

February 2011



# The Raymond & Nutfield News

## Editorial

Welcome to 2011 everyone – it looks like being another busy year for Raymond and Nutfield as we approach the new season with a diary full of events. The FoR seem to go from strength to strength, thanks to the work and commitment of all those involved.

Of course its not all work and no play. We are involved because we enjoy it and appreciate being a part of the history of two such significant narrowboats – and long may they continue to travel our waterways.

For me this season has been a real “voyage of discovery” as I am one of the “newbies” (there have been a spectacular 19 new members this year – see Marty's report). I hadn't been boating for 10 years so I took the opportunity to turn out and put my very rusty boating skills to the test; my thanks to the crews on both occasions, who were very helpful, and I really enjoyed myself. I was interested to discover I can still wield a windlass and steering the boats didn't present too many problems – not dissimilar to the old adage about riding a bike. What did surprise me though was how “wobbly” I was getting round the boat and walking along the gunnels posed the biggest challenge. Fortunately my “boat legs” had returned by the end of the day and I look forward to putting them back into practice this year.

My commiserations go to our hard working Chairman, Steve Miles – someone with well seasoned “boat legs”. To meet festival commitments the boats needed to be moved during some very inclement weather and Steve was unfortunate enough to slip on the wet deck and break one of his ribs. However, you can't keep a good boatman down and, needless to say, Steve is up and about and handling the boats as though nothing remiss had happened. Well done Steve, welcome back on board.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the newsletter, both text and pictures. As well as the reports and information we have articles about the boats on tour, the antics of our younger members on their training day, a full report of the work accomplished on Raymond in Dry Dock and a nostalgic reminiscence from one of our members of boating back in 1969. Enjoy.....

**Jenny Freeman**

## RAYMOND AND NUTFIELD ON TOUR

This report follows on from the one given in the previous newsletter which covered the events that the boats attended in more or less the first half of the year.



The Braunston Historic Boat Show was held on 26–27<sup>th</sup> June and we were out on show at our **home** ground, Braunston Marina. The Sales Stand was out and located alongside the arm. “Nutfield” and “Raymond” were moored on the other side of the arm under the canopy near the diesel point. Our boats lead the parades on both days to Braunston Turn and back, and then passing through the marina as usual.

There were two additional new events that we attended this year and this resulted in our being out for 4 consecutive weekends on the trot. On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> July Nutfield and Raymond left Braunston Marina to travel down south to attend the Buckingham Canal Society Lock Ransom at Cosgrove over the weekend of 24–25<sup>th</sup> July. The crew on this journey were Brian Seymour, Roger Golder, Robin Bishop and Neil

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Hankin. On the first day they were joined by Graham Swallow and Mike Freeman – who went along for the ride. The boats stayed at Cosgrove for a few days afterwards.

Following on from the Cosgrove event on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July the boats were moved onwards to Linslade to attend the canal festival there on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> July. The crew on this journey were Steve Miles, Robin Bishop, Tim Collier and Mike Bowley. Raymond and Nutfield were moored in a good position alongside the towpath, which was being used by many people who were walking along it to come out from the town. Once they had passed our boats they then crossed over the bridge across the canal into the field onto the Festival Site where most of the traders' stalls were set up and other activities were taking place. The Sales Stand was set up and operated here on our mooring from inside Raymond. A lot of interest was taken in Raymond and we had many people come on board to see inside her cabin.

On Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> August the boats headed back to Blisworth where they arrived on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> in readiness to be present at the Blisworth Canal Festival which was to be held on the 7–8<sup>th</sup> August. The crew on this journey were Steve Miles, Robin Bishop, Neil Hankin and Mike Bowley. We left the boats here along with several others that had already arrived for the Canal Festival that was taking place over the following weekend. Some of us returned to the boats on Friday to get them ready for the Festival.

This was the first of the new events. It was well organised and well advertised in advance, including on their own website. The car parks filled up quickly. The village supported the event and joined in with several activities taking place in various locations in the village. There were a good number of boats moored along the towpath including trading boats and private ones too. There were also boat trips starting out from two points. The weather was good and a thoroughly enjoyable time was had by all.

The boats remained at Blisworth afterwards until on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August they started the move to Foxton for the Canal Festival being held there on 14–15<sup>th</sup> August. The crew on this journey at the start were Richard Scarff, Neil Hankin and Nick Scarcliffe. They were met at Buckby bottom lock by Robin Bishop, Mike Freeman and Steve Miles who then joined them. When we arrived at the Watford Staircase Locks we found a queue of boats waiting to go up which eventually ended up being a two and a half hour delay.

