

# Hardy Neroda Boxes

**1934 - 1963**

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*(this is an edit and update of my Neroda article published in 2010)*



Most people, and all anglers, know the company - “**Hardy Brothers of Alnwick**”. A business established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century which has supplied Kings and scholars, Maharajas and dilettantes, Presidents and trout bums with some of the worlds finest fishing kit.

First appearing in their 1934 Hardy's Anglers' Guide is the Hardy Neroda Fly Box. This Bakelite box was an improvement on their previous Japanned tin fly boxes, which were prone to rusting and the japanning flaking off.

The Neroda Fly Box continued to grace Hardy's catalogues until at least 1963 and was gone by 1967. \*

## BAKELITE

Bakelite was the world's first synthetic plastic. Its electrical non-conductivity and heat-resistance made it suitable for many applications.

Created by the Belgian inventor, Dr Leo Baekeland in 1907, the synthetic polymer -*Polyoxybenzylmethyleneglycolanhydride* or *phenol formaldehyde* (PF) as it is commonly called, with the application of heat and pressure becomes what we now call Bakelite.

It has been used for many things including electrical insulators, old radios and telephones, jewellery boxes, pipe stems, eggcups and salt and pepper pots.

I believe that the Bakelite Ltd. company, Redmanol, made the Neroda boxes. To quote Ian Holdsworth of the Plastics Historical Society:-

*“The history of the Bakelite company is a little complicated and at this time (late 1920's/early 30's) you have to think of Bakelite Ltd. as a group or amalgamation of a number of different companies, including two moulding companies called Mouldensite Ltd and Redmanol Ltd.*

*Both of these companies were absorbed under the Bakelite umbrella and produced quality moulded goods from Bakelite phenolic moulding powders. Either could have made your boxes although I favour Redmanol Ltd. in particular as it was famous for producing high quality mouldings - albeit now under the generic Bakelite Ltd. company name.”*

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## Manufacture

The bare Bakelite boxes then went to Messrs Richard Wheatley at their Constitution Hill Works in Birmingham where they were fitted out.

Wheatley were long established manufacturers of fly clips and leather goods and an established supplier to Hardys of Alnwick. During discussions with Clive Edwards, owner and curator of the Richard Wheatley Museum, he confirmed that among the items they produced for Hardy Bros prior to 1934 were block leather reel cases, fly and cast wallets and black japanned clip boxes. He also pointed out that Hardy's Holdtite clips, as seen in the Neroda Fly boxes, could be found in some examples of Wheatley's own brand boxes. Hardy's 1934 catalogue introduced the new product as '*The Hardy 'Neroda' fly boxes and containers for eyed flies*'.

## History

In their 1934 Hardy's Anglers' Guide Hardy introduced the Neroda -

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### THE HARDY "NERODA" FLY BOXES AND CONTAINERS *for* EYED FLIES

#### Fly Boxes of Distinction

We wish to introduce to our Angling friends a long felt want in the form of a new and perfect fly box, something which entirely eclipses the japanned tin and aluminium boxes now used.

These new boxes will not bend or warp and disturb the set of the clips so that they cannot hold the flies properly. They are not affected by exposure to damp and will not rust or corrode. They never become unsightly, mutilated and practically useless; they retain their original shape, highly polished finish, closing properly, and are always perfect fly containers and protectors. All these boxes are fitted with a good spring fastener.

The range of the Hardy "Neroda" Fly Boxes is so extensive that an angler should have no difficulty in selecting something which will exactly meet his requirements.

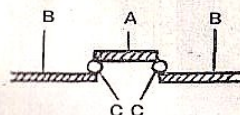
We decided to make only one size of box for Salmon Flies in this series, as we find very large boxes a nuisance to carry as they will not go into an ordinary pocket. On many occasions a large box is carried when only a small collection is needed; besides, it is more convenient to carry two or more boxes of moderate size than one large one.

#### The "Holdtite" Finger Clip AN IMPROVED FINGER CLIP

For holding Salmon, Sea Trout and Trout Flies fitted to "Neroda" boxes.

Has been thoroughly tested and proved to be a decided improvement on any others we have seen. It is simple and strong.

The fingers A, on the clips, are cut out of the sheet metal base plate BB, and, therefore, their position is on the same level as the base plate, thus permitting a good hold of the hook, CC, being obtained. See sketch:—



To increase their strength and springiness, they are impressed with a "rat-tail" which extends beyond the fixed end of the clip into the base plate.



The boxes were available in two separate nominal sizes, 6 1/4" x 3 3/4" and 3 7/8" x 2 1/2".

The 'clip' boxes varied in the number of clips - 40 & 119 in the larger boxes, and 51 in the smaller; note that these boxes also varied in thickness.

