



Supported by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



## Welcome to the *Roger*



*Roger taking part in  
Cavalcade May 2012  
(Tim Lewis)*

*Roger* is a historic working boat built of wood, carefully rebuilt by Rickmansworth Waterways Trust from 1997 to 2001 to the original, as-built design, and now conserved with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England and Three Rivers DC with other donors.

Although not a trip boat, and without 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:

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

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

**Roger's History** *Roger* was built by Bushell Brothers at their yard on the Wendover Arm near Tring late in 1935, for the Aylesbury coal merchant and canal carrier Arthur Harvey-Taylor. She entered service in Feb 1936.



*Bushell Bros boatyard,  
about 1910.  
(McCutcheon)*

*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 when they took over the Barlows canal carrying , 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.

*Roger at Batchworth  
in 2011.  
(RWT)*



**Restoration and Conservation** *Roger* was rescued by Rickmansworth Waterways Trust in 1993. Raising the funds for rebuilding was achieved in 1997, with major support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. 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.



*Roger being rebuilt at Batchworth 1998. The new stem post has just been put in place.  
(Doug Bail/RWT)*

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. And indeed this work allowed *Roger* to take an important place in our education programme *Learning at the Lock*, and to be used for many trips and visits to demonstrate the heritage of canal craft of this sort.

In the winter 2012, however, extensive conservation work was required to address unexpected rot which had appeared in some of the bow timbers. With funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England (PRISM Fund) and Three Rivers District Council, the stem post and fore-end flashes were replaced, along with several feet of the bottom planking and various other items.

The work was done by Jem Bates at Bulbourne, about half a mile from where *Roger* was built, and will allow the boat to continue in service for many years to come.



*Roger's new stem post being fitted- Feb 2012.  
(Fabian Hiscock/RWT)*

## A short guide to *Roger*



*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.

*Roger's* JP2 engine.  
(RWT)

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

- The *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.

*Roger's* cabin was completely redecorated in the traditional style by Beverley Clarke in the spring of 2011.



- 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. Although not often used on coal-carrying boats, they're vital now to our care of the boat.
- The *water can*, in two of which the crew carried all the water they used for drinking, washing and cooking. From about 1870 it was refilled from taps placed at intervals along the canal: before that, from wells and troughs.
- The *frames*, naturally shaped from oak, which make the form of the bow.

- The oak *hull planking*. In boats of this size two-inch planks were generally used 5 deep, to give hold depth of about 4 ft - hence the term "5-planker". Note the caulking between the planks, and the strong scarf joints used to join the planks, which are themselves as long as reasonably possible – about 25ft. The planks at the bow were steamed into shape, bolted to the stem post and frames, and secured to the bottom planking with 8" nails.
- 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 bottom planks, of elm because of its resistance to rot, and the keelson, three lengths of oak 4" by 12" scarfed together. The bottoms are bolted through the keelson.

## How the *Roger* is built

