



Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology

# Cotswold Canals Restoration

Phase 1b. Saul Junction to The Ocean, Stonehouse

**Project S10**

## **Some Vessels in the Purton Boat Graveyard Associated with the Stroudwater Canal**

by Paul Barnett April 2007 Issue 1  
[Amended December 2017 Issue 2]

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These notes describe some of the vessels that operated on the Stroudwater Canal. This work forms part of an extensive study by the Author on the hulks now at Purton.

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This work is an extension of the study by the Author on the hulks now at Purton

[Editorial Note 2017: At the time that this paper was first issued six named hulks were identified in it as vessels that had operated on the Stroudwater Canal. Further research has shown that these vessels were too large to have used the Stroudwater Canal and the relevant section has been amended. To avoid undue confusion the title of the article has not been changed even though there is no longer any significant reference to the Purton Hulks]

In 1876, James Herbert took on a new role as master of the barge *Reliance* in the ownership of the Stroud Gas Light & Coke Co. For the next 20 years he averaged 40 trips a year to Newport to collect 65 to 70 tons of coal.

### **Contents of this document:**

Notes on James Herbert

Photo of James Herbert

Various other memories of *Reliance*

Notes Compiled by the late Fred Rowbotham

Seven Trows including diagrams showing typical rigging

List of Barges and longboats that have used the Stroudwater Canal since 1899

Memories of the trows

This includes the Trow "Reliance" which carried no more than sixty tons to Stroud owing to the lack of water in Stroud Water Canal.

It also mentions four Stroud Barges.

"Finis"

"Severn Bridge"

"Perseverance"

"Lavender"

An extract from the thesis

## **Fore and Aft**

L. P. Barnett

### **A Severnside Maritime Dynasty**

Following a chance meeting one summer afternoon at the Saul Boat show in July 2003, with the wild looking yet quietly retiring local man Mr Adrian Gordon, I quickly discovered that this sleepy rural inlet and the surrounding hamlets first impressions were deceptive as they had once been the centre of a thriving and prosperous maritime empire. As we spoke it soon became apparent that Adrian's expansive knowledge of local maritime history had been passed down the generations first hand from his Great Grandfather and master mariner Capt. James Herbert via his Grandfather William James Herbert known as Bill, who like his brothers Ben, Joe, Jim and George, were put to work afore the mast of their fathers fleet of vessels.

Further and with Adrian's continued help and support, I will present, by way of this local families activities, a representation of the importance and dependence upon the coastal trade by this rural idle.

Gloucester with its geographical location at the head of the River Severn has always been associated with the sea despite its land locked appearance. As a result, the area has produced several prominent maritime families including the Aldridge's, Shaw's, Hipwood's, Evans, Ayland's, Gower's, John's, Rice's, Nurse's, Chadbourn's, Rowle's, Davis's, Langford's, Butt's, Price's and Herbert's to name but a few.

Throughout the ages these sea fairing men have locally built, maintained, owned and plied numerous vessels of various sizes in both the inland trade to the Midlands and further a field deepwater, in order to earn a living and thus support their families and growing economies in a cottage industry. Here is the story of one such family, The Herberts of Frampton on Severn.

Although James Herbert's story began in humble surrounding following his birth in 1850 to farm labourer Thomas Herbert & wife Eliza, he went onto become the head of a prominent family within the thriving maritime communities of Frampton, Saul and Arlingham. Furthermore this was achieved by his astute ability to recognise the potential of the regions geographical proximity to the turbulent waters of the adjacent River Severn and expansion of counties nearby canal infrastructure.

Indeed and upon his later business successes, James as ship owner/master, relocated his family to the newly built Kimberley House, Fretherne Bridge and thus oversee his affairs, which were ideally situated close by and adjacent to the regions North South East West maritime crossroads of the 1779 opened Severn and Thames Canal and more recent 1827 extension of the Gloucester and Berkley Canal, the River Severn's bypass to the countries industrial Heartlands.

That may be and upon leaving school, James keen hindsight overrode his earliest influences as he declined the farming life and joined the crew of one of the numerous small sailing vessels which were then common place trading around the Severn Estuary and Bristol Channel.

Little is known of James early career at this time, however his fortunes dramatically changed upon his marriage in the Parish Church of St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester on August 25<sup>th</sup> 1869 to Emma Jemima Aldridge and he was duly blessed with 17 Children of which the symbol Δ denotes sons who followed the calling and became mariners in their own right.

Capt James Herbert Δ – Emma Aldridge

Benjamin (Ben) Δ	Emily
William James (Bill)Δ - Francis Thomas	Nell
Arthur	Mary (Pat)
John (Jack)	Ada
Joseph (Joe)Δ– Flora Elizabeth	Emma
James (Jim) Δ	Dot
George Δ	Rose
Tomas (Tom)	The twins who drowned when young

With the coming of his young family, James channelled his efforts and soon made a good impression in his chosen career, as in 1872 he became master of the barge *Ready Penny*, owned by the Framilode coal merchant Richard Williams.

Name	P.O.R	Description	Dates
<i>Ready Penny</i>	Gloucester 5/49	Wd bge	1847-
<b>Dimensions</b>	(1849) L. 67.5 B. 11.2 D. 3.4	<b>Tonnage – (1849) G 22 <u>2363</u> N 22</b>	<b>B.D</b>
			3500

**Builders** Brimscombe, William Close,  
O.N.11112 Code K.R.G.S

**First Owners**

**Changes** 27.3.49 (64) George Swainson (Thomas Butt), Chalford  
24.9.63 (64) Sarah Butt (w) Chalford  
24.9.63 (64) Charles Butt, Chalford (65 68)  
3.11.70 (64) George Wood, Chalford  
3.11.70 (64) Joseph Pick, Frampton on Severn  
15.11.70 (64) Richard William, Frampton (73)  
22.11.73 (64) William Greenway, Westbury on Severn (75 76 81 85)

**Fate**

Converted to a lighter about 6 yrs ago (Oct 87)  
R.C. 9.6.85 Glos Reg

**Notes**

Glos 5/27.3.49: f&a,1,bge,-, rd, cvl,-,-(dim)  
Glos 7/31.12.72: f&a,1,bge, sq, cvl,-,-wd, (dim)

Fortune continued to smile on the young Captain as he duly skippered the larger and more profitable Richard Williams owned barges *Nelly* and the *Maria*.. These two barges regularly carried about 60 tons of Forest of Dean coal from Lydney to wharves along the Stroudwater and Thames & Severn Canals, which in turn enabled the young husband and father regular contact with his family.

In 1876, James Herbert took on a new role as master of the barge *Reliance* in the ownership of the Stroud Gas Light & Coke Co. For the next 20 years he averaged 40 trips a year to Newport to collect 65 to 70 tons of coal. This partnership was to prove long and rewarding and the family duly prospered. Indeed it allowed James to relocate his family on several occasions from their mega existence in Framilode to every larger premises eventually finishing at Oatfield between Frampton and Whitminster, where the family substituted their income by farming. It is further

important to note that despite many years of family involvement in the *Reliance*, James took many years to approach his former employers and is subsequently first registered as her owner in 1920.

<b>Name</b>	<b>P.O.R</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<i>Gaslight</i> Ren. <i>Reliance</i>	Gloucester 14/61	Wd bge	1861 - 1957

<b>Dimensions</b>	(1861) L. 65.5 B. 15.2 D. 4.2	<b>Tonnage – (1861) G</b>	<b>N 33.14</b>
<b>Builders</b>	Cainscross,		

**O.N.** 43667    **Code** TPWC

**First Owners**            29.10.61 (64) Stroud Gas Light and Coke Co., (Herbert) (60 68 73 76 78 81 85 87 14);

**Changes**                23.11.20 (64) (Pre War Capt.) James Herbert, Cambridge (1921), Whitminster (1931) (21 31) (dd 23.5.30);  
23.5.30 (64) James Small, Gloucester & Tom Pockett, Saul;  
27.11.31 SCCC upon Capt Herbert's death (34 36).

#### **Fate**

Hulked 1914-1916

Registry no longer required R.C.  
16.12.36 Glos Reg.

M. A Redwood says at Stourport  
1950.

In canal basin 1951 at Stourport in a  
sinking condition via C Hambridge.  
D.E. Field 1957 says broken up  
recently.

#### **Notes**

Glos 14/29.10.61 1,1,bge,sq,cvl - -  
wd

Once a trow with external keel  
Did two trips weekly Newport to  
Stroud. Original stated as built at  
Cams-cross should be Cainscross



Plate 1 *Reliance* at Ryeford lock (F Rowbottom Archive)

Despite this, James determination eventually paid off and he is recorded in 1891 as the owner of his first vessel the barge *John* of 72 tons, which went on to trade across the Bristol Channel, between Newport, Bristol, Cardiff and Weston super Mare with successive local men as her master, due to James commitment to the *Reliance*.

