pier opened there were steamboat trips to Sheerness, Chatham, Walton, Harwich and Ipswich and passengers could embark from the pier for Calais and Edinburgh etc., "by means of signals, arranged with Mr. Patterson, the Company's agent at the Pier." As the pier could not initially reach low-tide a vessel called the Southend Lighthouse or Mount was moored in deep water to receive steamship passengers who then transferred to small boats on a channel beside a causeway that led up the shore to the pierhead, as shown on an Admiralty chart of Southend Pier surveyed in 1834. Depending on the state of the tide passengers would ride in the boats along the channel or transfer to the muddy causeway and walk to the pierhead. The engineer was Mr. Walker who from the outset appears to have arranged for the pier, causeway and lighthouse to be set up on a direct line from the shore to Garrison Point, Sheerness.

# 19th Century



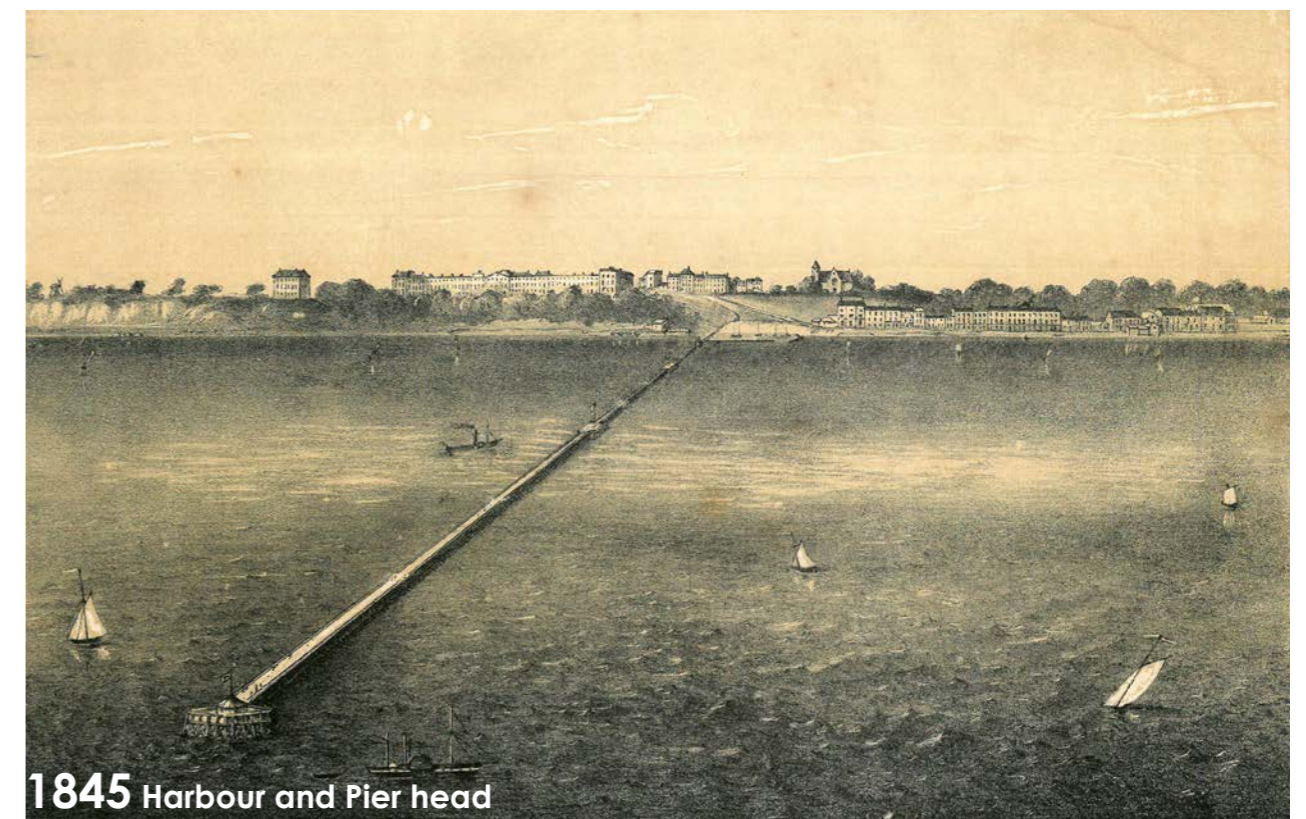
1831 Shewing the mouth of the Thames

At the time of the Bill in 1829 Garrison Point was still occupied by the fort built in 1669 following the Dutch Raid of 1667 that had destroyed the original blockhouse built by Henry VIII in 1547. The first of five proposals for the Bill called for the construction of a pier, jetty or causeway from the shore to deep water “where the flag will be hoisted and a light kept constantly burning in the night, so that passengers as well as goods may be landed or shipped at all times of the tide without delay....”. The Bill that received Royal Assent on Thursday May 14th 1829 included a provision that the lights could only be exhibited with the permission of the Corporation of Trinity House of Deptford Strond. The direct line from the pier to Garrison Point cannot be followed by passenger vessels because of the shallows near the Nore, but it does cross both the Thames and the Medway estuaries, so with lights at each end it appears that there was an intention that the pier would provide communication across and supervision of the entrances to both the Thames and Medway Estuaries to improve defence and provide safer navigation. The records of the hearings of 1835 include one of Mr. Walker, then the President of the Institute of Civil Engineering, noting how the pier “would not only connect the opposite shore of Kent and Essex but also make easy communications from the entrance of the Thames up to London, there being at present no communication on (the Essex) side.”. so, it appears from the outset that one purpose of the pier was to provide better communications between Kent and Essex for navigation and defence.



