



The enduring ferro-concrete barges, born out of necessity during the Second World War.



towed, until the Cadbury factory switched to oil power. She was beached in 1965.

Some of the most historically important wrecks are the eight ferro-concrete barges of the stem-head type, built in Barrow-in-Furness in the early 1940s. This was a unique type of bow, designed to cut through the water, rather than ride over it, in the case of a swim head. Intended to use a minimum amount of iron and steel, which were scarce in wartime, they were constructed by pouring concrete slurry over a metal frame.

Only 39 were built, and they were used as floating storage for oil, grain and food. Some of the technology used in their design was incorporated into the floating roadways which served the Mulberry Harbours, later used in the Normandy campaigns.

The Dispatch, a schooner later named the New Dispatch, was the penultimate ship to be built at the Geddie shipyards on the River Spey in Scotland. Built in 1888, she was one of only four equipped with moveable 'iron knees' designed to hold the deck to the side of a ship. These were instead of the wooden braces usually fitted. In theory, this would make the ship more streamlined, and fast enough to carry perishable goods. However, it was not so successful in practice. Originally part of a fleet which fished the waters around Newfoundland, she was de-masted in 1936. Her last years were spent along the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal, before being beached circa 1961.