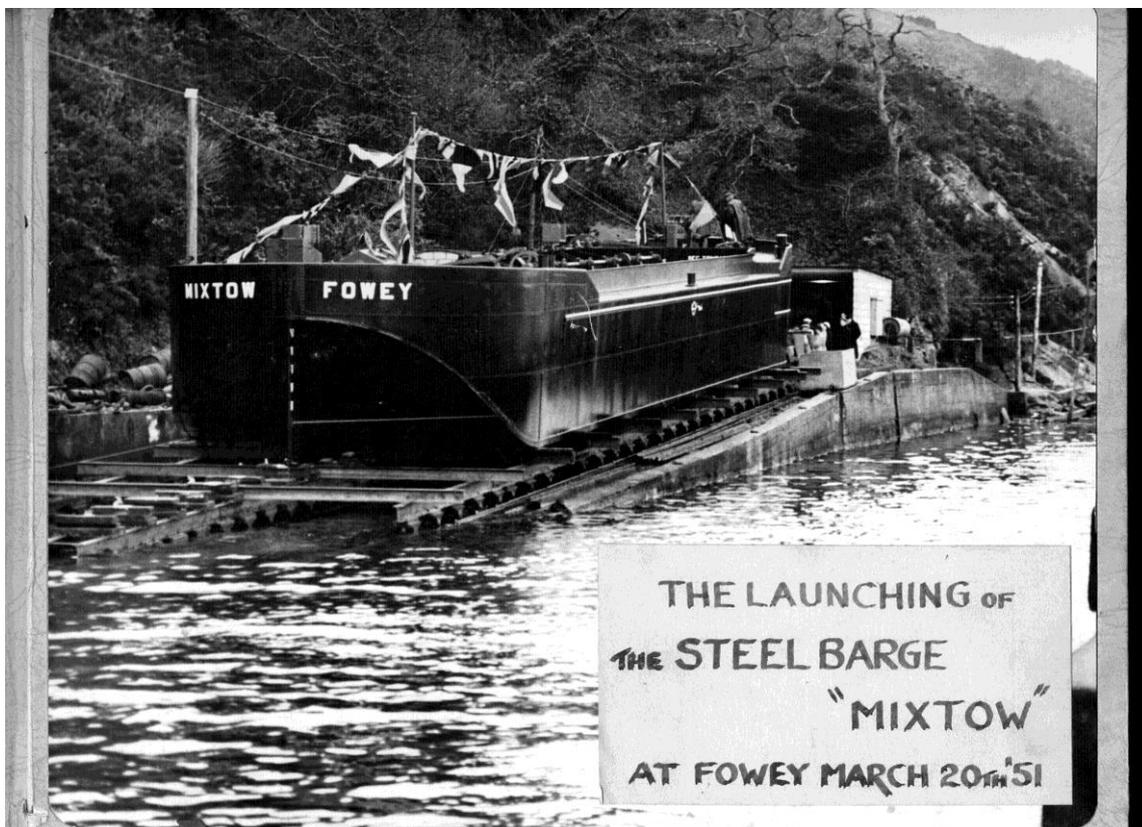
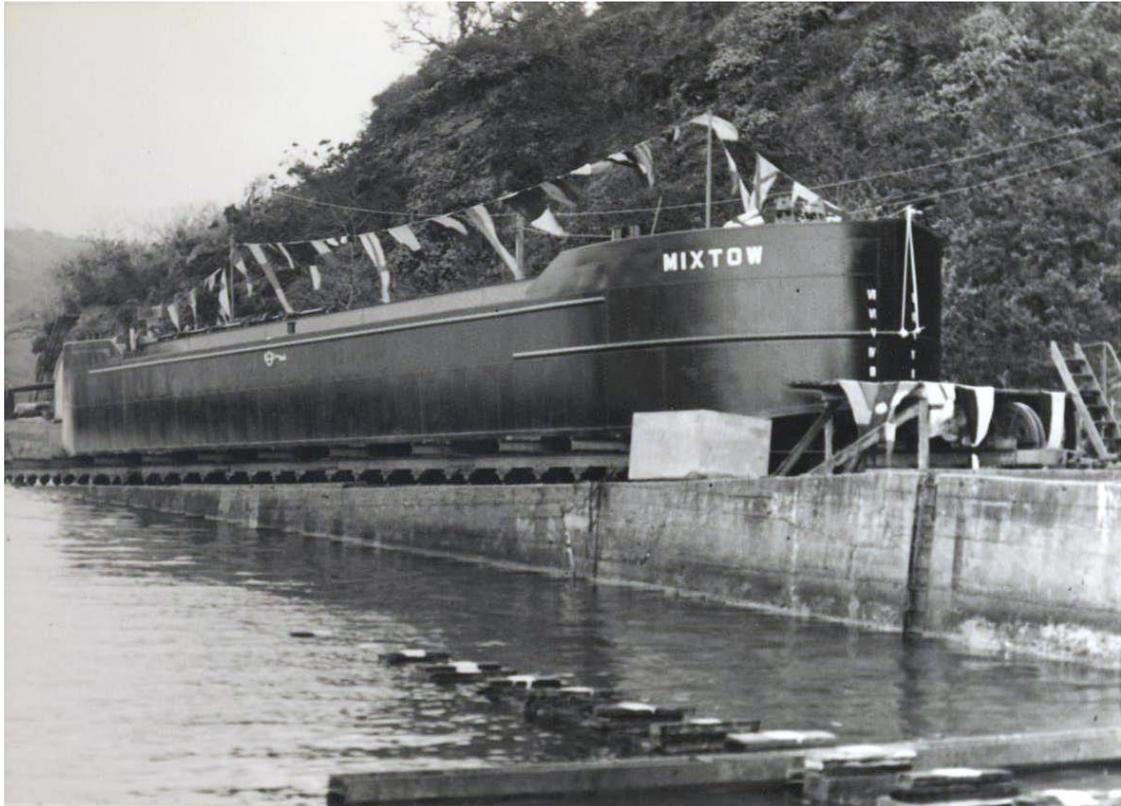