<b>Name</b>	<b>P.O.R</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<i>John</i>	Gloucester 12/50 Gloucester 7/72	Wd bge 50 – 86 Wd Sp 87 - 92 D	1848-1898 24/3

<b>Dimensions</b>	(1850) L. 64.1 B. 13.8 D. 3.2	<b>Tonnage – (1850) G</b>	<b>28.479 N</b>	<b>B.D</b>
			3500	
	(1872) L. 72.5 B. 16.8 D. 6.65	<b>Tonnage – (1872) G</b>	<b>55.65 N</b>	<b>72.34 B.D</b>
	(1887) L.        B.        D.	<b>Tonnage – (1887) G</b>	<b>N 72.34 B.D</b>	

**Builders**            Gloucester John Bird,  
**O.N.**11648    **Code**

## First Owners

### Changes

30.5.50 (64) James Foley (Richard Price) William Eassie, Gloucester  
3.3.60 (64) Oliver Camm, Framilode (65)  
9.1.66 (64) Henry Jayne, Newport, Mon. (68 73 76 78 81 87)  
31.12.72 (64) (Jessie Allen) Henry Jayne, Newport, Mon. (68 73 78 81 87)  
26.11.91 (64) James Herbert, Whitminster (92 97)

### Fate

Founded in Bristol Channel 24.3.98

R.C. 27.3.99 Glos Reg

### Notes

Glos 12/30.5.50: f&a,1,bge,topping, sq, cl,-,-(dim)

Glos 7/31.12.72: f&a,1,bge, sq, cvl,-,-wd, (dim)

Works Dept (Bristol), IV, 37, 40 dd 25.3.98 James Herbert master of ketch open trow *John*, 11648, crew 4, 140t, silver sand, Mardy & Jones, Newport. From glassworks, Newport, left Barry 24/3 7am Westerly light breeze, about 8am off Lavernock wind moved to North and increased rapidly with rising sea. 10am 24/3 hard squalls with snow, NNW-NNE whole gale. Vessel down by head, would not wear or stay to turn and get back to Sully. Abandoned and immediately foundered. Crew picked up by cutter *Osprey* of Weston Supper Mare. Sank about a cable NE of New Patch, Barry. Loss £450 Insurance £200

1893 James continued his expansion and duly purchased the barge *Volunteer*, and with his eldest son Benjamin as master, commenced a trade in fest coal from the railway tip at Sharpness to Stroud gas works.

Name	P.O.R	Description	Dates
<i>Volunteer</i>	Gloucester 6/69 Bristol 16/96	Wd Bge	1868 -
<b>Dimensions</b>	(1869) L. 67.3 B. 15.4D. 12.8	<b>Tonnage – (1869) G</b>	<b>N 25 B.D</b>
<b>Builders</b>	Jackfield,		
<b>O.N. 60590</b>	<b>Code</b>		

## First Owners

### Changes

31.3.69 (64) Joseph Dillon, Bewdley (73)  
12.4.73 (64) William Knee sr, Stroud (75)  
27.2.75 (64) Joseph Warren, Saul (76)  
27.2.75 (64) mge James Bretherton, Gloucester  
27.4.76 (64) Samuel Rowles, Frampton on Severn  
20.9.76 (64) Samuel Arthur Rowles, Frampton on Severn (81 85 87)  
14.5.87 (64) Elizabeth Rowles (w) Frampton on Severn (92)  
20.4.93 (64) Ellen Franklin wife of Albert James Franklin Frampton on Severn  
20.11.93 (64) James Herbert, Framilode (96 97) (21.10.96)  
4.3.97 (64) Henry Robert Brown, Bristol (BoS 19.10.96)

### Fate

R/A Btl, RC 20.10.96.

CC at Btl 30.11.96

R.C. 4.3.97 used as ballast barge (97 08)

### Notes

Glos 6/31.3.69: f&a 1,Bge,sq, cvl,-,-wd (dim)

Three years later *Volunteer* was replaced by the barge *Wherry Packet*, which continued in same traffic. During this period, James's younger brother Charles was also afloat, as master of barges owned by the Field family carrying coal from Bullo Pill to wharves along the Stroudwater Canal.

Name	P.O.R	Description	Dates
<i>Wherry Packet</i>	Gloucester 16/39 Gloucester 6/54	Wd bge	1835-1912

<b>Dimensions</b>	(1839) L. 63.2 B. 13.1 D. 2.8	<b>Tonnage – (1839) G 25.2500 N 58</b>	<b>B.D</b>
		3500	
	(1854) L. 63.2 B. 13.1 D. 2.8	<b>Tonnage – (1850) G 26 N</b>	<b>B.D</b>
	( ) L. B. D.	<b>Tonnage – (1884) G 25.2500 N</b>	<b>B.D</b>
		3500	

**Builders** Benthall, F. S. Gother,  
**O.N.11709** Code

### First Owners

**Changes**

- 24.8.39 (64) T.S.Richardson (William Wotton) Luke Pyfinch Maybury, Worcester
- 13.2.54 (64) Roderick Rice, Gloucester
- 14.2.54 (64) Roderick Rice, Gloucester
- 14.2.54 (64) Thomas Webb (Roderick Rice Jr) Roderick Rice, Gloucester
- 27.2.54 mgr (64) Joshua Thomas & Lauriston Winterbotham Lewis, Tewkesbury
- 2.2.56 mgr (64) William Lane, Stroud (65)
- 5.1.67 (64) Stratford Flour Mills Co. Ltd, Stroud (68 73 76 78 81)
- 13.7.67 (32) Joseph Lane (32) John Clark, Stroud
- 10.1.87 (32) Harriett Clark (w) Saul, (32) John Clark, Stroud
- 17.1.87 (32) Thomas Cratchley, Stroud & (32) Harriett Clark (w) Saul
- 17.1.87 (32) Zaccheus Whitting, Eastington, (32) Harriett Clark (w) Saul
- 17.1.87 (64) Zaccheus Whitting, Eastington,
- 20.10.94 (64) James Smart, Chalford
- 1.9.96 (32) James Herbert, Framilode, (32) James Smart, Chalford
- 3.10.96 (32) James Herbert, Framilode, (32) Benjamin Herbert, Framilode,
- 4.10.98 (64) James Herbert, Framilode,

### Fate

Not known

### Notes

Glos 16/24.8.39: 1,1,bge,sliding, sq, cvl,-,-(dim)

Glos 6/14.2.54: 1,1,bge,stg, sq, cvl,-,-(dim)

In 1897 and after some 20 years of routine shuttle between Newport and Stroud gas works, James arranged for his first son Benjamin to replace him as master of the *Reliance*, and he took the role of master owner of the *John*. This in turn proved to be more exciting than he had first envisaged as while sailing from Barry to Newport with silver sand the *John* experienced heavy weather and foundered off of Lavernock Point on the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> March 1898. As a result the four man crew, which included James's third son Arthur, had to take to the boat where they were rescued some time later by the *Osprey* and landed at Weston.

Some time later James replaced the *John* with the smaller trow *Victory*, 37 tons register, and this was used to trade between Newport, Bristol, Chepstow and Bridgwater. On some of these trips, he was accompanied by one or more of his younger sons, Arthur, John and James jnr, until he handed over command to his son-in-law William Halling in 1910.

Name	P.O.R	Description	Dates
<i>Victory</i>	Gloucester 6/77 Gloucester 4/36	Wd Tw open dk sc	1877 - 1951

**Dimensions**

(1877) L. 71.2 B. 14 D. 4.7  
 (1936) L. 71.2 B. 14  
 D. 4.7

**Tonnage – (1877) G N 36.82**  
**Tonnage – (1936) G N 36.82**

**Builders**

Gloucester, Samuel Hipwood  
 O.N. 69918

**First Owners**

25.4.77 (64) William Harris,  
 Droitwich (81 87 92 97);

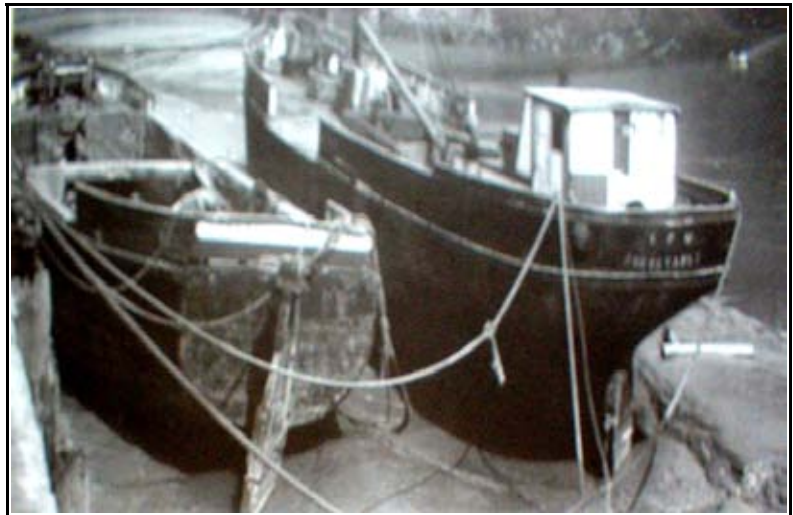


Plate 2 The *Victory* at Chepstow 1953 (WI & MM)

**Changes** 16.5.83 (64) Sarah Harris, (w) Droitwich;  
 6.5.83 (64) Fredrick Harris, Droitwich;  
 10.6.86 (64) William Harris, Droitwich;  
 14.12.99 (64) William Harris, Droitwich (sic);  
 4.7.03 by court order (64) James Herbert, Frampton (08 13);  
 24.11.15 (64) Arthur Samuel Rice, Gloucester;  
 18.8.19 (64) Eli Ayland, Gloucester;  
 25.10.21 (64) Louie May Goode, Woodford, Essex;  
 30.6.22 (64) Jacob Rice & Sons Ltd; 3.11.34 (64) JR & Son Ltd (34 36 47).