1834 First reference made to Southend Pier on an Admiralty Chart

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1845 Harbour and Pier head

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# 19th Century



Southend from the London Tilbury and Southend Railway



Shrewburyness Garrison

## 1849-54

The Royal Artillery at Woolwich starts to make temporary use of ranges at Shoeburyness where they are not constrained by the shipping on the Thames. The Crimean War stimulates further research on artillery, resulting in the permanent development of the Royal Artillery ranges and associated buildings at Shoeburyness from 1854, in effect re-invigorating the location of the fortified Roman settlement.

## 1855-56

The London, Tilbury and Southend Railway (LTS Line) built by Peto, Brassey and Betts reaches Leigh Old Town station in 1855 and the original terminus at Southend Central Station on 1st March 1856. The first line ran south by the river on the route through Tilbury. The steamers from Tower Pier remained a popular form of access to Southend Pier up to WW2.

## 1859-61

Peto, Brassey and Betts the railway developers lease 40 acres of land from Daniel Scratton to develop the first phase of the planned Cliff Town to attract visitors and retired residents to Southend.

## 1862-63

The garrison at Shoeburyness is completed in 1862 and the following year a thousand Royal Marines undertake a major exercise with a mock invasion of Southend. They succeeded to land and penetrate to Cliff Town before retiring to their boats, underlining the historic precedents and fear of invasion at South End.

## 1866

The Overend, Gurney and Company banking failure causes widespread insolvencies including that of Peto, Brassey and Betts.

## 1871

The Bank Holidays Act stimulates day trips to Southend-on-Sea. The second phase of the Cliff Town development is completed. The day-tripper invasion gets underway.

## 1884

Extension of LTS from Southend Central to Shoeburyness.