The 'dry fly' boxes, nos. 4 & 5, have lidded compartments and the boxes numbered 6, 7 & 8 are the 'pipe cleaner' boxes, as many refer to them, because of the appearance of the rope like strands which hold your flies.

(images from 1934 catalogue)

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HARDY BROTHERS LIMITED



**"NERODA"**  
Waistcoat Pocket  
Dry Fly Box  
No. 5



**"NERODA" No. 1 Salmon Fly Box with "Holdtite" Finger Clips**

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**"NERODA" May Fly or  
Large Dry Fly Box No. 4**

**NERODA BOXES FITTED WITH  
"HOLDTITE" FINGER CLIPS**

No.	Description	Size	Price
1	Salmon - - -	6 1/4" x 3 3/4" x 1 1/8" holding 40 flies	9/6
2	Sea Trout and Trout	6 1/4" x 3 3/4" x 3/8" holding 119 flies	9/6
3	Sea Trout and Trout	3 7/8" x 2 1/2" x 1/2" holding 51 flies	7/6

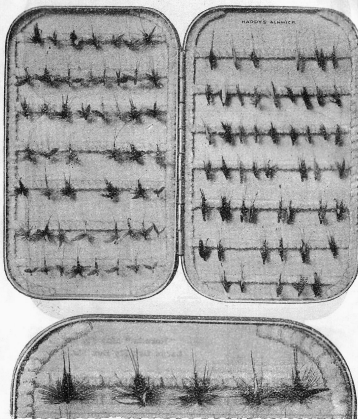
**NERODA BOXES WITH COMPARTMENTS  
AND TRANSPARENT SLIDING DOORS**

No.	Description	Size	Price
4	May Fly or Large Dry Fly	6 1/4" x 3 3/4" x 1 1/8" with 14 compartments including two extra large size	10/6
5	Waistcoat Pocket Dry Fly	3 7/8" x 2 1/2" x 1" with six compartments	7/6

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HARDY BROTHERS LIMITED

**The "Neroda" Drywet Fly Box**



**Natural Size.**

An entirely new method of holding eyed flies wet and dry.  
The flies are hooked over the Chenille-covered bars and cannot drop out or change position. A severe shaking does not disturb them. Other important advantages are that the hackles are protected and the flies are always on view. The method of holding allows a very large number of flies being carried as the flies may be in close together. The smallest trout fly to Loch flies can be carried.

Box No.	DESCRIPTION.	SIZE. INS.	PRICE. "NERODA"	PRICE. ALUMINIUM
6	May Flies and Large Dry Flies.	6 1/4" x 3 3/4" x 1 1/8"	8/6	7/6
7	General Patterns—Wet or Dry Trout Flies.	6 1/4" x 3 3/4" x 3/8"	8/6	7/6
8	General Patterns—Wet or Dry Trout Flies	3 7/8" x 2 1/2" x 1"	—	6/6



### NERODA BOXES FITTED WITH "HOLDTITE" FINGER CLIPS

No.	Description	Size	Price
1	Salmon - - -	$6\frac{1}{4}" \times 3\frac{3}{4}" \times 1\frac{3}{8}"$ holding 40 single or double flies	9/6
1A	Salmon - - -	$6\frac{1}{4}" \times 3\frac{3}{4}" \times \frac{13}{16}"$ holding 40 single salmon flies	9/6
1B	Small Salmon or Low Water Salmon Flies	$6\frac{1}{4}" \times 3\frac{3}{4}" \times \frac{13}{16}"$ holding 70 flies	9/6
2	Sea Trout and Trout	$6\frac{1}{4}" \times 3\frac{3}{4}" \times \frac{13}{16}"$ holding 119 flies	9/6
3	Sea Trout and Trout	$3\frac{7}{8}" \times 2\frac{1}{2}" \times \frac{3}{4}"$ holding 51 flies	7/6

In their 1937 catalogue Hardy introduced 5 new variants of the Neroda.

