

Severn Trow Norah, words and model by Tony Judd
Photos by Graham Povey



ABOUT THE BOAT.

This is a model loosely based on the Severn Trow NORAH. The real boat was built in 1868 at Bridgwater. Trows were flat bottomed, shallow draft, sailing barges, carrying bulk cargoes. Mostly coal, but also stone and tiles, building materials, pit props, and grain. About 70ft to 95ft in length, carrying 80 to 180 tonnes of cargo.

The Trows worked mainly between Gloucester and Lydney down as far as Cardiff and Minehead.



ABOUT THE MODEL

The NORAH was an open boat, but to make the model “safe”, side decks and hatches have been added. 1/12th scale, built in wood, plank on frame, with cotton sails, natural fibre ropes, the vessel is 78” on deck x 17”, and draws just 5”. To grip the water and get to windward, a dagger board is inserted through a centreboard case. 17lb of lead is bolted to the bottom of this and brings total lead ballast to 65lb. The whole boat weighs 125lb, and has 2,300 sq. inches of sail. Depicted here heavily reefed and without the topsail. The hull lines and the sail plan are available in a National Maritime Museum publication. There is a nice model of the NORAH in the Gloucester waterways museum.

Controls are via 6 Hitec sail winches. 1 each for the rudder, mainsail, and mizzen. Another winch is wound both ways for the jib to give port and starboard sheets. To achieve this for the staysail two winches are required, port and starboard. With this setup the model can be sailed exactly as the real boat.

If you input “Severn Trow” on Google or YouTube, videos on “Radio Controlled period Sailing Boat models” should come up. One will take you through the build sequence, and another will show the vessel under sail. The model’s name is ASHMEAD.