**Fate**

Seen 23.9.35.  
 1951 still carrying odd cargo of stone from Tintern Quarry v C Hembridge.  
 Seen 27.6.53 at Chepstow rather poor state.  
 Seen at 27.8.54 at Chepstow back broken and a wreck along side wharf.

**Notes** Glos 6/25.4.77 dk, pt laid each end, 1, Tw, sq, cvl - - wd



By this time, and in light of continue growth and expansion, James subsequently purchased various vessels for other members of his family. His fifth son Joseph became master of the Bridgwater registered ketch *Two Brothers* and who in turn exhibits a fine example of this continued expansion within the Herbert Maritime dynasty in his own right via his purchase and successful 13 year the career of the 81 grt wooden dandy *Ada*, as registered in the name of Flora Elizabeth Herbert



Plate 3 *Two Brothers* in Bridgwater. (R Fitzhugh)  
**Name** **P.O.R** **Description** **Dates**  
*Two Brothers* Bridgwater Wd. K ex Tw open 1869 – 1935

**Dimensions** L. 69.2 B. 18.3 D.6.0 **Tonnage** G 67 N 52 B.D

**Builders** Bridgwater, John Gough  
**O.N.** 56369

**First Owners** Guy Hodges, Burnham on Sea;  
**Changes** James Herbert, Oakfield Villas, Whitminster, Frampton on Severn,  
 Gloucester, managing owner.

**Fate**  
 Broken up 1922 R.C. 8.5.1922, Broken up at Merchants Dock.  
 Finished off at Aston.  
 Swing Bridge Sept 1935, Bristol.

**Name** *Ada* **P.O.R** Bristol 19/69  
 Bristol 16/70  
 Gloucester 2/81

**Description** **Dates**  
 Wd Dy 1869 - 1956

**Dimensions** L. 82.6 B. 18 D. 7.3  
**Tonnage** ( ) G 81 N 67  
**Tonnage (1869)** G 81.97 N 73.53  
**Tonnage (1870)** G 81.97 N 81.97 crew  
 space not allowed  
**Tonnage (1881)** G 81.97 N 73.53 crew  
 space allowed  
**Tonnage (1897)** G 81.97 N 67



Plate 4 below *Ada* at Purton 16<sup>th</sup> March 2004 (Author)

**Builders** Bristol, Thomas Gardner  
**O.N.** 62742 **Code** JHBL (NFPT)

**First Owners** 4.2.81 Thomas Gardner, Church Street, Gloucester (32) & Thomas Wither  
 mm Gloucester (32);  
**Changes** 10.5.09 Kittel Pedersen(16) & Thomas Wither mm Gloucester (16) &  
 Alexander Jones(32) Gloucester;  
 11.5.11 Kittel Pedersen & William Alexandria Jones & Florence Lucy Jones  
 (sp) Gloucester;  
 2.3.13 Florence Lucy Jones (32);  
 17.10.17 F. L. Petersen (Do) 32 - Kittel Pedersen;  
 23.12.20 Mrs. Flora E Herbert, (64) wife of Joseph, Frampton. on Severn;  
 16.11.33 T.R. Brown & Sons Ltd Bristol used as gash barge (64);  
 Hulked for Barge Dec 1933.  
 Benjamin Perry & Son, Bristol

**Fate** Used occasionally as a hulk  
 RC. 8.4.1938 Registry no longer required Glos. reg.  
 Abandoned on the Purton Bank 24<sup>th</sup> March 1956

**Notes**



Archive (NMMA)

S& SM .III.16 – Mentioned in own article  
Glos. 2/4.2.81: 1,2 Dy,rd, cvl,- - wd (see above).  
 1/2/1902 St. Mary's Life Boat stood by in Roads.  
 Seen at Avonmouth Easter 1946.  
 Seen at Bristol Oct 1949.  
 Seen in photo 11.01.1951 'abandoned'.  
 At Purton 1957 via Rob Schopland .

Plate 5 *Ada* at Bristol 11<sup>th</sup> May 1951 *National Maritime Museum*

James second son William became master of the barge *Perseverance*, trading between Bristol, Lydney, Chepstow and Newport,

<b>Name</b>	<b>P.O.R</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<i>Perseverance</i>	Gloucester 1/60 Gloucester 1/89	wd. Bge chine 1m Sp open	1859
<b>Dimensions</b>	( ) L. 67.4 B. 14.1 D. 3.6 ( ) L. 68.5 B. 15.85 D. 5.4	<b>Tonnage – (1860) G41 N 25.77</b> <b>Tonnage – (1889) G 41.46 N 26</b>	
<b>Builders</b>	Gloucester, O.N. 27872 Code PTDC		
<b>First Owners</b>	24.1.60 (64) Roderick Rice Gloucester (60)		

### Changes

28.7.60 (38) William Rowles, Saul (68 73 75 76 81 87 88), (26) Robert Hayden Jones, Saul;  
 21.8.6 (32) William Rowles, Saul (68 73 75 76 81 87 88), (32) Robert Hayden Jones, Saul;  
 29.3.71 (32) George Ford mge Ryeford Mills, Stonehouse, (32) Robert Hayden Jones, Saul;  
 27.7.78 (32) George Ford mge Ryeford Mills, Stonehouse, (32) William Rowles, Saul;  
 25.1.89 (64) John Shelton, Bristol;  
 25.3.89 (64) Mrs Rhoda Shelton, (w), Bristol (92 97);  
 11.11.02 (64) Joseph Smart, Bristol  
 22.4.10 (64) Thomas R Brown, Knowle  
 9.6.10 (64) James Herbert, Frampton (13)

### Fate

Photographs in 76 77 36  
 Converted into a landing stage.  
 R.C. 6.12.17 Glos Reg.  
 At Ryeford Bridge awaiting B.U. 1936

### Notes

Glos 1/24.1.60 f&a,1,bge,sq, cvl - - wd



James replaced the *Wherry Packet* after a long and active life with the *Endeavour* to continue taking coal from the Sharpness tip to Stroud gas works in the company of his eldest son Benjamin as master of the *Reliance* in the employ of the coal trade from Newport to Stroud gas works.

Time passed and following his improving good fortune, he sold Kimberley House and adjacent land in 1915 to the Midlands based *Cadbury Brothers* and he relocated to Cambridge near Slimbridge and thus in close proximity of his main business port at Sharpness. As a result the site of his former home near Fretherne Bridge was re-developed to form a thriving canal side chocolate factory and a trans-modal wharferage, deemed necessary to transport large quantities of coco crumb, whilst enabling a plentiful source of cheap local dairy produce from the surrounding farming community.

In conjunction to this the Herbert family's long association with Stroud gas works came to an end and was duly replaced by the opening of Cadbury's factory in 1916 and its insatiable appetite for a regular supply of coal. At this time, Benjamin relinquished his command of the *Reliance*, the *Endeavour* ceased carrying to Stroud Gas Works and instead the family began supplying Cadbury's with coal brought from the Sharpness tip. To help in this flourishing trade, James bought the smack *Industry* in 1919 and fitted it with a motor.



Name	P.O.R
<i>Industry</i>	Gloucester
Description	Dates
Wd. K open	1871 - 1931
<b>Dimensions</b> (1919) L 55.6 B 16.6 D 7.4	
<b>Tonnage</b> (1919) G 40.26 N 29	
<b>Builders</b> Chepstow, George Fryer	
<b>Engines</b> fitted 1919	
<b>BHP</b> 25	
<b>O.N.</b> 47965	
<b>Miscellaneous</b> engine fitted	

Plate 7 Trow *Industry* (Nigel Harris Archive)

#### First Owners

**Changes** William Jones, Lydney;  
James Herbert, Oakfield Villas, Whitminster, Gloucester (31);managing owner.

#### Fate

Hulked on foreshore at Broadoak.  
R.C. 20.10.1931 Glos Reg.  
Remains now buried within the car park of the White Hart Public House at Broadoak

By the 1920s, the days of commercial sail were coming towards their end, but although over seventy, James Herbert was determined to keep the old traditions going as long as possible. To



this end he bought the Bridgwater ketch *Marian*.