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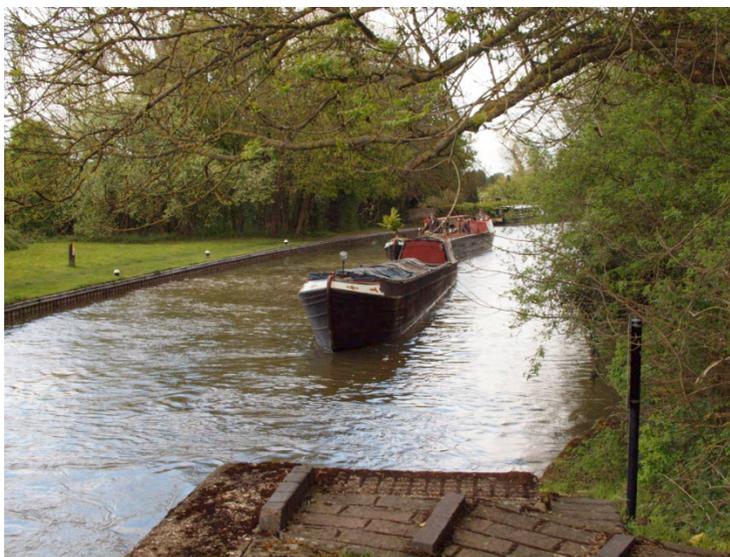
After an overnight stop at Crick we arrived at our final destination mid afternoon on the Friday. There were a large number of boats moored along the towpath including some of the trading boats who, like us, were at Blisworth the weekend before. There were also a number of old working boats and private ones as well. The main area of the festival was at the top of Foxton Locks and in a nearby field there were outside stalls and marquees which contained many traders. This was the second of the 2 new events we attended and completed the run of 4 in a row.

Following on from the Foxton event Nutfield and Raymond were then moved back **home** Braunston Marina, the journey starting out early on the Monday morning. The crew on this journey were Steve Miles, Richard Scarff, Neil Hankin, Robin Bishop and Melvyn Forman.

The next event attended was the Shackerstone Family Steam rally on 4-5<sup>th</sup> September.

Finally there was the Stoke Bruerne "Village at War" weekend on 2-3<sup>rd</sup> October. Nutfield and Raymond left Braunston Marina on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October to travel to Stoke Bruerne.

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The crew on this journey were Steve Miles, Neil Hankin, Robin Bishop, Jeremy Cooper, Mike Bowley, Nick Scarcliffe and Nick's friend Michael.

Early in the morning on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> following the Stoke Bruerne event the journey started to move Nutfield and Raymond back **home** to Braunston Marina. The crew on this journey were Neil Hankin, Robin Bishop, Jeremy Cooper, Jenny Freeman, Nick Scarcliffe and Nick's friendly Michael.

**Robin Bishop**

### **“A memory of 1969”**

Its actually one of the sunny days of the year 2010 and I have joined Nutfield and Raymond to help them up the Buckby Flight. Progress is good and we are about halfway up when I find myself reminded of a chilly April morning in 1969 when I am standing on the bridge by the Nelson with a group of friends, having experienced my first wide lock the previous evening, Oh! – and the odd glass.

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I had already found what was to be my first narrowboat, a River Class Butty rejoicing in the name of EXE. It was a bare hull standing on the dock at Les Allen`s yard, with much work to be done.

The friends were interested in the project but felt a need to do some boating beforehand. A boat was hired from Sawley Marina for a fortnight, the last week in March and the first week in April. There were two crews, one to Oxford and one back again. The first week it snowed and the second week had the sun, which was the one I was on.



The bottom gates were open and there was the sound of an approaching boat engine. What followed was a vision of seamless non-stop motion. As the fore-ends of a pair of breasted boats came into view two men in weathered jackets and trilby hats appeared. One made his way to the top of the lock and pulled half a paddle just in time to bring the boats to rest as they reached the cill although the motor was in forward "tick-over". The second man was already closing the bottom gate, aided by the flow of water into the lock. Moments later the other gate was closing to. All the paddles were raised at the top of the lock. The boats rose rapidly and as the level was made the motor nudged the gates open, the steerer wound the throttle up and the boats made their way out of the lock with another boater already well ahead on the towpath to ensure that the next lock was ready. What was captivating was an apparent meshing of men and machines and the fact that the boaters did not run, but they certainly

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knew how to walk fast. It was probably the fast walking that had brought this memory to mind, having seen Richard Scarff scurrying across the top gates before setting off to the next lock.



