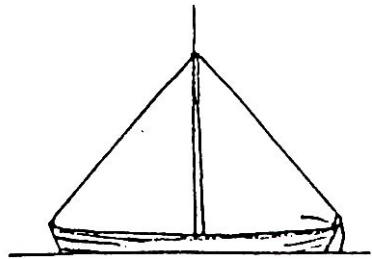


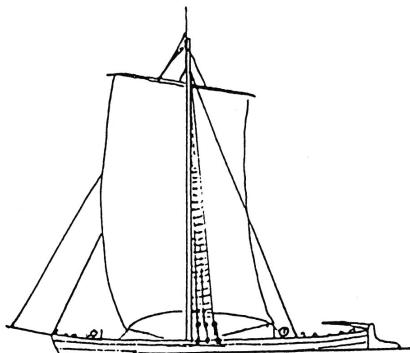
## Severn Trow

The Severn trow (the name rhymes with 'crow') was a cargo-carrying craft that was unique to the River Severn and Severn Estuary. The name comes from the Saxon word 'trog' which means 'trough', which describes the craft's basic internal shape. Trows were in use for over 800 years and 4 main types existed, which demonstrate how ships evolved into larger, more efficient cargo-carrying.

**Early trow:** This was the first type of trow and was in use from medieval times to around 1500. They were mainly river craft, travelling between Newnham to the upper reaches of the Severn in the Midlands. They looked like small Viking longships but had a flat bottom (to cope with the shallow waters of the river) and although they had a central mast, they were probably towed from the bank or rowed rather than sailed. Most were about 10m long and 2m wide, and could carry around 8-10 tonnes of cargo.



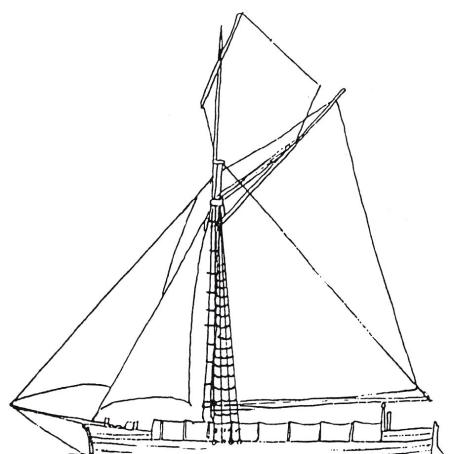
Early Trow



### *Upriver Trow/Wye Barge*

**Upriver trow:** By Tudor times, the early trows had grown into a larger craft, with a blunter bow and flat stern plus a single large square-sail. Most were around 18m long and 4m wide and could carry on the order of 20-40 tons of cargo. Many sail into the tidal waters of the estuary and many now sailed from the Midlands as far south as Bristol. Many specialised types of the upriver trow came into use, including the Wye barge, Stroud barge, Wych barge (which carried salt from Droitwich) and the Avon stone barge.

**Estuarine trow:** By 1850 a new type of trow had appeared which was better suited to sailing in the Severn Estuary and also in adjacent coastal waters. These craft had fore-and-aft sails (these were sails that pointed along the boat rather than across it), plus a deeper, broader hull. They were larger than the upriver trows, usually around 20-25m long and 5-6m wide. They could generally carry on the order of 50-60 tons of cargo.



Estuarine Trow



**Sea-going trow:** The final version of the trow came into use from 1900 and they were estuarine trows that were modified with higher sides, more decking and wooden hatches over the usually open hold. The aim was to reduce the amount of water that washed onboard at sea in rough weather. These trows were the same size as the estuarine trows but could carry more cargo, usually around 100 tons. These craft were used well into the 20th century and the last sea-going sailing trow did not cease working until 1939. Some were converted into barges that were towed behind powered craft and as such were used into the 1950s. Today only a single trow, the Spry, survives and has been restored at Ironbridge Museum.