Plate 8 Trow *Industry*

(HCJ Archive)

<b>Name</b>	<b>P.O.R</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<i>Marian</i>	Bridgwater	Wd K.	1869 - 1939
<b>Dimensions</b> ( ) L.	<b>B.</b>	<b>D.</b>	<b>Tonnage</b> – ( ) G 59 N 48
<b>Builders</b>	Bridgwater, John Gough	<b>O.N.</b> 56370	<b>Code</b> J.G.T.B



#### **Owners**

T Rowles, Bridgwater; George William Radford, 2 Branch Villa, Wembellon, Bridgwater;  
James Herbert, Oakfield Villas, Whitminster, Frampton on Severn, Gloucester managing owner (1923 - 1933).

**Fate** went ashore near Minehead, whilst on passage from Hayle, Cornwall, to Gloucester in Oct 1927. 1933 used as a work boat at Braunton. Burnt on foreshore in Highbridge River in 1939.

Plate 9 Hulk of the *Marion* at Highbridge (Rod Fitzhugh)

He finally went on to purchase the Bridgwater ketch *Champion* - an appropriate name for an owner who was a champion of coastal sailing vessels until he died in 1930 on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1930 at his last home the Hollies, Whitminster Lane, Frampton upon Severn aged 80.. By this time, it was very difficult to keep such vessels trading profitably in competition with motor barges, and it was not long before most of James Herbert's fleet were converted to towed barges or were broken up.

<b>Name</b>	<b>P.O.R</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<i>Champion</i>	Bridgwater	Wd K. decked	1853 - 1939

**Dimensions** L. 82.7 B. 19.2 D. 7.9

**Tonnage** – N 68

**Builders** Bristol,

**O.N.** 10814

**Code** K.Q.B.V.

#### **First Owners**

#### **Changes**

D Nurse, Bridgwater;

J.C. Hunt, Bridgwater;

James Herbert, Saul, Stonehouse, Gloucester managing owner (1930).

**Fate** Broken up 1939

Upon his death James was replaced at the helm of the *Reliance* of by his eldest son Ben Herbert as Master, with William James Jr. (Bill) as Mate. Both men were master mariners in their own right. This can be clearly be seen in the T.V. monolog Bullo, A little Dock that Died, as told by the now sadly missed former District Engineer of the Severn River Board and local historian Fred

Rowbottom, who fondly recalls his childhood experiences of navigating the Stroudwater Canal on board this former trow and in the following self penned extract from Bill Herbert himself:

### **A chatty letter dated July 14 1954**

#### **Mr William James Herbert aged 85**

Mr W. J. Herbert's letter contains a wealth of chatty information about his father James Herbert who was a master mariner in charge for Stroud Gas Works for 27 years and his brother held a similar position for 23 years. "My father worked the Severn from Newport to Stroud Gas Works". Carry capacity of the "*Reliance*" was 70 tons and the company's contract was for 3,000 tons.

That will give an idea whether the canal was open for trade or not. He added after giving some information about the places from which the coal was shipped Mr Herbert says "The length of the *Reliance* was 68 feet long overall, and the beam 15 feet 6 inches" He should know because at one time he was mate on the craft and is a master mariner.

On the question of the Sevens tides, Mr Herbert's knowledge is encyclopaedic and his letter brims over with information about the manner in which craft worked the Severn and Wye. A long experience on the Stroudwater canal has also enabled him to amass a great deal of information which he offers to place at the disposal of the promoters of the canal.

As we will see, William James Herbert (Bill) was born the 2<sup>nd</sup> son of James and Mary in 1879 and was duly enlisted into the family business employed to led towing donkeys at the age of 10, and followed his father to sea by enlisting on various vessels including the coastal schooner *Miss Thomas* as owned by his future father in-law and head of the prominent local shipping Thomas family.

Indeed it soon came to pass that the young William James Herbert and Francis Thomas (Fanny) were married at Frampton and set up home at the Lake where their first son William was born. They then moved to the "Tobacco Box" which is in Fretherne Parish and finally on to Frampton Green by the "Three Horse Shoes". Furthermore and like his father before him, William and Fanny had a large family which was made up of the following ten children:

#### William James Herbert – Francis (nee Thomas)

William (Bill) - Amy

Doris – Fred Price  
Christine – Jack Gordon  
Edith – Tom Daniels  
Mary - Bernard Hone

John –Joan (nee Mason)  
Edwin (Ted) – (married Tom widow)  
James – Mary (nee Golding)  
Thomas – Joyce (nee Guy)

May – Derek Mason

And like his father before him, he went into the Severn Sea coastal trade aboard the trow *William* for *A. J. Smith* of Bristol carrying coal and burnt ore as described in Colin Greens 1998 publication *Severn Traders*.

As the years passed and work for the old sailor men became scarce, he successfully secured gainful employment and a birth on what was to become the last of the remaining former trows



afloat, the *Safety* as owned by local merchants *Silvey Bothers* of Midland Road, Bristol as described thus:

<b>Name</b>	<b>P.O.R</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<i>Safety</i>	Gloucester 17/38	1m Bge	1838 - 1968
	Gloucester 26/50	1m Bge	
	Gloucester 15/67	1m Tw open	
	Gloucester 6/86	1m Tw	
	1889	Wd 2m K.	
	Bridgewater		
	Weston Super Mare		
	Gloucester 2/31	Twin Sc now box	
<b>Dimensions</b>	(1838) L. 65.1 B. 14.3 D. 3.1	<b>Tonnage – (1838) G 7061</b>	<b>N 302561</b> 3500
	(1850) L. 65.6 B. 14.3 D. 3.1	<b>Tonnage – (1850) G</b>	<b>N 302561</b> 3500
	(1867) L. 70.8 B. 16.2 D. 4.9	<b>Tonnage – (1867) G</b>	<b>N 43.37</b>
	(1886) L. 75.6 B. 16.6 D. 5.85	<b>Tonnage – (1886) G 58.87</b>	<b>N 45.25</b>
	( ) L. B. D.	<b>Tonnage – (1909) G 60.26</b>	<b>N 45.25</b>
	(1931) L. 75.6 B. 17.3 D. 5.85	<b>Tonnage – (1931) G 79.25</b>	<b>N 45.43</b>

**Builders** Stourport, Andrew Bird

**Engines** 1930

**By** Berguis  
30 B H.P.

**Miscellaneous** Has slight rake to bow

**O.N.**11118

**First Owners**

21.9.38 William Hopper, TS (Thomas Whitmore) (64) Roderick Heath & John Mathew Heath, Stourport = Mathew Heath & sons;



Plate 10 remains of the last trow *Safety* at Bristol (*PoBA*)

**Changes**

17.3.47 R.C. inland navigation only;

31.12.50 R/A; (64) B. Devey, Stourport;

31.12.50 James Folly ( Thomas Whitmore) (64) Benjamin Devey, Stourport;

7.1.56 under mge (22) Benjamin Danks, Stourport, (21) Thomas Yandell Venn, Bristol, (21) John Owen Sanders, Worcester;

24.8.60 (43) Charles Bosley, Westbury on Severn, (21) Thomas Yandell Venn, Bristol;

28.8.60 (64) Charles Bosley, Westbury on Severn;

19.3.62 (32) Fredrick Jones, Newnham (68 73 75 76 81) (32) John F. Frape, Bridgwater (60);

13.1.66(48) Fredrick Jones, Newnham (68 73 75 76 81) (16) John F Frape, Bridgwater (60);

22.11.67 Re measured and R/A;

22.11.67 (64) Fredrick Jones, Newnham (68 73 75 76 81);

9.10.82 (64) George Fredrick. Jones Newnham (87 88 92 97);

9.10.82 Alt Tonnage R/A;

9.11.86 (64) George Fredrick. Jones Newnham (87 88 92 97);

19.10.05 (32) George Fredrick. Jones Newnham (87 88 92 97) (32) George H Thomas, Lydney;

4.11.05 (32) George H Thomas, Lydney, (32) Edward Warren, Bridgwater (08);

30.12.12 (32) Mrs Kate Warren (w), Bridgwater(13) (32) George Henry Thomas, Lydney;  
 21.1.21 (32) Gilbert Ernest Silvey, Westbury on Trym (32) Herbert S. Colbourn, Bristol/Western-  
 S-Mare (1932);

**Fate**

22.9.31 R/A on material alterations  
 R.C. 17.3.1847 used for inland navigation Glos Reg.  
 1957 St. Philips grounded hulk.  
 1959 at St Philips, Bristol.  
 Broken up Jan 1969 MNL Supp (on bank near Tobacco Warehouse B).

