

Coch-y-bonddhu (or Cocky)



Coch-y-bonddhu being sailed by Earnseat pupils in the 1950s. The rowing boat in the foreground is 'Kittiwake' built for John Barnes, Head of Earnseat School by Crossfields in 1945. John Barnes is the man in the centre of the boat and his second son Peter Barnes is holding the boats.

Key Statistics

Built 1934 Length 13 foot

Description

Coch-y-bonddhu or Cocky was built by Crossfields in Arnside for Arthur Ransome. It is named after a fishing fly. In the 1950s the boat was used by Earnseat School in Arnside to teach sailing. The boat is now owned by The Arthur Ransome Society and is in the collection of the Windermere Jetties Museum. Unlike Swallow the boat has a centre-board rather than keel.

History by year

- 1933 Arthur Ransome orders Coch-y-bonddhu from William Crossfield and Sons for his fishing friend Charles Renold to introduce him to sailing at a cost of £21.
- 1934 Cocky helmed by Arthur Ransome beats Swallow in a race round Belle Isle in Windermere
- 1934 Charles Renold gives boat back to Arthur Ransome as he prefers fishing to sailing
- 1935 Arthur Ransome moves to Suffolk taking Coch-y-bonddhu with him. At first he uses it as a tender for his yacht Nancy Blackett, which is named after one of the Amazons in Swallows and Amazons, but then as sailing dinghy on the Orwell Estuary below Ipswich and in the Walton Backwaters, near Harwich, the setting for his book Secret Waters. Coch-y-bonddhu is lent to George and Josephine Russell, who live at Broke Hall beside the Orwell for two years and used by their children.
- 1940 Arthur Ransomes moves to the east side of Coniston Water. Sails boat regularly on the lake.
- 1943 Coch-y-bonddhu appears as Scarab in Arthur Ransome's The Picts and the Martyrs which is set in the Lake District.
- 1945 Arthur Ransome moves to London, sails Coch-y-bonddhu in Thames
- 1948 Arthur Ransome moves back to Lake District buying Lowick Hall south of Coniston Water
- 1950 Arthur Ransome moves back to London.

1950s Coch-y-bonddhu brought by John Barnes, Headteacher of Earnseat Prep School in Arnside, which was based at Ashmeadow through a boatyard at Bowness. Cocky returns to Arnside on a coal lorry. She is used to teach his son Edward (Ted) and Earnseat pupils sailing. The family regard the boat as Edward's. The boat is renamed Swallow.

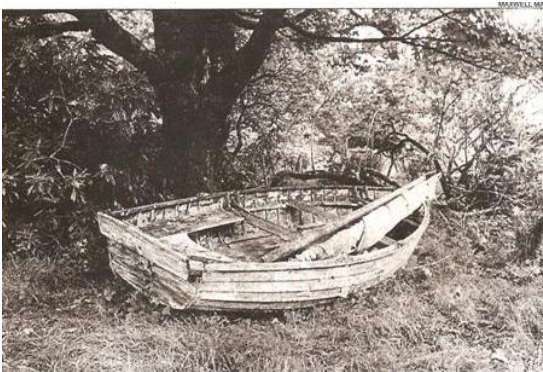
1960s Brought by Jeff Parker-Eaton, an ex racing driver, farmer, member of Arnside Sailing Club and teacher at Earnseat School, and taken to Camusrory, a Dr Barnado's Adventure Centre in a remote location at the head of Loch Nevis in Scotland to teach sailing.



Dr Barnado's Adventure Centre, Camusrory

1968 Brought by fiddler and historian Charlie McFarland for use as a fishing boat from Kilcamb Lodge Hotel at Strontian in Scotland from Henderson's Boatyard in Mallaig

1992 Rediscovered in the Hotel garden in poor condition by Dr Chris Birt of the Arthur Ransome Society. The hotel then owners Gordon and Peter Blakeway donate the boat to the Arthur Ransome Society. An appeal for £4500 to restore the boat was launched



Coch-y-bonddhu in Hotel Garden at Strontian

1995 Restored by boat-builder John Hodgson at Fiunary (Morven) on the Sound of Mull. John Hodgson had previously worked for the boatyard in Arnside.



John Hodgson restoring Coch-y-bonddhu in 1990s

- 1995 On display at Windermere Steam Boat Museum till 2006 when Museum closes
- 1999 Takes part in a in a Swallows and Amazons race round Horsey Island in the Walton Backwaters near Harwich and is reunited with Arthur Ransome's yacht Nancy Blackett. Walton Backwaters are the setting for Arthur Ransome's book Secret Water., Horsey Island appears as Swallow Island in the book.
- 2001 Comes last in Nancy Blackett Race in Walton Backwaters
- 2000 Peggy Blackett a replica of Coch-y-bonddhu built in Ullapool in Scotland
- 2005 Coch-y-Bonddhu sailed by Griff Rhys Jones in a BBC documentary about Arthur Ransome



Griff Rhys Jones sailing Coch-y-Bonddhu

- 2007 Coch-y-Bonddhu on display at National Maritime Museum in Falmouth
- 2008 Coch-y- Bonddhu moved to Windermere School
- 2018 Transferred to the new Windermere Jetties Museum



Peggy Blackett, a replica of Coch-y-bonddhu at Arnside, August 2018