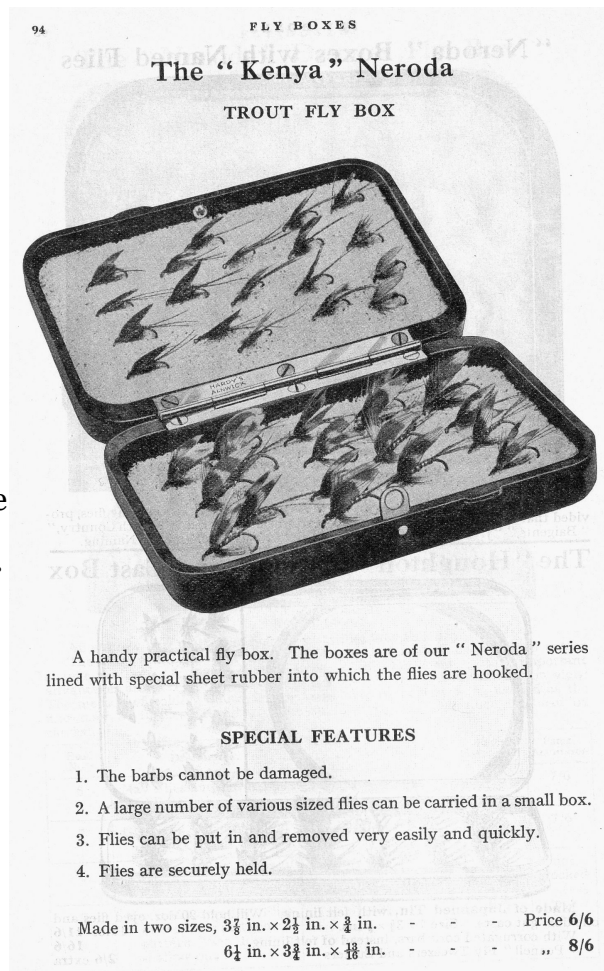
The two additional clip boxes, 1A and 1B, were both of the thinnest size. The 1A was for smaller salmon flies (singles rather than doubles), still with 40 clips, and the 1B was similar with 70 clips.

9	May and Large Dry Flies in deep side and general pattern Wet Flies in shallow one	$6\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4} \times 1$	8/6	not stocked
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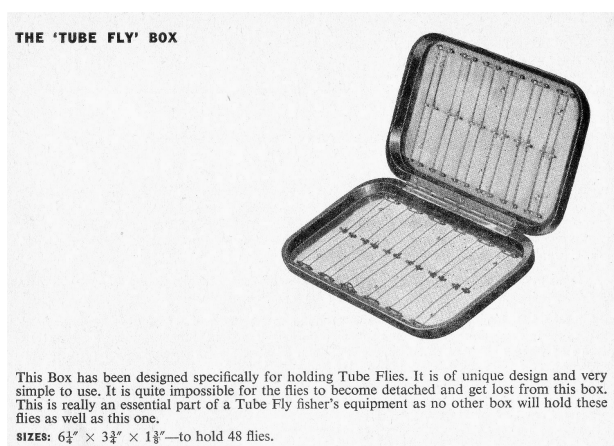
Also added was box number 9, an asymmetrical 'pipe cleaner' trout fly box with one side deeper than the other, the idea being that larger winged flies didn't get squashed.

The other two boxes were two sizes of what Hardys called their 'Kenya' Neroda box, lined with soft red granular rubber – a quite rare box to find in original condition.

This catalogue photo isn't very representative of the actual boxes which exist. The rubber inner is a pinkish/red granular rubber (prone to decomposing with age)



A later variant was the relatively rare 'Tube Fly Box'.



The Hardy Neroda boxes continued to appear in Hardy's Anglers' Guides until 1963.\*

A rare "Neroda Tube Fly Box"  
(with thanks to John @ Mullocks Auctions)



The Hardy Logo as it normally appears on the boxes  
(occasionally these can be found blank – Neroda boxes were also made for other dealers, without any logo. Examples with logo to one face and blank on the other ... probably have a mirror twin ... )



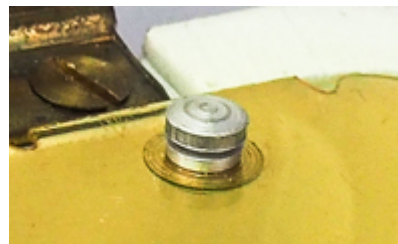




Clip boxes in both sizes



A larger size “Dry Fly” box – the ‘lids’ are usually a slightly yellowish/clear Perspex type material with upturned lips or nickel silver studs.



Neroda boxes were produced in two different colours. Collectors refer to these colours as '**Oxblood**' and '**Tortoiseshell**'; the '**Oxblood**' boxes have always been slightly more collectable.



Below: a pair in 'Tortoiseshell' – note that the small box has an imprint but no 'Hardy' logo

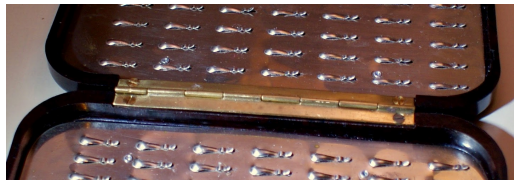
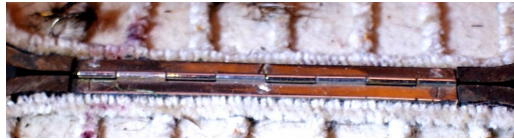




A pair of '***Oxblood***' boxes



As well as these variations there are two types of hinge - brass and nickel silver, some with three screws per side and others with two.