**Notes**

Glos 17/21.9.38 f&a, 1, Bge, Stg, sq, cvl - -, wd, (dim)  
Glos 26/31.12.50 f&a, 1, Bge, Stg, sq, cvl - -, wd, (dim)  
Glos 15/22.11.67 f&a, 1, Tw, sq, cvl - -, wd, (dim)  
Glos 6/9.11.86 f&a, 1, Tw, sq, cvl - -, wd, (dim) (2m K 89)  
 Also reg in Coll  
BS2.51 Lawsuit following collision with *Enid*.  
BS3.89 Note of long life submitted to WDP by GEF.  
E. Post 2.2.54 Sank near Halfpenny Bridge last week, Bristol now refloated by *Tug Medway* and men of T. R. Brown.

After a long and eventful career he finally finished his days afloat on a mud hopper with coal to Lydney Brewery and to Birmingham for cardboard and he left the sea to enjoy a peaceful and well earned retirement.

This however is not were our story ends as William was followed by his first son William James Jr. also known Bill and who had served alongside him on the trow *William* and in the family owned ketch *Marian* with his Grandfather, James,

He also sailed in the locally owned *Pisgah* under skipper Bill Screech for several years:



<b>Name</b>	<b>P.O.R</b>
Pisgah	Gloucester
1/29	
<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>
St Sc	1927 -
<b>Dimensions</b>	
(1927) L. 67.2	<b>B.</b> 13.6 <b>D.</b> 4.4
<b>Tonnage</b> – ( ) G 39	N 25
<b>Tonnage</b> – ( ) G 38.59	N 24.47
<b>Tonnage</b> – (1961) G 38.12	N 21.95
<b>Builders</b>	Sliedrecht Holland, A Roorda
<b>Engines</b>	<b>By</b>

**B.H.P.** 30

Plate 11 The *Pisgah* in Gloucester Docks (WWM archive)

**Miscellaneous**

**O.N.** 147378                      **Code**

**First Owners**

**Changes**            George Partridge, Roller Flour Mills, Pershore (mgr Walter R Bull, Saul)

**Fate**    Unknown

## Notes

BS2.82 22.11.37 Beached @ Berkeley Pil following collision with Steam Tug Nethergarth  
BS2.94 Admiralty court case re above. Judgement Piscah 30% & Nethergarth 70% to blame  
From this he went onto the *Healings* owned *M.V. Deerhurst* and was employed for 12 years  
carrying grain from Avonmouth to their mill at Tewkesbury, with up to 200 ton in convoy with the  
towed barge *Appleby*.

<b>Name</b>	<b>P.O.R</b>
<i>Deerhurst</i>	Gloucester/34
<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Stl cargo bge.	1933

## Dimensions

(1933) L. 100.5 B. 21.8 D.9.1

Tonnage – (1933) G 158 N 91

## Builders

Bristol, Charles Hill & Sons

38 B H.P.

O.N.147383



## First Owners

Plate 12 The *Deerhurst* & *Appleby* at Avonmouth (PoBA)

**Changes** S. Healing & Sons Ltd., Tewkesbury

**Fate** House boat in Bude (2004)

After taking retirement Bill found it difficult to settle and eventually returned to work on the now renamed Sharpness to Gloucester Canal in the employ of British Waterways, with his old friend Eric Aldridge on *Dredger No. 4*. This vessel is which is now on permanent display at the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester Docks.

So as we can see, the Herbert's, have played an integral role in bringing the sea to this rural backwater and even though their ships are gone, their men laid to rest and the call of the sea a distant memory, they will continue to live forever in the memories of this once proud maritime community.

I will therefore finish with this fitting tribute from one who knew so well.

### **The Herbert's of Frampton on Severn Mr Edwin S. Herbert.**

Sir, in the passing of my brother Bill, (Mr William H. James Herbert), I wonder if the short "Resume" of the family history, would be appropriate for you column. Mr Edwin S. Herbert. (Ted)

This was a very well known cliché, for over 100 years in that neck of the woods. The late William James Herbert, being the last male for over 40 years of my family who lived there, at No. 11 Whitminster Lane, until ill health forced him and Amy his wife into a retirement home, two years ago. Amy died shortly afterwards.

However to justify my preface, I must start with my Grandfather, the late Mr James Herbert, who died in 1932. He was, in his day, an Entrepreneur, of the Severn Vale. He owned ships, trading to Ireland, all ports of the Bristol Channel, and the Severn and Canals, both the Gloucester Berkeley, and the now Defunct. Stroudwater Canal.



This, in the day when water transport was in its prime, many of the crews were his sons, Ben, Bill, Joe, George and Jim. He had seventeen children, and his daughters, Emily, Nell, Ada, Pat, Emma, Rose and Dorothy all worked at times on their farm at Lea Court Framilode. They milked the cows and churned butter (by hand) and walked, or caught a boat, up the canal, to sell the supplies on Gloucester market.

At Kimberley House, near the top bridge at Frampton, he had a baker's oven installed in the kitchen, when it was built in 1900. His wife and daughters were the bakers in the days when bread was a staple diet. They baked 10 portions at one time. He later sold nearby land to Cadbury's where they built their Frampton factory, and secured a contract to supply them with coal with the "*Reliance*" one of several of his canal barges. This was one of the first factories in the area, taking the milk for chocolate from many of the Severn valley farms. Furthermore as it was located on the canal, with its own berth on the bank, it was ideal for Cadbury's own longboats to transport the pure "crumb" chocolate, direct by water to Bourneville.

This proved a great boon, to the dairy farmers of the Severn Vale taking all surplus milk. During the war they made butter and cheese there. My father, Bill who died 81 in 1960, told me stories of him and his elder brother Ben, taking longboat barges, horse drawn, along the toe path, loaded with coal, for the Stroud Gas Works. He was then 10, Ben 12, years old. This must have been about 1889 as he was born in 1879.

He in turn married into a family of mariners, the Thomas family. My mother who died in 1926 was survived by ten children. (I was number seven, aged 5 at the time). Bill, (Mr W. H. J. Herbert) was their second child. He also worked on barges later on the motorized versions *Pisgah* and *Deerhurst* as engineer. Later about 1945 he went to Cadburys, from where he retired in 1969. He then took a semi retirement job for 5 years on the British Waterways owned dredger *No 4*, drawn back to his old love of the canal and river.

He in turn is survived by six children, all Frampton born. His elder son, Phillip, now lives at Leonard Stanley, with Mary also a Framptonian. He is well known in the cricket world locally, being an M.C.C approved coach, and a present vice president of the Frocester Cricket Club. Some of his colts play in the current Frocester teams. Mary and daughters Sue and Rachel have done years of duty, of club chores and tea ladies. Their son Christopher is at Oxford.

David the younger son is a partner in a local electrical business and currently the president of the local round table. He is assisted, ably by Veronica with many charities that benefit from their efforts and is much appreciated in the area. They live at Arlingham with their two children Rebecca and Mathew.

Of his four daughters, three live locally. Carolyn at Leonard Stanley, Lindsey at Bussage, and Daphne, at Quedgeley. Her husband Terry Hogarth has recently become elected to the Parish Council for Quedgeley.

Hilary, who lives at Chalfont St. Giles, with her husband Mike Hinman, still calls Gloucestershire "home". Mikes family lives at Arlingham with two brothers at Standish and Selsly.

Bill will be buried, with Amy, his much loved wife at Whitminster Church, and will be fondly remembered by the remaining descendants of the Herbert legacy:

William (Bill) & Amy Herbert  
Philip Caroline Daphne David Hilary & Lesley

Doris & Fred Price  
Brain & Keith

Christine & Jack Gordon  
Gloria & Adrian.

