



Summer 2011



# The Raymond & Nutfield News

## **Editorial**

Summer is here again already and the boats have a full agenda of events ahead. So far this year they have successfully attended waterways events at Braunston, Northampton, Rickmansworth, Bomoor and Stoke Bruerne. As I write they will be making their way back to Braunston to take their places on parade for the Historic Working Boat Rally – I will let you know in the next edition whether this year they successfully make the ladder turn in one!

Raymond's smart appearance is attracting admiring glances. Next it will be Nutfield's turn – prepare to be impressed when you read about the "possibilities" in Steve's article. Also covered in this edition are reports of our Training Weekend, event and travelogues,- and get ready to get hooked by the first in a series of articles about the origins of boat names.

If anyone would like to help/participate/volunteer in any way at all please just get in touch – and ladies take note that I'm going to make it my mission this year to upgrade the "facilities" so we can stick around longer. Yes lads, putting the "loo" in the engine room with all the doors open doesn't quite cut it with us girls!! Well, I have it on good authority that you can't be around boaters for long without at least one toilet joke creeping in!

**Jenny Freeman**

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**Front Cover photograph by Mike Kelly**

**All other photographs by Steve Miles and Jeremy Cooper**

## Dates for your Diary

June 11-12	Stoke Bruerne Gala
June 24-26	Braunston Historic Boat Rally
July 23-24	Cosgrove BCS
July 30	Linslade Canal Festival
August 6-7	Blisworth Canal Festival
Sept 17	Huddlesford Canal Festival
October 1-2	Stoke Bruerne Village at War
October 8-9	Nutfield in dry dock for survey and work

## *Treasurer's Report*

Having paid several regular bills, such as insurance, at the start of the year, it was good to get into the show season and see some money start coming back in. This started with the BCBM Boat Share Show at Braunston – a replacement for the annual OwnerShips Show – which happened in March instead of early February as previously. Although we believe the organisers did well, I'm sorry to say we experienced rather low footfall. However, we were subsequently delighted to receive a welcome donation from BCBM which more than made up for the poor sales figures.

Every year we wonder if the economic situation will affect attendance at boating events but, with better than expected takings at the next two shows, Northampton and Rickmansworth, perhaps it was just the site layout at BCBM which affected our trading. So, we are now hoping for another successful show season and the chance to raise enough funds to cover the bills and some to spend on the boats. As ever, many thanks to everyone who turns out to help crew and man the boats

We have re-introduced the Crew Donations Pot on the boats, anticipating that crew members will be happy to contribute a small amount (say £1/day) towards the cost of the, admittedly limited, facilities which we provide. (You'll

never know when you could be grateful for a sticky plaster or appreciate that there's Elsan fluid in the loo.) This arrangement will also apply to Training Days, in particular to help with the rising cost of the extra fuel consumed.

During the winter, we use small electric heaters to help keep the boat cabins dry. Unfortunately Raymond's heater has stopped working and we had to borrow one last winter. If anyone has a low wattage tube heater which they could donate to Raymond please let us know – they are quite hard to source these days and surprisingly expensive to buy.

**Marty Seymour**

## **Membership**

Renewals continue to come in steadily and our current total is 73 members. Thanks to everyone who has renewed – your ongoing support is both welcome and essential to help us keep going. Special thanks to everyone who has added an extra donation to our good value minimum £10 too.

From this tax year, Gift Aid is going down to 25p from 28p in the £1.00. Gift Aid is a useful source of extra income for us, bringing in over £280 this year. If you haven't already signed up for Gift Aid, please do so but also remember you need to tell us if your circumstances change and you stop paying enough tax to cover your Gift Aid.

**Marty Seymour**

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

The website now has a Photos and Videos page where I'll post galleries of photos and videos of Raymond and Nutfield in action. So far (as I write) there's just the one gallery of shots taken by Steve Miles and Diana Golder during the training weekend in April, plus the video of Raymond in dry dock back in October. But there are already lots more photos which will be posted as the Summer goes by, and I've begun shooting a new video of Raymond and Nutfield on the cut. So watch that space!

The website also now has an animated display of sponsors' logos on every page, and a new Sponsors page with a few more details.

**Jeremy Cooper**

## CREW TRAINING WEEKEND, APRIL 2011



On the Braunston Flight

Over the weekend of April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> a number of our volunteers gathered at Braunston for a weekend of training and practice in working our pair of boats. Those attending ranged from the highly-experienced (there to teach!) to the almost-complete novice (hopefully, to learn!). We met at the mooring in Braunston Marina on the Saturday, and held a brief introductory chat before actually setting off on the water.

The first day was taken up with a trip through the village and along the Oxford Canal stretch to Wigrams Turn, and thence to the three locks at Calcutt – the crews divided into two groups, one taking the motor boat for the outward journey, the other the butty, swapping over for the return trip. The intention was for all of those who wanted to have the opportunity to steer both boats while running on cross-straps, and I think we achieved that, albeit with the number of people involved the stints tended to a bit on the short side! At the locks, we took the time to practice running in and out with the boats singled, holding the motor over while the butty slid in alongside – good in theory, but a fresh and chilly breeze meant that nothing went that smoothly. But I hope that everyone got to see and understand the principle, even if the practice

was notably less than perfect! We did breast the boats in the bottom lock, and Pete Copeland made a decent job of winding them in spite of the breeze.