A fine example of the "***Kenya***" Neroda box





Below, 2 excellent examples of the “Tube Fly Box”  
*(courtesy of a Danish collector friend)*



A pair of clip boxes with the so called gold plated interior (it's not gold, but it does have a gold 'sheen' to the finish of the clip plates)



*(courtesy of Mr D Deacon of Angling Antiques)*

There are a number of other small variations, such as clips attached directly to box rather than to a backing plate, different types of clip, Hardy Security clips, clips with different orientation .... etc - see images that follow -

*(Thanks to Ian Marshall)*

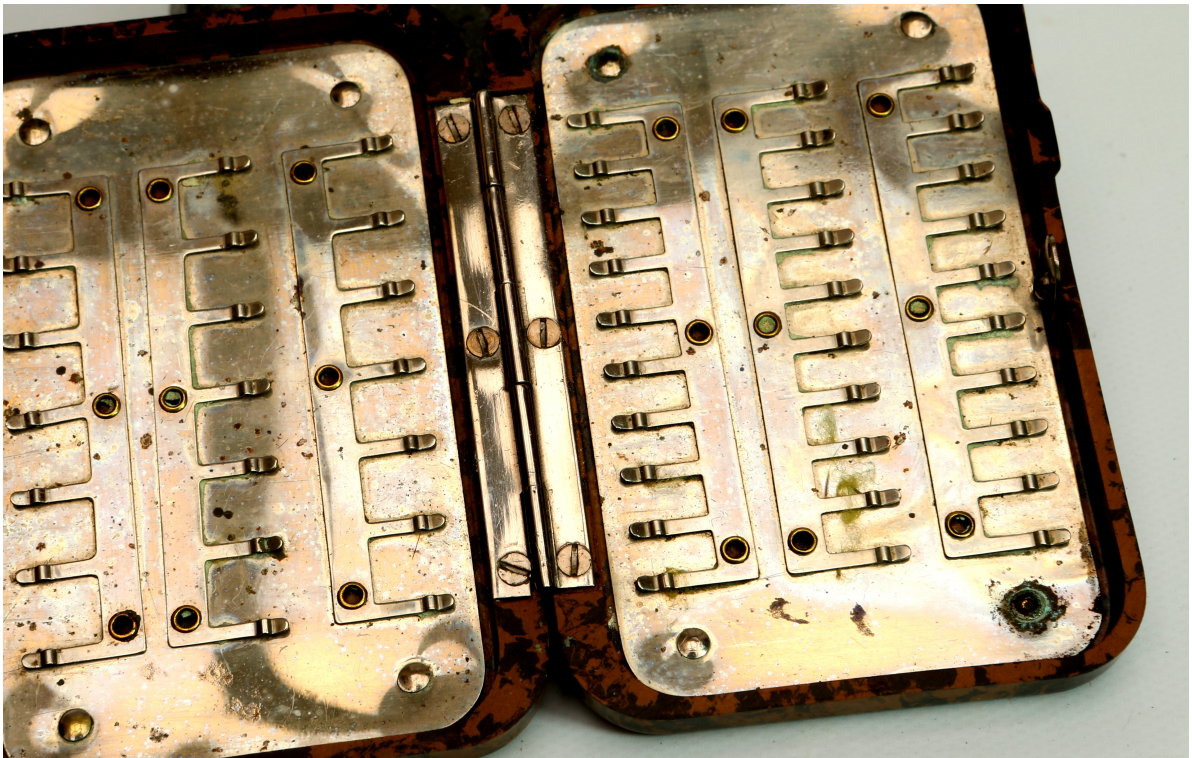












It has been suggested by Clive Edwards, owner of the Wheatley Museum, that the boxes with clips rivetted directly onto the bakelite box are the earlier versions.

The high number of rivets needed caused cases to crack, break or the clips worked loose so it was decided to mount the combs onto plates and use less rivets.

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A fun part of collecting is the research and anticipation so go out there and see what you can add to the story.

As anyone who collects 'Hardy' equipment, whether it be reels, rods or Neroda boxes, will tell you - once you think you have it all figured out a new example will appear that contradicts all that you previously believed.







*\*Hardy have recently re-introduced a new Neroda box to their range. These are produced in both green and brown mottled plastic in a 'tortoiseshell' pattern, easily distinguished from the older ones by a circular gold Hardy logo, lined with foam.*

*This is a different animal to the one discussed above and, whilst they may become collectable in years to come, they are not within the scope of this article.*

*Brian Taylor is a writer and vintage tackle collector. He lives in the UK and is constantly researching dusty corners of the interweb and friend's basements in the hopes of finding that left handed Barton multiplier ... or?*

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