

Sound Mirrors Timeline

- 1915 - Early War Office reference to the subject of listening devices for aeroplanes by means of acoustic arrangements
- 1915 - Trials of a 16 ft Sound Mirror dug into the chalk near Maidstone in Kent
- 1916 - Wooden paraboloid sound collector 60cms diameter used in First World War by the French
- 1917 - Larger mirror 3 metres in diameter tested with an aircraft
- 1917/18 - 15 ft diameter Sound Mirrors dug into the chalk at Fan Bay, east of Dover, and Joss Gap saw operational use against enemy aircraft
- 1922 - 20ft diameter concrete Sound Mirror built at West Hythe
- 1925 - 20ft Hythe Sound Mirror trials
- 1927 - Proposal to erect three similar 20ft Sound Mirrors along the coast. In the event, only two were built, one at Greatstone and one at Abbots Cliff, between Folkestone and Dover
- 1927 - Plans under consideration for the building of 200ft wide Sound Mirror at Greatstone
- 1928 - 20ft Sound Mirrors completed at Greatstone and Abbots Cliff
- 1928 - A spur line to the Sound Mirrors was built off the RH&DR, known at the time as the War Department Branch, which was used to transport men, equipment and building materials to the mirrors site. The branch line was close in 1951
- 1929/1930 - 30ft Sound Mirrors built at Greatstone and West Hythe
- 1930 - Proposals for more 30ft Sound Mirrors, to defend Portsmouth. No records have been found of these or any other 30ft mirrors
- 1930 - 200ft Sound Mirror built and ready for use at Greatstone
- 1932/33/34 - Exercises undertaken to test the six concrete Sound Mirrors in Kent; the three at Greatstone, two at West Hythe and one at Abbots Cliff
- 1933 - Two storey concrete listening room constructed at the 200ft Sound Mirror
- 1935 - The first practical Radar system was produced, with trials carried out at Orfordness in Suffolk
- 1935 - Because of serious problems with noise from the residential development of Greatstone and Lydd-on-Sea, consideration was given to abandoning the site at Greatstone with proposals to move to a new site at Dungeness
- 1935 - Planned work to build Sound Mirrors in the Thames Estuary were abandoned in view of the possible development of alternative methods of detection ie Radar
- 1936 - Experiments continue at the 200ft Sound Mirror at Greatstone
- 1937 - Re-alignment of the Southern Railway branch line to New Romney caused problems at the Greatstone site
- 1937 - 200ft Sound Mirror at Greatstone closed down
- 1939 - Instructions of the General Staff to destroy the six Kent Sound Mirrors were never carried out. Five still exist, with the sixth, the 20ft Hythe mirror, was only lost through natural causes.

Reference: Richard N Scarth's book *Echoes from the Sky: A Story of Acoustic Defence*