Edith & Tom Daniels

Anthony, Colin, Jill & Peter.  
 Mary & Bernard Home  
 Raymond, Valerie & Pauline (now in Australia)  
 John & Joan (nee Mason)  
 Jeanette, Mary, Sheila, Terry, Joy & Irene.  
 Edwin (Ted)(married Tom's widow) Joyce (divorced)  
 Paul Leslie & Diane  
 James (Jim)& Mary (nee Golding)  
 Kenny & Jenny  
 Thomas (Tom) & Joyce (nee Guy)  
 Paul & Leslie  
 May & Derek Mason  
 Christopher & Rosemary

*Authors Footnote*

Further post writing research has unearthed that James continued to expand his fleet and as such is accredited to have been the owner of the following vessel

<b>Name</b>	<b>P.O.R</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>
William	Gloucester 16/61	Wd Bge O Dk	1861 -1920
<b>Dimensions</b>	(1861) L. 68 B. 14.2D. 3.8	<b>Tonnage – (1861) G</b> 29.97	<b>N 30 B.D</b>
<b>Builders</b>	Worcester,		
<b>Engines</b> <b>H.P.</b>	<b>By</b>		
<b>Miscellaneous</b> <b>O.N.43670</b>	<b>Code</b>		
<b>First Owners</b> <b>Changes</b>	6.11.61 (64) Thomas Harrison, Droitwich (65 68 73 76 78 81 87 08) 31.8.09 (64) William George Bourne, Droitwich 25.09.09 (64) Severn and Canal Carrying Co. Ltd, Gloucester (13) 30.11.15 (64) James Herbert, Frampton on Severn 25.2.18 (64) George Head, Bristol		

**Photographs in  
Lloyds Class**

**Fate**  
 RC 11.3.1920 Glos – Reg  
 Broken up

**Notes**

Glos 16/6.11.61: f&a,1,bge,sq,cl,-,-wd, (dim)

To wit it is hoped that this research will continue, as it is strongly believed that with the use of local records as held at both Bristol & Gloucester Records Offices, it will undoubtedly prove

fruitful to provide further information regarding crew, cargo and trade routes, which at this time remains lost within the pages of time and history.

For Further details or to discuss this piece further please contact Paul Barnett on 07833143 231



The setting of the

sun over the Severn at Purton (Author)

### **References and further reading**

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The index cards of Graham E Farr, courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

The Adrian Gordon Archive.

The Eric Aldridge Archive.

The Fred Rowbottom Archive courtesy David Drew.

The Nigel Harris Archive

Port of Bristol Authority (PoBA)

National Waterway Museum Gloucester Archive (WWM)

National Maritime Museum Archive (NMMA)

Welsh Maritime Museum (W1 & MM)

An extract from the thesis

**Fore and Aft**

L. P. Barnett

# **The Herbert Family of Frampton on Severn**

**A Severnside Maritime Dynasty**



***Captain James Herbert***  
***1850 - 1930***

*L. P. Barnett*  
*5 Darell Close,*  
*Quedgeley,*  
*Gloucester.*  
*GL2 4YR*  
*07833 143 231*

### **Aldridge diaries**

Oliver Davis ships carpenter died Dec 18<sup>th</sup> 1917

Joe Gardiner, ships carpenter of Saul died March 20 1913

**Bob Davis,  
Shipwright,  
Junction Dry Dock,  
SAUL.**

“FLOWER OF THE SEVERN” is not a trow. She has most of the peculiarities of the trow but was built on a keel and throughout his recollection and the recollection of his predecessor she always carried two bilge keels fastened on outside the planking. He thinks that the “WILLIE”, now owned by Silvey & Co. of Bristol, was built as a trow for W. M. Butler & Co. of Bristol within fairly recent times and that plans may be obtainable from Butlers.

states that our little Coal barge “RELIANCE” was originally a trow (this has since been confirmed from other sources) and that she was cutter rigged, had a keel plank with chains for use when light, originally carried about seventy tons and traded regularly between Newport and Stroud doing two trips per week. She was owned by the Stroud Gas Co. and Captain Herbert, from Executors we bought her, was her Master for a great number of years before he bought her himself. Her canvas was taken out of her about 1914-1916.

Mr Davis remembers making a new boom for her to replace one carried away by fouling a bridge when sailing up the Gloucester & Berkeley Canal. He states that it was quite common for trows to sail up the canal as owing to its general direction they could almost rely on leading wind.

### **Extracts from Jack Evans Notebook Mousell Chadborn Forman**

Sale of Mousell Chadborn Lighters (p 125, 409, 430)

1950-1973: 19 to I-Hubert Ashmead (1-25 except 7, 10, 19, 20, 23, 24)  
3 to BWB (7, 19, 23)

April 1970: 3 to BWB (20, 31, 33)  
6 to Hubert Ashmead, Bristol (24, 27, 28, 29, 33, 35)  
1 to R Small, broken up at Sharpness (26)  
2 to R Davis, Saul Shipyard (30, 34) (p125)

1972-73: 9 channel lighters used as breakwaters in the river outside the Old Dock  
(Barnwood, Brockworth, Chedworth, Cranham, Tuffley, Matson, Sandhurst,  
Birdlip and Painswick)

Extra information by LPB

The following were 200 ton steel lighters built by Charles Hills & Sons of Bristol:

1928 – Nos. 20, 24, 26, 27 Yard no. 166 – 169 85 tonnes

1930- Nos. 28, 29, 30, 31 Yard No. 197 – 200 delivery date 1933

1934-Nos. 32, 33, 34, 35 Yard No. 227 – 230 delivery date 1935

**Mr John Gower 16/06/03 - 11/2004**

D.G.Gower shop owners in Bute dock in Cardiff the trow Willie or William  
Eric Aldridge born 1918  
Age of Victor 84 born 1898 died 1982

Other family connections

Great Grand father Dennis Gower served full apprenticeship at Saul boat yard building and repairing schooners. He then branched out to build ships life boats.

Grandfather Victor started apprenticeship but went to sea 1912 1913

Leveson Gower John Gower both traded on the Severn

It was suggested that Framilode was a boat building area, however this is not the case as only small boats were pulled out to mend.

Darrel Inn schooner Irene (picture)

Max (Cave) Ayland

Lorry fatality Frampton Bridge 1954 to 1956 Mr Bennet severed head from the forest due to double bridge lack of experience travel slow.

Lewis Victor Gower Father Royal Marine died 2002

#### **Bryan Hurn notes**

Lionel Barrat Old gateman at Saul

#### **John Perkins aged 74**

**Ligherman on the Gloucester to Sharpness Canal and River Severn**

**1955 -1969**

**First interview 26.06.03**

#### **King**

Just before the *King* was abandoned it had had a new decking and hatch combing fitted by Bob Davis yard at Saul Junction for a then princely sum of £ 12:000.

#### **Ken Price**

Ken also adv that his brother **Bernard Price** (Ben) bought the former trow *Fanny Jane* and had an engine fitted with an engine at **Davies** Yard Saul and used to run her to Chepstow with Stone.

#### **Dicky Woodward Aged 80**

**1950 -1988**

**British Waterways as Suction Plant Operator**

**Born 13<sup>th</sup> December 1923**

**Date of interview 10 May 2003 and 8 June 2003**

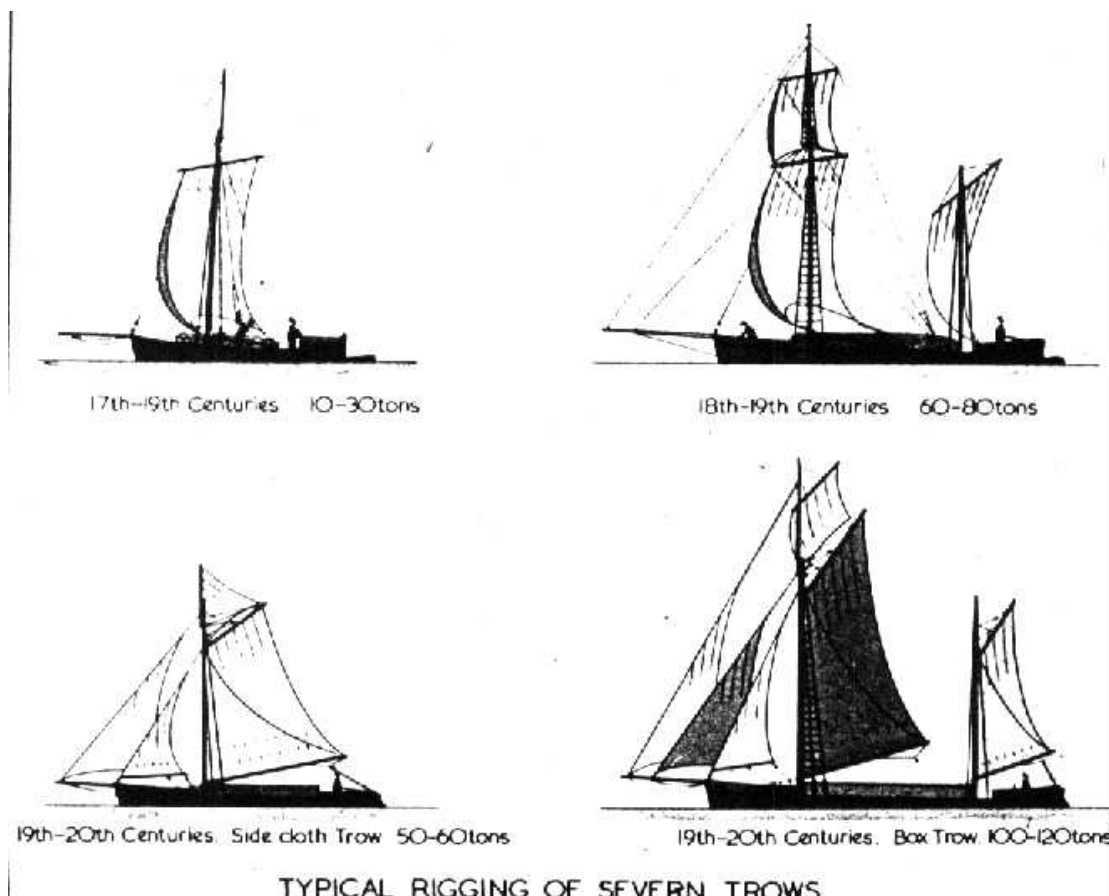
**Bob Davis** owned the ship yard at Saul Junction

**The Severn Trow**  
**source Fred Rowbottom Archive**

The Severn Trow was a wooden Vessel generally Ketch rigged and of carrying capacity varying accordingly to present records between 60 tons and 120 tons. She was originally built with a wide gunwale to which were fitted aside cloths supported by poles and stanchions which fitted into the gunwale itself. This rather flimsy protection against the elements still persists to this day. A later development of the trow was to raise the forward and after hatch coamings, build up the sides of the vessel for the length of the hatch and put on a side deck at about the height of the top of the raised coamings in order to preserve the sheer line.

