



Welcome to the *Roger*

Roger is a historic working boat built of wood, and carefully rebuilt by Rickmansworth Waterways Trust from 1997 to 2001 to the original, as-built design.

Although not a trip boat, and not provided with any modern conveniences, *Roger* is used to give people interested in the heritage of our waterways a very unusual opportunity and experience.

Roger is presented as a working boat in full working order, and is a historic boat on several counts:

- it is one of the last wooden canal boats left in working order.
- it is the last example of Bushell Brothers' influential narrow boatbuilding.
- It was the last wooden motor boat trading on the Grand Union.

The Trust uses *Roger* in its education programme, especially to give opportunities for young people to gain experience, self-confidence and new skills on the waterways.

Historic Background. *Roger* was built by Bushell Brothers at their yard on the Wendover Arm near Tring in 1936, for the Aylesbury coal merchant and canal carrier Arthur Harvey-Taylor.

Roger was paired with the butty *Daphne* and captained by Arthur Bray with his wife Rose from 1941. This continued during the decline of the Harvey Taylor fleet during the 1940s and 50s, with the *Roger* and *Daphne* carrying the last load for Harvey-Taylor, coal from Baddesley Colliery to the Croxley paper mill, in April 1955. They then passed to the Samuel Barlow Coal Company, where *Daphne*, built in 1930, was replaced by the brand-new *Raymond*, the last wooden working boat built in England, in 1958.

Roger and *Raymond* went in 1962 to Blue Line, and continued, carrying mainly coal under the captaincy of the Brays, until 1968, when *Roger* was replaced by the steel motor boat *Nutfield* and paid off to be converted for residential use.

Roger's last major outing was in 1986, to recover the derelict Ovaltine boat *Albert* for restoration. She was then left in poor repair in Maple Cross basin.

The boat was rescued by Rickmansworth Waterways Trust in 1993, and raising the funds for rebuilding was achieved in 1997 with Heritage Lottery Funding. The boat was then rebuilt, to the original design, by Chris Collins at Batchworth, and re-launched in May 2000 for final fitting out, and painting in the original livery, at Troy Wharf. This took a further year.

The main aim was to provide a rare living example of this type of boat for the information and education of young people, and for the community in general.

Roger is now fitted with a Lister JP2 engine, built in about 1930. We believe that this was the prototype engine, and while not *Roger's* original engine it was fitted for Arthur Bray in the 1940s. It's very typical of the powerful engines used in boats of this sort at that time. There is no electricity in the boat at all, and the engine is started by hand.

Other interesting features of *Roger's* construction include:

- The *boatman's cabin*, which the crew will show you as you wish. This has a coal burning *range*, the *table* and *bed cupboards* so typical of the working narrow boat, and the other cupboards fitted as tradition dictated.
- the *fuel tank*, from which fuel is pumped by hand to the day tank from which fuel is supplied under gravity to the engine.
- The *lub oil tank*: there is no sump, just the 5-gallon tank!
- The raw water cooling, which takes water from the canal and returns it via the engine.
- The exposed steering position on the *counter*.
- The *stands* and *mast*, which support the *top planks* and *cloths* which keep the rain out.
- The *water can*, in two of which the crew carried all the water they used for drinking, washing and cooking. It was refilled from taps placed at intervals along the canal.
- The *frames*, naturally shaped from oak, which make the form of the bow.
- The oak *shearing*, which protects the hull planking from the wear and tear of cargo carrying.
- The shutts, which similarly protect the elm bottom planks.

The present. *Roger* is registered on the National Register of Historic Ships and licensed as a Community Boat. She is moored at Batchworth.

The aims of the restoration are achieved by allowing parties of children to visit it as part of the Trust's award-winning education programme "*Learning at the Lock*", by showing the boat off to the public at the Rickmansworth and other Festivals, and by using it in our training of captains and crews.

A main concern of the Trustees is now increasing the range of uses to which this important historic boat can be put, to the benefit of young people especially, and our *Under the Bridge* programme is being developed to meet exactly this need.

Your visit, along with any donation you may wish to make, is a welcome contribution to this work of the Trust.

Rickmansworth Waterways Trust

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How the Roger is built