The steel Hopper MIXTOW

On 20th March 1951 the Barge Mixtow, built a Brazen Island was launched from No 2 slipway. She was named by Mrs Graham wife of the Chairman. Building had commenced on 15th November 1949 to a design by Captain Mitchell, the Harbour Master. She was 107ft long, 22 ft. in beam. A draft loaded of 8ft and was 300dwt. There was accommodation for four crew and she had a heavy duty bow roller to handle moorings. She cost £8053 to build.



The Mixtow ready for launching from No.2 slipway Brazen Island



Ready to launch with flags flying. Note the load line on her side



Mrs Graham, wife of the chairman Mr W.H.GRAHAM names and launches the barge Mixtow



Launched and being towed in alongside Brazen Island wall. Tug in the background.



The Brazen Island team who built the Mixtow
Pictures from the Fowey Harbour Commissioners archives

LAUNCHING OF THE FIRST STEEL SHIP BUILT AT FOWEY

HARBOUR COMMISSION ENTERPRISE

Fowey Harbour Commissioners, instead of standing off workmen when there was little work, decided in 1949 to build a ship—the forerunner, it may be, of others from the same yard—and on Tuesday there was launched, in Fowey harbour, the first steel ship of its size to be built in the port. The ship is a Dumb Hopper barge.

Mr. Walter Graham, chairman of the Fowey Harbour Commissioners, who welcomed the guests, said he believed that ceremony was a "unique occasion in the history of Fowey."

"This little town, with its deep water harbour, has, as everyone knows, been connected with the maritime history of the country for many centuries, but today we are going to launch the first steel ship of anything like this size and type to be built in port," he said. "Many good wooden ships have been built at Fowey and Polruan and have sailed the seven seas, and though the vessel we are to launch today is not an ocean greyhound or a china clipper, she is of the humbler, useful kind, and a maid of all work."

"I referred to a deep water port, but unfortunately, deep water ports have a habit of filling up and becoming not so deep. To avoid this here, and largely through the enterprise and foresight of Capt. Collins, the Fowey Harbour Commissioners bought a dredger and some barges with which to keep the channel at its advertised depth of twenty feet at low water, and so allow the large vessels which you see going in and out with their valuable cargoes of china clay, now of special importance in earning dollars.

Developments

"Having got our dredging plant, we acquired these buildings and put in some machinery to enable us to keep the plant repaired and in running order. Then in 1937 the Ministry of Transport gave us powers to build the outer slipway and the sea wall, and to repair not only our own plant but also other ships in need of attention," said Mr. Graham. "During the War the Admiralty and Ministry of Transport made good use of the slipway and repair shops and helped us build the second slip where we are now."

"Our facilities for repairing ships have proved of great advantage to the owners of ships trading to this harbour. Many are the jobs that we have done at short notice, such as putting new bows on to a ship that had been in collision, straightening shafts and all kinds of repairs to engines and machinery of ships while they are loading here, instead of their having to lay-off and to go to one of the bigger yards."

"Unfortunately there is not a steady stream of repair work to keep our men employed full time, so in 1949, rather than stand men off when there was little work, we decided to build this Dumb Hopper barge as a stock job."

Harbour-Master's Design

"So the keel was laid on November 15, 1949, to the design and drawings of our harbour-master, Captain Mitchell. She is 107 feet long, 22 feet beam, 8 feet in depth and has a deadweight capacity of 300 tons. Approximately 70 tons of steel were used in her construction and she has a specially designed bow to accommodate a heavy roller for handling heavy moorings and small salvage jobs. There are four water tanks inside for supplying boiler water to the dredger."