## 1885-88

More direct line opens between Barking and Pitsea

## 1888-89

The New Essex Line opens from Shenfield to Southend Victoria

# 19th Century Map

1873 MAP



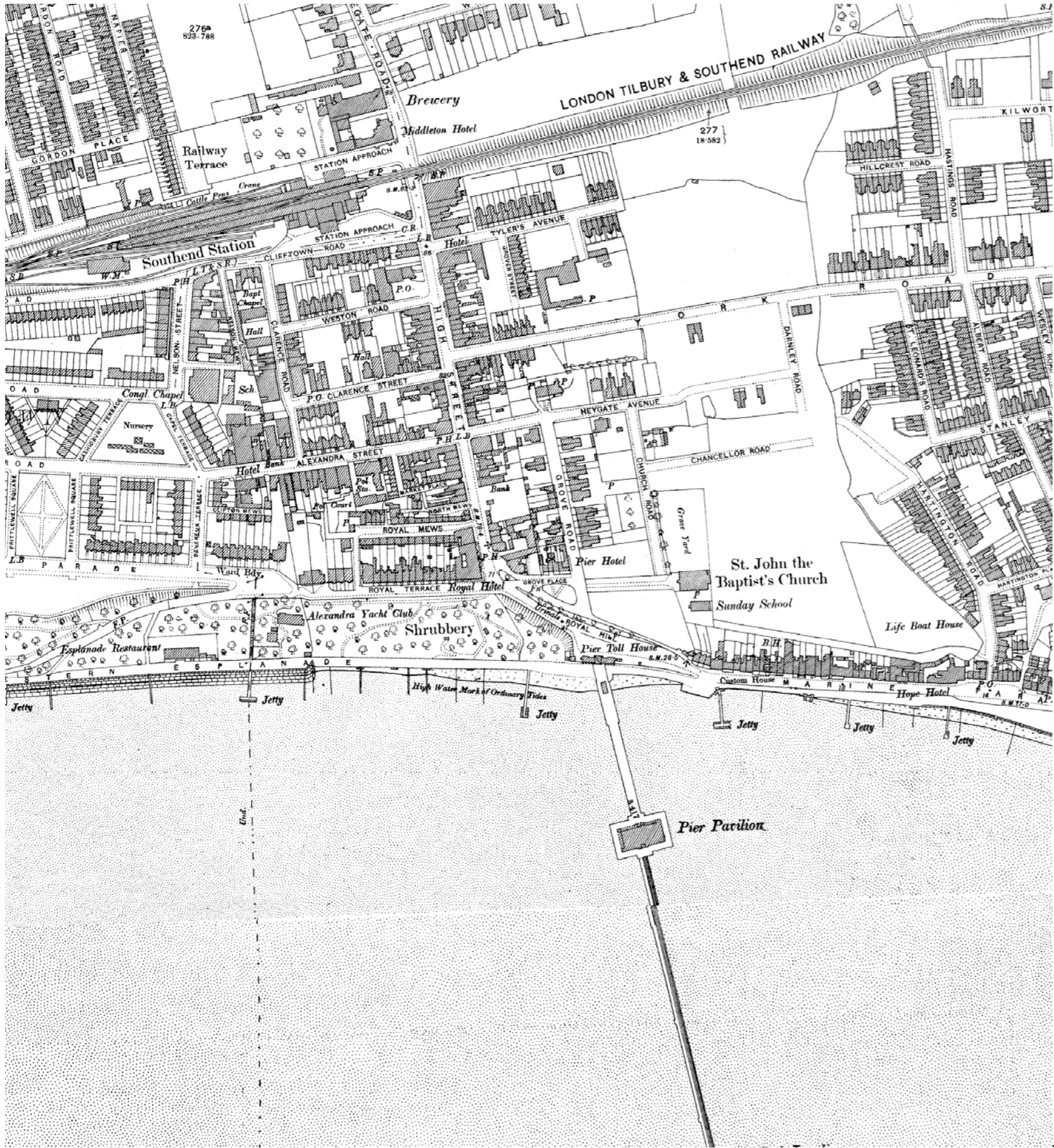
# 19th Century Map

1880's MAP

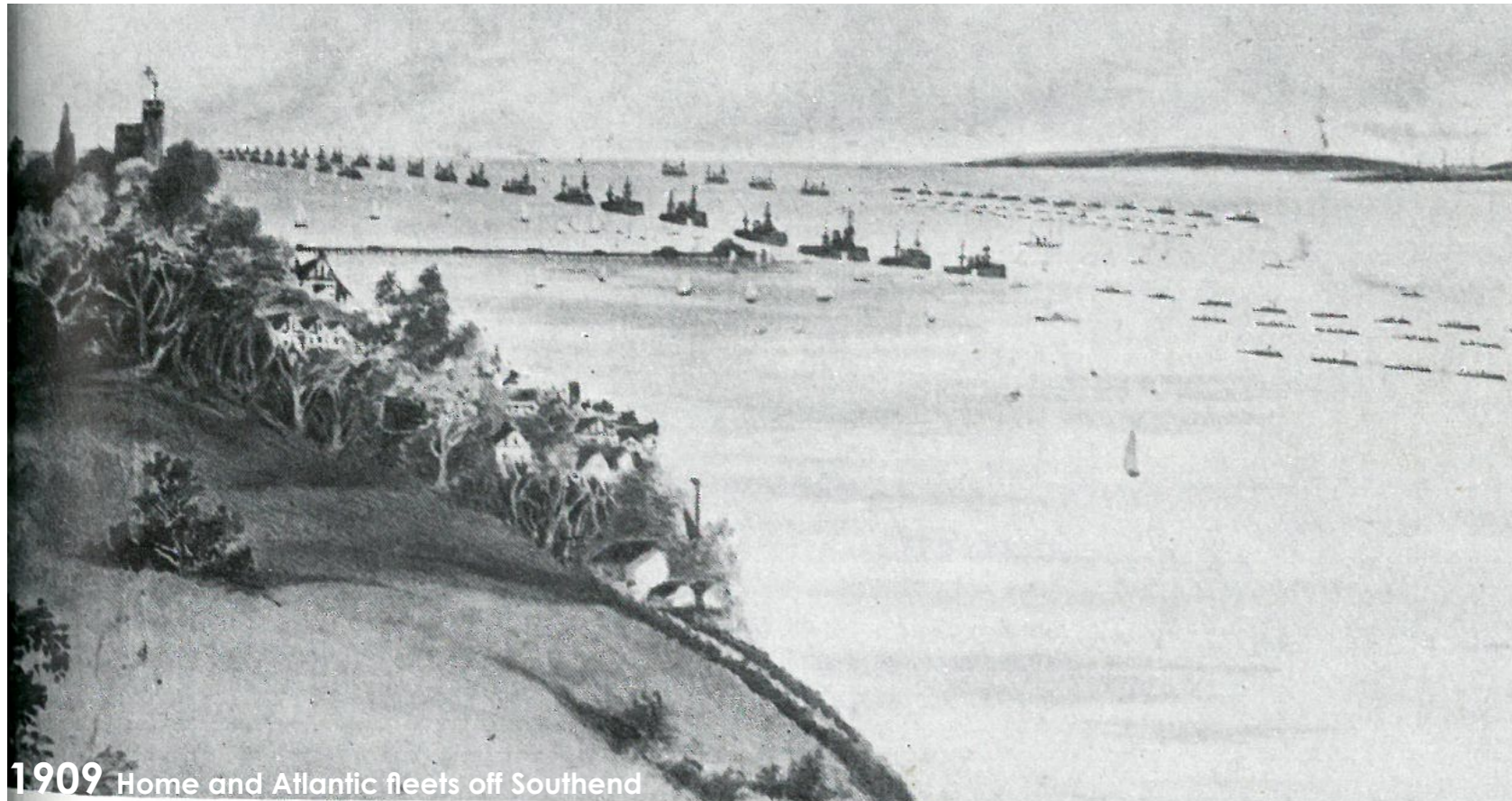


# 19th Century Map

1895 MAP



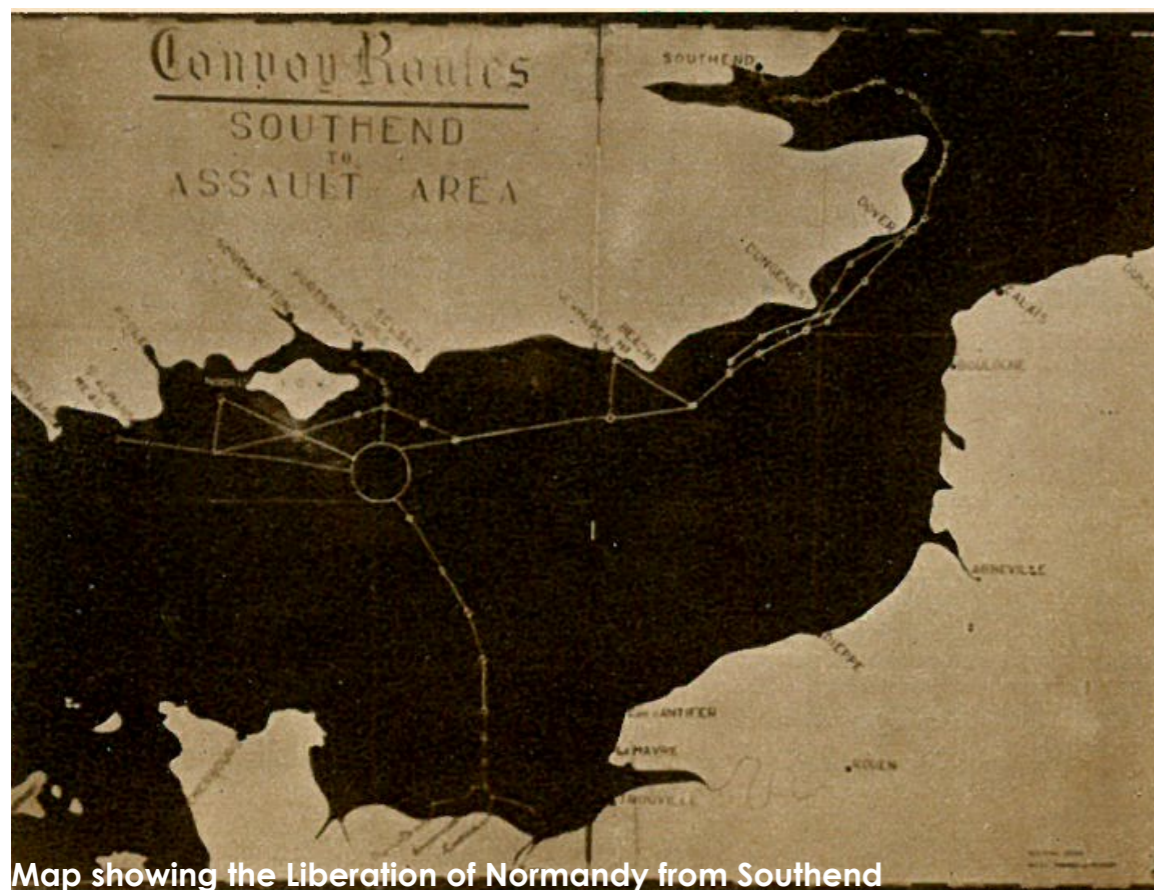
# 20th Century



**1909** Home and Atlantic fleets off Southend

## **1939-45**

The vulnerability of the Lower Thames Estuary to invasion is recognised once again during WW2 when Southend Pier becomes H.M.S Leigh, in command of the Thames, first for defence of the realm and then for the D-day preparations.



**Map showing the Liberation of Normandy from Southend**

# 21st Century



# SUMMARY



Southend September 2018

Southend, from Stratende, takes its name from the landing of a Roman road on the estuary that was used to supply the east flank of a broad advance during the invasion, from the high ground on the north side of the Thames Estuary, across the Roach and the Crouch to a crossing of the Blackwater in the vicinity of Maldon where the advance turned north-east to join others for the capture of Camulodunum, all within the sixteen-day period when Claudius accompanied Aulus Plautius for the invasion of Britain. The route for the advance results in the subsequent Roman road network and centuriation of the landscape. The Saxon migrations and Viking raids made use of the same route, which was revived following the Norman invasion but lost through the Mediaeval period when the river crossings of the Roach and the Crouch were repeatedly inundated by the North Sea.

The vulnerability of the location to invasion has long been recognised. Southend as the landing in the small valley, where the cliffs on the north bank of the Thames Estuary descended to the shore and the higher ground turned inland before descending to the marshes, has played a significant role in the development and history of Britain.



Southend November 2018

M Willingale. November 2018

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