The bulwarks were also raised at the ends of the vessel to conform with the raised sides. The whole superstructure was given the name of the "box" and vessels which had been converted were called "box trows". The trow was generally crewed by a captain and four men. Wages seemed to have been very low but there seems to be little doubt that it was this large number of men which caused the trow to decline so much more rapidly than the more efficient Thames Barges.

Another type was called the Dank's Trows. These are flat bottomed iron sailing vessels some Ketch, some Yawl. Some Cutter Rigged, one even with a Gunter Lug. These boats used to carry a long plank about three feet wide fitted at its top edge with brackets and chains. When empty this plank was hauled under the bottom of the boat as a false keel. They are said to have been fast and with certain exceptions easy to handle and quite reasonably Weatherly. They are also said to have been good sea boats. We still have four of them cut down to work as lighters. These vessels were designed to pass through the entrance to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal at Stourport where the loaded iron sheets and carried their sheets down the Severn and up the Avon to Bristol where they were corrugated and galvanised.





**Barges and longboats that have used the Stroudwater Canal since 1899**  
**Source Fred Rowbottom Archive (Len Pocket)**

<b>Vessel Name</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Cargo</b>
<i>Staunch</i>	Chalford	Wallsall	
<i>Gem</i>	Cirencester	Ryeford	timber
<i>Providence</i>	Cirencester	Ryeford	timber
<i>Trial</i>	Cirencester	Ryeford	timber
<i>Brothers</i>	Cirencester	Ryeford	timber
<i>Onward</i>	Dudbridge	Bristol	Gravel
<i>Industry</i>	Stafford Mill	Stoke on Trent	manganese Ore
<i>Eva</i>	Eastington	Brimscombe	
<i>Try</i>	Clarks Iron Works	Gloucester	iron
<i>Success</i>	Brimscombe	Gloucester	
<i>Water Lily</i>	Daneway	Birmingham	stone
<i>Express</i>	Chalford	Ebley	timber
<i>Good Intent</i>	<b>Latton</b>	Dudbridge	timber
<i>Alice</i>	<b>Latton</b>	Dudbridge	timber
<i>Emma</i>	Bowbridge	Purton	stone
<i>John</i>	Ebley	Chalford	
<i>Elizabeth</i>	Ebley	Chalford	
<i>Sabrina</i>	Ebley	Chalford	
<i>Perseverance</i>	Gas Works	Chalford	coke
<i>Alice</i>	Eastington	Ebley	timber
<i>Endeavour</i>	Eastington	Ebley	timber
<i>Union</i>	Eastington	Ebley	timber
<b>Vessels not found via G. Farr's Archive</b>			
<i>Guide Me Right</i>	Ryeford	Birmingham	timber
<i>Ellen Blanch</i>	Chalford	Dudbridge	wheat
<i>Sla</i>	Ebley	Chalford	

**Other vessels which have used this waterway included**

Temperance	Dove	Brothers	Express	Gertrude
Ethel	Thistle	Severn Bridge	Flora	Annie
Laurie	Thomas	Reliance	Harriett	Rose
Finis	Wherry Packet	Alert	Union	Irene
Elsie	Sarah	Kathleen	Severn	Stanley

Kitty (Gloucester Rowing Club, Pleasure Boat)

**Vessels not found via G. Farr's Archive**

<b>Elpreda</b>	<b>Verdun</b>	Live & Let Live	Nora May	Dorothy
G.O.M	MB	Louie	Rapid	Sibley

**Trows Memories**  
**source Fred Rowbottom**

**Mr. F. W. Alexandra,**  
**Hunt & co**  
**Shipbrokers,**  
**BRIDGEWATER.**

Mr. Alexandra has recollections of the following trows working of BRIDGEWATER with general cargo and inwards with coal from Cardiff or Newport and Lydney.

“Mary”	120 Tons
“David”	145 Tons
“Garibaldi”	155 Tons
“Severn”	150 Tons
“Ark”	170 Tons
“Palace”	Tonnage not given
“Edith”	115 – 120
“Druid”	

PALACE is said to be still trading under sail from Chepstow with stone. She is said to be owed bay a Quarry Owner in Chepstow.

“EDITH” was originally built as an open trow but was especially notable for having had a lowering mast which enabled her to trade above Bridges in the River Parrott to brick works.

Mr Alexander showed me a photograph of “DRUID” which was formerly owned and commanded by Capt. Hunt who formed the Ship broking firm of Hunt & co. She was a ketch and carried flying jib, standing jib, staysail on a boom, boom and gaff mainsail, topsail with no head stick or topsail yard, mizzen, and mizzen topsail. She had a standing bowsprit. The custom was to stow the topsail at the head of the mainmast. Her crew was three in number: Captain, Mate and Deckhand. Cargoes mainly carried were Coal, Grain, Timber and pitprops, flour and Generals. Mr. Alexandra has no information as to a keel plank for use when the craft was light.

**Captain Smart,**  
**Harbour Master,**  
**BRIDGEWATER.**

Captain Smart, a man of man of about seventy years of age, was for many years interested in the little Bristol Channel coasting vessel “GOOD INTENT” which was trading the age of 125 years but which is believed to have been broken up in Bristol within the last two or three years. He stated that he had been working in the Bridgewater river for fifty-seven years. He can remember the time when there were 250 vessels working under sail out of Bridgwater. More than half of these he thinks were trows. Only two survive. These are the “FANNY JANE” and “FAMILY”

In his younger days trows occasionally traded as far west as Swansea and Watchet but at some date not specified, except as “ a great number of years ago”, the Board of Trade stepped in and decided that most Westerly ports for trows should be Barry and Bridgwater. He can remember a regular service being run with coals downwards and General Cargo up between Lydney and Bridgwater with two trows called the “GLOUCESTER PACKET” and the LYDNEY PACKET”.

All trows according to Capt. Smart’s recollections were three handed, but he had heard that Danks’ trows were five handed, as sailors did the loading and discharging and no shore labour was ever employed by Danks’ firm. He says that the trows generally were not very fast, not very handy, but were very convenient for their particular trade as the journeys were short and the craft easy to load

and discharge owing to the absence of side decks. He recollects that the Danks' trow "ELY" was the fastest trow in the Bristol Channel.

**Bob Davis,  
Shipwright,  
Junction Dry Dock,  
SAUL.**

"FLOWER OF THE SEVERN" is not a trow. She has most of the peculiarities of the trow but was built on a keel and throughout his recollection and the recollection of his predecessor she always carried two bilge keels fastened on outside the planking. He thinks that the "WILLIE", now owed by Silvey & Co. of Bristol, was built as a trow for W. M. Butler & Co. of Bristol within fairly recent times and that plans may be obtainable from Butlers.

states that our little Coal barge "RELIANCE" was originally a trow (this has since been confirmed from other sources) and that she was cutter rigged, had a keel plank with chains for use when light, originally carried about seventy tons and traded regularly between Newport and Stroud doing two trips per week. She was owned by the Stroud Gas Co. and Captain Herbert, from Executors we bought her, was her Master for a great number of years before he bought her himself. Her canvas was taken out of her about 1914-1916.

Mr Davis remembers making a new boom for her to replace one carried away by fouling a bridge when sailing up the Gloucester & Berkeley Canal. He states that it was quite common for trows to sail up the canal as owing to its general direction they could almost rely on leading wind.

**Mr J. Jackson  
SEVERN CARRIER  
S & C. C. Co.**

Captain Jackson was a boy aboard the Dunks' trow "ELY" under his father, Lewis Jackson, and has spent the whole of his life in the service of the Severn & Canal Carrying Co. and its Predecessors. He remembers the time when the Board of Trade stopped the trows going below Barry. He describes in the most glowing terms, the "ELY" as being as fast to windward as a pilot boat. She has a very high peaked mainsail, almost a gunter lug, with the peak seven feet higher than the mainmast head. She was originally ketch rigged but her mizzen was taken out of her very easily in her career and she always traded as a cutter.