Later that morning, the coal boats – (long gone), there was another first experience steering through a wide tunnel. Maybe you have guessed it but there it was a single light steady in the middle of the tunnel. Being relatively unversed in the ways of the waterways, the thought did cross my mind that it could just possibly be a wide boat approaching. This was a thought that I shared with the friend by me at the tiller. At the last moment the light moved to one side and a pair travelling light rapidly passed. It was only some time later that I discovered that my thoughts about wide boats were quite clearly heard by the people at the front. I think there were thoughts as to how many pairs of spare trousers had been packed!

Less than twelve months later Exe was making its first voyage south passing through Braunston late on a January Morning. That could well be another tale.

**Michael Freeman.**  
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## **[www.friendsofraymond.org.uk](http://www.friendsofraymond.org.uk)**

The "Friends of Raymond" website has a new name (above). However, if you use the old one (...thefriendsofraymond...) you will be directed to the new one, so nobody need lose touch with us. Jeremy Cooper, our new Webmaster, has used his considerable expertise to overhaul the site – primarily to target an audience of people who don't already know about Raymond and FoR.

The front page is leaner than it was, but offers links to all the other pages (a "LINKS" column now appears on each page so that everything connects); most of the pictures and information previously on the site can still be found there. It also features a "Latest News" page and we welcome contributions – including recent photographs.

Have a look on the site and if you have any comments/suggestions/queries just use the email link on the website in "CONTACTS".

## **Dates for your Diary in 2011**

Dates so far for this year are :-

19–20 March	The Annual Braunston Boat–Share Show
April 30–May 2	Northampton (IWA) Campaign Rally
May 21–22	Rickmansworth
May 28–30	Wendover (possibly)
June 11–12	Stoke Bruerne Gala
June 24–26	Braunston
July 23–24	Cosgrove BCS
July 30	Linslade
August 6–7	Blisworth
September 17–18	Huddlesford
October 1–2	Stoke Bruerne Village at War

Moving dates will obviously fit around these events, to suit the various crews. The plan is to leave Braunston initially on April 28<sup>th</sup> – but we might decide to go a day early if people want to watch The Wedding on TV

### **Some provisional dates (Check for updates on the website):**

– There will be a training weekend in early April, when we will also be preparing the boats for the season on the Friday. This will be based at Braunston & the probable dates are April 2–3.

- This year it will be Nutfield's turn in the dock - initially for a survey but some work is anticipated. This will be in October - there will be more details of this in the next newsletter.

**Needless to say, volunteers are always needed.**

## **FORWARD THE KIDS!**

On October 28th, during the autumn half-term week, the Friends organised a special training day at Braunston. We have recently had a number of youngsters, relatives of our adult members, taking an interest in our activities: Chris Jones's son Tom has joined the boats several times and expressed his wish to learn more about boating and get more involved; my own stepson Gabriel has come with me on the pair over the last few years, and happily got stuck in with a windlass, pushing lock-gates and even steering the boats (under close supervision!). And this year, Mike Freeman's grandson Lewis joined us for the trip to Foxton, showing himself only too willing in helping work not only ours but many other boats through Watford Locks.

The idea was mooted of having a day of training for these kids, to show them how to handle the motor boat properly and to get the feel of its controls, and the half-term week offered the ideal opportunity. Fortunately, the weather was reasonable - chilly and grey, but dry and with only a gentle wind. We took just the Nutfield, setting off from the Marina around ten o'clock and heading up the North Oxford Canal. Once clear of the congestion around the village, Lewis took over for the first period, and soon showed himself quite capable of handling all 71'6" of the boat, competently slowing down as instructed to pass the moored boats along the way.

The route to Hillmorton allowed about half an hour each for the three boys, and Tom took the helm next. He had had some little experience of the boat before, at our training day in April, so it came as no surprise that he settled easily to steering around the sometimes-awkward turns of the Oxford. Likewise Gabriel, who came last - he had steered the pair in the past and spent his time at the tiller

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chatting with me, perhaps paying less attention to where he was going at times than he should have! One or two quick rescues, and he too showed his ability.

I had chosen that route in order to make use of the narrow locks at Hillmorton – with hindsight, perhaps not ideal as the shallowness of much of the channel did make handling the deep-drafted motor more difficult for the boys if they got at all out of the deep water in the middle of the cut. At the locks, they again took turn and turn about running the boat in and out while the others (and the grown-ups!) did the donkey-work on the bank. Lewis first, down two locks; then Tom, down the last and back into the first uphill (I did the winding, with him on the gunwale beside me!), and then Gabriel, through the last two. Each of them managed very well, steering remarkably neatly into the tight space of the locks and bringing the boat to a halt in good time.