"If any of you care to go on board presently, you will see that accommodation has been provided for four men, in 280 square feet of floor space, better quarters than found in some sea-going ships," said Mr. Graham.

"I must pay tribute to Captain Mitchell, who designed her; to Captain Dennis, that wizard who can turn drawings on paper into steel frames, plates and angles, all fitted to go in their proper place to make a ship; to our foreman, Wally Stephens, another wizard, who can explain to the men how to handle the stuff and put it in place where Capt. Dennis wants it; to George Gale, who makes the machine tools and the fiddle bits that no-one else can make; and to all the men under them, who have worked as a grand team and have taken a tremendous interest in building this ship and worked hard for it for the love of the game."

Mr. Graham specially welcomed Mr. Richards, Ministry of Transport surveyor, and the members of the Harbour Commission and their ladies. Welcoming his wife, Mr. Graham asked her to launch the ship.

Mrs. Graham, who was presented by Miss Helen Mitchell, harbour-master's daughter, with a bouquet of carnations, then launched the vessel.

Afterwards the company celebrated the occasion in time-honoured custom.

Newspaper report detailing the launch of the "Mixtow"

She was soon at work and she and the Tregeagle and associated plant were engaged in a contract in Rosslare, Ireland. This was completed on 12th July 1952 and then she moved to Wexford for another contract.



Mixtow being towed infrom sea



moored in Lew Roads

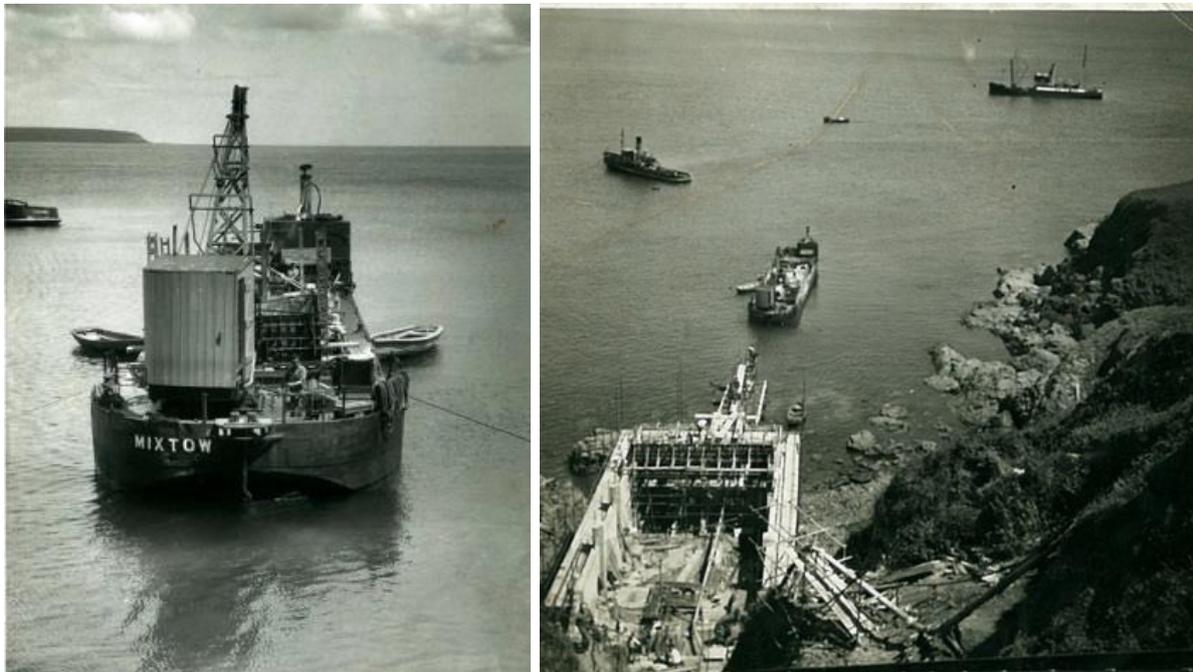
She was used in Fowey and Par for the next couple of years until at a board meeting on 23rd February 1954 it was agreed to accept an offer from Falmouth Dock and Engineering Co of £8,000 for the barge Mixtow. The sale was completed on 8th March and she was towed to Falmouth by their tug the "Portwey"

(www.stportwey.co.uk/ for information).

Once in Falmouth she had a steam crane added together with a workshop and beam were built across the hopper hold to take plant and she was extensively used in contract work and as a diving base.



Seen moored in the inner harbour with the floating crane and a United Towing tug behind



Working to construct the Lizard Slipway and lifeboat boat house tug Portwey in attendance. Pictures by Reg Penaluna of Lanner



Seen at Truro with a Falmouth Docks barge carrying out maintenance work. They are moored outside the Fred Everard coaster Aridity