

LANDING CRAFT INFANTRY

Unique ID: MAS-100012

Object type certainty: Probably

Workflow status: Published

This hulk is situated on the River Deben, just outside of Melton (Suffolk) and is estimated to measure 11.5 m in length and 3 m in width. The structure is rectangular in shape with squared edges and straight sides. One end suggests the presence of a bulkhead and a hatch or doorway, while the other end is missing. Parts of possible rudder components are located close to the bulkhead, suggesting that this is the stern. Internal frames can be seen throughout the remaining structure; estimated measurements reveal a spacing of approximately 0.42 m. The hull is constructed of wood in a double diagonal layout, with metal plating over the top on the exterior of the hull. The hulk shows extensive deterioration and many of its fixtures and fittings have been stripped. A large proportion of the vessel is now missing.

The shape, size and construction are all indicative of a British Landing Craft Assault (LCA) from the Second World War (WW2). The basic structure of this type of landing craft was a double diagonal wooden hull, commonly built using mahogany (Lavery 2009:20), although other timber species were used to keep up with the number of vessels required. Steel armour plating was then added as an outer skin. The overall length of an LCA was 12.7 m (41.6 ft) with a beam of 3 m (10 ft) (Royal Marines Museum). The main feature of LCA's was the bow ramp, used for amphibious landings such as on D-Day. This part of the vessel appears to be missing and may explain why the hulk has no bulkhead or bow features. The main use of the vessel was for troop transport; this featureless area took up most of the length of the hull. The internal frame spacing of LCA's was 0.45 m (Lavery 2009:21). At the after end of the troop compartment was a watertight bulkhead that separated the engine room (Lavery 2009:19). This bulkhead had a hatch for access by the stoker, which may be what is visible on the remaining hulk. After the engine room there was no further armour plating, which serves to explain the complete loss of the stern. It is difficult to positively identify this vessel as, although the hulk displays several characteristics of an LCA, with the overall lack of structure it is possible that the remains may be of a barge or similar vessel.

Notes:

The British LCA was developed early in WW2 to meet the need for landing troops on invasion beaches, being built between 1939 and 1945. The LCA was developed from a prototype designed by John Thornycroft Ltd, who then took up much of the LCA construction throughout the war (Lavery 2009:18). The landing craft proved to be a vital tool in WW2, particularly in the invasion of mainland Europe. The vessel allowed troops to be ferried from the main transport to the beachhead, with a shallow draft allowing it to be driven right into the shallows. Additionally, the low silhouette and almost silent engines added to the success of the vessel.

If this vessel is an LCA, its location suggests that it was possibly used as a training vessel. The south coast of Suffolk was extensively used for all kinds of training during WW2. A large area directly to the east of Woodbridge, and across the river from the hulk, was acquisitioned by the military for training purposes (Liddiard and Sims 2014:37). The coastline also made it ideal for training in amphibious landings.

The NRHE and Suffolk HER reference numbers cited in this record refer to the 'Melton (north) hulk assemblage', an assemblage of seven hulked vessels in the intertidal zone at Melton, on the north bank of the River Deben. This site is recorded in two surveys: *Rapid Field Survey of the Suffolk Coast and Intertidal Zone* (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service 2003) and *Hulk Assemblages: Assessing the national context* (Museum of London Archaeology 2011, 2013), however no vessel types are recorded. It has also been recorded through the Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network (CITiZAN) No. 82023.

Class: Maritime craft **Sub class:** Landing craft

Subsequent actions

Current location of find: In situ

Subsequent action after recording: Submitted as wreck to the Receiver of Wreck

Chronology

Broad period: MODERN

Period from: MODERN

Period to: MODERN

Date from: Circa AD 1939

Date to: Circa AD 1945

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Length: 11500 mm

Width: 3000 mm

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Friday 30th September 2016

Personal details

Found by: This information is restricted for your login.

Recorded by: T H

Secondary identifier: M F

Other reference numbers

NRHE monument number: 1526476

Other reference: Suffolk HER: TM 25 SE 52

Materials and construction

Primary material: Wood

Secondary material: Steel

Completeness: Incomplete

Spatial metadata

County or Unitary authority: [Suffolk](#) (County)

Spatial coordinates

4 Figure: TM2850

Four figure Latitude: 52.1013196

Four figure longitude: 1.32763397

1:25K map: TM2850

1:10K map: TM25SE

Display [four figure position](#) on What3Words

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 1 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Coastal walking

Discovery circumstances: Coastal walking

Current location: In situ

General landuse: Coastland

Specific landuse: Inter-tidal

CITiZAN, 2016 '[Interactive Coastal Map](#), , .