When asked what he thought was the reason for the decline of the sailing trow he said simply "I can recollect being thirteen days from Sharpness Point to Cardiff in "ELY" and 33/4 hours for the same journey in the M.V. "OSRIC". He mentioned that "ELY" was rather high forward and that when they had to pass under the Marsh Bridge at Bristol they frequently rigged tackles to sling their tow boat on the under side of the bow spirit where they filled it half full of water to ballast her head down.

He can remember the following trows in the possession of the Severn & canal Carrying Co.

"USK" ) All built of iron. All side cloth trows  
"STOUR" ) "USK" was cutter rigged. "STOUR" and "CONDOR"  
"CONDOR") Ketch rigged.

"USK" was broken up. "CONDOR" was lost off Clevedon and "STOUR" is still in our possession having been converted first to a box trow and since the war to a lighter

"MARY" All built of wood. All ketch rigged.  
"TIMES"

“WATER WITCH”

“MARY” was a half box trow. “TIMES” and “WATER WITCH” box trows.

“WILLIAM” built of wood, cutter rigged, was a “WITCH” barge.

“ELY” All iron. All ketch rigged. All built as trows

“SEVERN”

“WYE”

“LEADER”

“AVON”

“TAFF” Built of iron. side cloth trow to start with, subsequently converted to a box trow.

He remembers “RELIANCE” as a trow and says she was a very handy little vessel. He says he does not think that she carried more than sixty tons to Stroud owing to the lack of water in Stroud Water Canal (in her present work as a Coal lighter she was carrying a hundred tons but her side has been raised by fitting a false gunwale on top of the original gunwale).

Capt. Jackson also remembers another rather interesting class of vessels peculiar to the Severn. These are Stroud Barges. There were four of them

“FINIS” whose wreck can still be seen at Arlingham [Not visible in 2017]

“SEVERN BRIDGE”

“PERSEVERENCE”

“LAVANDER”

These barges carried Coal from Bullo Dock on the west side of the Severn to Stroud. They were double ended and carried about fifty tons and all worked under sail. They are believed to have been cutter rigged.

**Capt. Jackson can recollect the trow “SUCCESS” being lost at Severn Bridge.**

He also can recollect the occasion when the “SUCCESS” went aground on the top of the Charstone Sand at the top of high water, and the Master Owner (who now owns the “PALACE”) threw out her cargo of stone on the sand to save her from being beneaped. The cargo can be seen there to this day.

Capt. Jackson also states that Witch barges were cutter rigged and the Droitwich men boasted habitually of their ability to sail the Severn Estuary but it was their invariable custom to employ a pilot from Sharpness to Bristol who actually handled the vessel for them, and in those days it was a great joke among the Gloucester and Bridgwater trow men that the Droitwich men never sailed their own craft.

Capt. Jackson described the method of using the keel plank. The trows were of course flat bottomed vessels and drew very little water when light. With our leeboards or false keel of some kind it was quite impossible to get them to windward. They had not even the advantage of a hard chine. Each vessel was therefore supplied with a keel plank 28’ long, 2’ wide and 3” thick. This plank was fitted at its upper edge with two pairs of brackets near the ends. To the outer ends of these brackets were fixed chains. The plank was dropped over the side and the chains on that side were made fast on deck at the predetermined correct length. The other chains were passed round the vessel’s stern (to avoid the trouble of passing round the bowsprit and bow,) and were hauled up on the other side of the vessel until the plank was properly placed under the vessel’s bottom. Capt. Jackson pointed out that owing to their light draft the trows nearly always lay wind rode so that it

was usually as easy matter to put the plank over on the down side so that the tide helped to push the plank under to its proper place.

Incidentally Capt. Jackson mentioned that the cutter rig in the Severn Estuary is always referred to as “smack” rig.

**Captain Louis Jackson.  
Retired Trow Captain  
Formerly employed by  
The S & Co C. Co.**

Captain Louis Jackson was eighty years of age last January (1934)

As a boy he went to sea but he was 27 years in the trow “MARY” owned by the S & C OR its predecessors, 30 years Master of “ELY” and 11 years in “LILLEA VENN”.

He retired about five years ago so that it appears that either his age is greater than it is stated to be, some of the above statements are incorrect, or that his time at sea was very short. He was a member of the crew of the Severn cutter, or as he calls her, smack “MATILDA” in 1860 and spent a night in her rigging when she was sunk on one occasion. In his early recollections this S & C. owned nineteen trows. Ten traded regularly between Gloucester and the South Wales Ports and nine between Gloucester and Bristol. In addition they owned a number of lighters and barges trading between Stourport and Worcester.

In his earliest recollection the trows “USK” and “TAFF” and all the Wich barges worked under one square sail from Bristol. He believes that this square sail was still in use as late as 1895. (I have not yet got any information on this point). They were later fitted with cutter or smack rig.

In addition to the trows mentioned by his son, Capt. J. Jackson, Capt. L. Jackson remembers Company’s trows called:

“MARY” (wooden). Built at Brimscombe. This vessel was rather narrow in the beam owing to the restricted width of the Stroudwater Canal which runs to Brimscombe. She was subsequently widened by jacking out her sided and fitting longer main beams.

“CHARLES” Built of wood. Box trow, ketch rigged.

“ALANDINA” These were Dutch barges but were almost exactly of the form of a trow and had the trow’s characteristic side cloths.

“SARAH” Wooden. Cutter rigged. Built in Cardiff.

“UNITY” Wooden. Fitted with four portable tanks for carrying gas water. Otherwise a normal side cloth trow. Traded regularly to Cardiff.

“QUEEN” Wooden. Ketch rigged. Built at Cardiff.

“WATER WITCH” Built in Gloucester

All trows have two main beams. The forward one carries the mast tabernacle and the other after one stiffens the sides of the vessel. When the side cloth trows were converted to box trows it was found that the height of the side of the box was very inconvenient for the land loading which was custom in those days and ports were cut in the box sides to help in loading

The wooden “MARY” had ports big enough to roll a paraffin barrel through.

Capt. L. Jackson can recollect sailing “ELY” up and down the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal. Also on one occasion he sailed “MARY” up the Gloucester & Berkeley Canal and towed “WATER WITCH” which had been disabled. It was the custom when sailing in the canal to unship the bloom and rig a temporary main sheet much on the lines of the Leigh bawley to avoid damage to the swing bridges. The cargoes generally carried were sand, iron sheets, pitch, flour, salt and sugar and groceries. There were also a trade in wine and beer from Bristol to the Midlands.

Capt. L. Jackson, in common with all persons I have questioned up to date refers to the Bideford men as the “Bar” men.

He was most enthusiastic about sailing qualities of the “ELY” He states that as a cutter she steered easily and handed well and she was fast in a breeze or light wind. “ELY” is an iron trow with a very fine run, a good entrance below water, but with very heavy shoulders and a bluff bow above the waterline. Capt. Jackson says she was very dirty in a punch. He states the trows were kept very smartly and were as clean as smartly handled as any yacht.

The men were not seamen. The Company fed the crews or paid them a food allowance. The whole of his trow service was with the Severn & Canal or its predecessors, so he was accustomed always to having a Captain and four hands. The crew did all loading and discharge, and in calms they manned the tow boat which each boat towed about with her and towed the vessel clear of danger, the tide doing the work of moving her from point to point. The tow boats were 18’ long, built of 2’ oak and we still have two of them in service. The four members of the crew manned these boats and rowed them with long sweeps.

The recruiting of Captains, according to Capt. L. Jackson was haphazard. Sometimes it was by promotion and sometimes by transfer from other owner’s vessels. The Captains engaged their own crews, and it was the almost invariable custom for them to include among the crew at least one of their own sons. As a general rule the Gloucester trows were manned by Gloucester men and Capt. L. Jackson who is a Gloucester man himself, describes them being “rather small, nippy, handy men. Occasionally a Gloucester trow Captain would engage a Stourport man. These were always considered to be very big, strong men, and so rather an acquisition for the very heavy arduous work of loading and discharging. Capt. L. Jackson states that he can remember the first hand crane being put into use, and the first work it did was to discharge a cargo of lead sheets from his trow.

In his early days he had to navigate the very tortuous channel of the Severn Estuary entirely by natural marks on the shore, there being no lights or buoys. He said that there was a very large proportion of trows being navigated by men who were really unfit to command them and this, far more than the absence of navigation marks, was responsible for the rather frequent casualties.

His view on the handiness and suitability of the trow for her work was so biased by his affection for the “ELY” that it is hardly worth placing it on record. He says he can recollect trows working regularly to Chepstow and occasionally to Llandogo, which is near Tintern Abbey on the Wye.