Out of the top lock again, Lewis was in charge – perhaps a little over-confidently! Trying to go a bit too fast at times, he ran foul of the shallow water several times and had to be rescued, but easing the speed down he was soon back in control. Tom too had some difficulty with the mud – it's all too easy to end up with the tail wagging the dog as the stern drags in the shallows, and the boat swings from one side of the channel to the other. But he again proved his ability to cope with such a big boat, given that as the shortest of the boys, he had the most restricted view over the cabintop. And Gabriel, almost as tall as me at thirteen, had no such difficulty when he took the tiller again.

Over the final stretch back to Braunston, Chris M Jones (the other Chris Jones!) took the opportunity for some more practice with the boat – but he soon took young Lewis under his wing and was giving the kid a bit more very useful teaching. (Picture of Lewis below, courtesy of Mike Freeman)

I felt we had a very successful day – the three boys all enjoyed the experience, and I think learnt a lot about the canal into the bargain. I would have no hesitation in including any of them in future crews! And my thanks go to the adults who brought them, and came along to help: Chris R Jones, Chris M Jones, and Mike Freeman. I am planning another training day for April 2011, the date to be decided as I write

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this, when we will take the pair out with a view to improving our competence in handling them in the tight confines of Braunston as well as on the surrounding waterway – watch this space, and let me know if you want to join in! Places will be restricted, so drop me a line, phone or email me.

**Steve Miles, Chairman, FoR**



## **RAYMOND ON THE DOCK, OCTOBER 2010**

In October 2009, the Raymond was docked for its regular insurance survey, as well as for some routine maintenance to be carried out. The survey was done by Barrie Morse who for many years ran the old Tooley's Dock in Banbury, a man with more experience of wooden boats than almost anyone around today. The result was his comment that ours was probably the soundest wooden boat he had ever surveyed! Perhaps not too surprising really, as most of it is only ten years old!



Concentration – Roger at work

But, as many of us had suspected, work was needed. Over those ten years, the timber of the hull planking had largely dried out and much of the caulking had become loose. The use of traditional pitch to seal the seams hadn't helped, as this material sets to a rock-hard consistency which then cracks all too easily and falls out. The result was that every seam of the hull now needed to have any suspect caulking removed and fresh oakum hammered in. There were other minor issues too – three cracks had appeared in the timbers themselves, which also needed attention.

So the dock at Braunston was booked again for the weekend of October 7–9th 2010, and the necessary tools and materials acquired in advance. A number of us turned up on the Thursday night, at a cottage in the village which had been booked by Diana Golder, one of our trustees. We ate well (Diana is also an excellent cook!) and then repaired to the Old Plough for liquid refreshment.

The Marina's men (Bless 'em!) had already moved the boat, and by the time we arrived at the dock were pumping the water out. I have to admit to being rather later than most – I was still suffering from a broken rib acquired the weekend before whilst moving the boats to

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Stoke Bruerne. Richard set to with the pressure-washer to remove a year's accumulated weed and muck from the hull sides, while the rest of us sorted out equipment and materials for the work to come.



Fitting a tingle

Over the next three days, an extraordinary amount was achieved. Every hull-side seam was inspected and any suspect caulking raked out. Teams of two volunteers then set about rolling the oakum from the half-bale we had in store - it has to be rolled into long strings before it can be inserted into the gaps between the planks - and then pushing it into place and hammering it home. Most of the seams needed several layers of oakum, each hammered to a high degree of hardness with the special tools, some owned by FoR and others borrowed, before they could be sealed. With the oakum raised to a level just below the timber surface, the seams were then sealed using a modern sealer, applied from a hand-held gun - not traditional, perhaps, but more likely to remain in place for years to come as it remains flexible once set. And recommended by Barrie Morse himself.



Nick & Neil on the Caulking

The cracks in the planks were repaired in a truly traditional way! Our treasurer, Marty Seymour, had managed to acquire a failed calorifier tank, and Richard cut the ends off and flattened the copper sheeting of the barrel before cutting rectangular sections large enough to cover the cracks. These 'tingles' were then nailed into place over the cracks which had been filled with oakum first, with a layer of sealer on the inner sides, using copper nails to avoid any danger of rust eventually weakening the repair. Very much the way Mr Nurser would have done it!

