It was estimated that 28,000 oysters were destroyed.

In 1869, severe gales and high tides once again devastated Warren and Starcross following a great storm in 1838. The town's hard sea defences experienced a lot of damage, which eventually caused the failure and subsequent subsidence of a section of the town's sea wall. The beach was also lowered as a result of this storm, lowering its effectiveness as a coastal defence. In 2014, breaching many of our sea defences, and causing several homes and businesses in the Estuary to flood. However, the shape of the estuary has long been influenced by stormy weather at sea.

In the 20th century, the period between 1937-1946 proved devastating for Dawlish Warren in particular. From 1937-1939, a series of storms and high tides removed most of the bungalows that were sited on the Warren, and the storms that occurred between 1944-1946 washed away the end of the Warren; flattening the end of the spit and detaching it from the main body, so that its previous shape existed only at low tide. Further stormy weather in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s also exacerbated the existing damage and caused further damage to the Warren.

The storms freshest in our mind are probably those that hit the UK in January and February 2014, breaching many of our sea defences, and causing several homes and businesses in the Estuary to flood. However, the shape of the estuary has long been influenced by stormy weather at sea.

In 1817 a violent storm washed five acres of the Warren away, sadly killing many rabbits. In 1824, another storm caused the sea to completely breach the land at Dawlish, and to inundate the lower part of Exmouth, in addition to flooding and damaging several houses in Starcross. 14 years later, a quarter of Dawlish Warren was washed away by a storm, and several sea defences were breached again in Exminster, Exmouth, Dawlish Warren and Starcross following a great storm in 1838.

In 1869, severe gales and high tides once again devastated the coast, and around 300 yards of rail track were washed away east of Dawlish (in comparison, around a third of this length was impacted by the February 2014 storms). The Warren was seriously breached, and sand filled the oyster beds and choked the breeding stock. It was estimated that 28,000 oysters were destroyed.
In 1284, Isabella de Fortibus, Countess of Devon, made two weirs across the river upstream of Topsham to drive a new mill, leaving a 20' gap to allow shipping to pass. When Hugh de Courtenay, Earl of Devon, inherited Isabella's titles and possessions, he stopped the gap, forcing all Exeter-bound ships to unload at Topsham, adding to his wealth. This continued for over 200 years until 1538, when Henry Courtenay was executed and his lands forfeited to the crown for alleged conspiracy against Henry VIII. Efforts to re-open the weir failed and it was decided that a canal by-passing the weirs provided the only solution. Built by John Trew during 1564-1566, this was the first canal in England to use the pound-lock.

The principal port for Exeter in the 14th century, its subsequent decline partly due to the construction of railways and modern iron ships being too large for the shallow river Exe. The industrial revolution in the north devastated Topsham's commercial importance.

The emergence of Exton in 1342 was probably linked to development of a water mill, which led to the construction of a road to take corn from the Great Field to Exton by 1321, later known as Rydon Lane. In 1868, the two water mills at Rydon and Exton were experiencing serious difficulties in dry weather. Rydon Mill stopped production in 1909, and Exton Mill stopped in the early 1920s.

Exmouth

In the early 18th-19th century, Exmouth attracted wealthy people who enjoyed the sea views and bathing areas, including Lady Nelson and Lady Byron. Exmouth served as an important port for over 700 years, from the early 12th century onwards, with the construction of a formal dock in the mid-1860s. However, economic decline and the closure of Exmouth station's branch lines to the docks in the mid-20th century led to their closure in 1989.