While all this was going on, others among the astonishing number of volunteers who turned out over the weekend were getting stuck in to a raft of other jobs - much of the paintwork around the fore-end and stern of the boat was tackled, loose flaking paint chipped away, cracks

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filled, and then repainted, with the result that Raymond will present a much smarter appearance for the coming seasons. And the pattern of diamonds on the hull top bend below the cabin was altered in keeping with the Blue Line livery – it had previously been left as it had appeared under Barlow's ownership. Others were hard at work in the hold – the new top planks received a fresh coat of red floor paint, the cross-beams were all lifted and also repainted as were the top frames around the inside of the hold itself. The two stands, whose paintwork was looking very sad after ten years, were also rubbed down and repainted, although time did not permit us to finish the decoration. And the paintwork of the cabinsides and the deckboard was gently keyed and re-varnished. And on top of all this, Neil and Richard even found the time to tackle the cabin on the Nutfield, fitting a timber fillet along the bottom seam of the cabinsides to try to stop the water leaks we have been suffering there.

Finally, on the Sunday, the Raymond's hull was completely re-blacked before the dock was filled and the boat floated out on Monday morning.

A big vote of thanks must go to all of our members who turned out over the weekend and got stuck in so enthusiastically: Roger and Diana Golder, Robin Bishop, Richard Scarff, Graham Swallow, Brian Seymour, Neil Hankin, Ray Robinson, Nick Scarcliffe, Irene and Phil Reeves, and a matched pair of Chris Jones's – Chris R, our ex-chairman, and Chris M, better known as the fellow who paints the amazing cover pictures for Narrowboat Magazine.

Also up to his elbows in blacking was our webmaster, Jeremy Cooper, and as a result there is a short video of the docking now showing on our website; and a special thank-you to Marty Seymour, who not only oversaw laying in the necessary materials for us but even wielded a paintbrush to great effect on the access steps we use to get visitors on and off of the boat at shows.

I don't think I've missed anyone – if I have, I apologise! I was somewhat distracted, and rather frustrated, by my inability to do as much as I would have liked.



Looking good

I find caulking a very satisfying occupation, but more than a few minutes of that and my rib was making its presence felt!

After such an effective weekend's work, we not only have a boat that looks a hundred percent better than it did before, but one whose hull is now completely sound. It is an ambition of mine to one day re-enact the jam 'ole run for real – to carry about forty tons of coal from Atherstone to Southall – and now, with the steelwork of the Nutfield also attended to, we have a pair of boats that are capable of doing it.

My thanks go to all of those who took part – and also to every one of you reading this, because it is your support that enables and encourages us to keep up with the ongoing task of maintaining these boats and making them available to the public as an example of what the canals are truly all about.

**Steve Miles, Chairman, FoR**

## Treasurer's Report

All members will find a copy of our accounts for 2010 enclosed with this newsletter. You can see that we have had another good year. Income was slightly down on 2009 but we made a larger surplus due to spending less.

Raymond & Nutfield attended 25 days of boating events during the year, far more than ever before. Income from sales is about 40% higher than in 2009; the total shown for that year includes the lock ransom. Both visitor footfall and weather can have a significant impact on our takings at shows. World Cup football matches during the major Braunston Show also made a bit of a dent, the same thing happened 4 years earlier. Many thanks are due for the hard work of our volunteers who move the boats around and man them at events, raising funds for the boats. Special thanks also to Tim Coghlan and Braunston Marina for the very welcome £2,000 donation at the Historic Boat Gathering, plus the proceeds of the DayStar Theatre evening for our Nutfield Restoration Fund.

Our basic running costs for insurance and licences continue to go up a little each year. Major boat maintenance costs in 2010 were the new top planks for both boats (courtesy of donations from the IWA), Raymond's floor repairs and her caulking and blacking in the dock.

**Marty Seymour**

## Membership Report

During 2010 we recruited 19 new members, which is excellent. Welcome to them and well done everybody – please keep signing up more!

At the moment our total paid-up membership is 66, up from 59 a year ago. When counting members I always draw a line at the end of each year. If you have not paid I list you as "lapsed". This time there are 15 members who have lapsed but sometimes October renewers are just a little slow. If you are one of the 15, we are grateful for your support to date but please carry on if you can. If you simply forgot (easily done) I will be very happy to send you a Standing Order Mandate Form. Just drop me a note c/o Braunston Marina or an e:mail via the

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website. Members are at the core of every voluntary group and your support is vital.

**Marty Seymour**

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**Grateful thanks to Our patrons for their support**



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All photographs courtesy of Jeremy Cooper & Steve Miles