Back up again, once more singling the boats out of each lock, with the motor steerers for the most part making a good attempt at picking up the straps; and then back to Braunston, the different groups now playing with each boat. One of the major issues I had wanted to impress upon our butty steerers in particular was their responsibility to watch for hazards and then avoid them – given that the number of chimneys and watercans we've lost in recent years has become rather excessive! All right, I know these incidents wouldn't happen if BW were to make a decent job of cutting back all the overhanging vegetation, but we have to accept that that isn't going to happen, despite the tragic accident of last year when a grandmother was drowned after being knocked off of a hire-boat by a falling willow tree. It isn't always possible to avoid getting a bit agricultural, but I think the message was taken on board!



Into Nelson Lock

On the Sunday, we decided to change the original plan and take the boats as far as Norton Turn, the main object being to let people have the opportunity to steer the pair while breasted as we ran up through Braunston Locks and then down again after winding at the junction. This time, all went rather more smoothly – the breeze had dropped somewhat! – and Neil Hankin handled the turn with some aplomb despite the very tight waterspace. The junction at Norton was never intended for boats to approach from Braunston and turn up

the Leicester section, and it is considerably more than a right angle you have to negotiate – difficult with a single motor, next to impossible with a breasted pair! But we got around, assisted by some energetic bow-hauling, and headed back to the locks. Of course, two of our volunteers also got to steer the pair through the tunnel, with two more on the butty as we passed it in each direction.

Another smooth run back downhill – the breasting at the top lock was particularly satisfying to all concerned! And we still had the time for a few attempts at the 'boat show' circuit, up to the triangle, reversing around it and then back, through the marina and out under the ladder bridge.

I think all those who came enjoyed their weekend, and I hope they all learnt something useful from it – I know I did! I want to thank everyone who was there – the dividing line between teachers and pupils is so difficult to draw; we are all still learning, if the truth be told, so I make no distinction here: Neil Hankin, Richard Scarff, Robin Bishop, Roger & Diana Golder, Jeremy Cooper, Nick Scarcliffe, Pete Copeland, Graham Swallow, Duncan Oxley, Chris (M) Jones, and Merv Brookes, in no particular order! Also John Blay, who joined us for the Saturday as a possible recruit – I hope to see him on my crew list in the future.

I must also mention, before I close, a rather pleasant coincidence – on Sunday morning, halfway up Braunston Locks, who should we meet but Peter Oates and Laura Sturrock with the Stanton going the other way. The Stanton looks really magnificent now, restored to its original GUCCCCo livery, and we had a great photo opportunity as the boats passed in the pound. For anyone who isn't aware, the Stanton, a sister boat of our Nutfield, was one of the other motors run by Blue Line at the very end of canal carrying, and was with our pair on the very last Jam 'Ole delivery in October 1970. We look forward to seeing them again at the Historic Boats gathering in June!

**Steve Miles**



## **DOWN TO “WELLINBORO’ RIVER”**

### **A TRIP TO THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN RALLY IN NORTHAMPTON**

Our now-annual trip to the boat gathering organised by the IWA'S Northampton Branch had an added impetus this year, as the National body had 'taken it over' as the Campaign Rally for 2011. This was to mark the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Nene Navigation in 1761, and was intended to promote both the river itself and the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal as attractive and worthwhile cruising waterways.

We left Braunston on Thursday April 28<sup>th</sup>, in pleasant sunshine, and enjoyed a reasonable day's cruise as far as Gayton Junction. The journey up the locks at Braunston, and then down again at Long Buckby, were perhaps not as swift or easy as we might have wished due to slow-moving traffic in front of us, but we were still tied up on the Arm, opposite Gayton Marina, before 5pm. A quick car-shuffle, and then a good meal was enjoyed in the Walnut Tree Hotel (which will always be the Blisworth Station Hotel to us who know the area!).

The next day we managed to avoid the Royal Wedding whilst boating down the Arm – a full crew made light work of the 4.5 miles and seventeen locks, despite again slow traffic holding us up on the Rothersthorpe Flight, and we were tying up in Northampton at 12.30, having got into the top lock just on 8am – very creditable! Those of you who have boated with me will know that, while I don't believe in speed for its own sake and won't rush around like a lunatic at any time, I do like to see boats worked with efficiency. I think I learnt too much of the ways of the old boaters in my early days on the cut! I like to 'get 'em' ahead', and hate to be held up by sloppy working whether it's ours or someone else's.

The event itself was a great success for us – the sales table took over £200.00 in three days, and there was a small amount in donations received as well. The footfall was perhaps not what we might have hoped for, despite the nice weather, and the Saints playing in Milton Keynes on the Sunday took a large part of the population of the town away for one day! The one thing I personally found inexcusable was the complete lack of any presence from the IWA head office – as a National Rally, you would have expected there to be some kind of promotional effort, a small marquee or at least a display in the



main marquee to represent the organisation. But nothing appeared – only a visit from the chairman on the Monday afternoon.

The return trip up the Arm on the Tuesday – we stayed on the extra day in recognition of the rally's status as a public event – was even better than the trip down! We had a clear run, until the last few locks where a descending boat caused us to wait and lose time, and made the run to top lock in just over four hours. In the days of trade, the boaters used to reckon four hours from Northampton to the junction with empty boats, so to come as close as we did was a credit to all concerned. From the turn, where I left the boats to lock-wheel by Lincoln, the crew headed south through Stoke Bruerne, down the flight there and on to Cosgrove, where the pair were left on the length just below Cosgrove Lock, ready to travel on to Rickmansworth later in the month.

While waiting for them to arrive in Stoke Bruerne, I found the local radio station wandering around looking for people to interview, and grabbed the opportunity! I don't know if anyone heard the result, but I think it went all right – a great chance to talk about our boats and the Friends of Raymond in front of a (hopefully) wider audience. And over the entire trip from halfway up the Arm until tying up in Cosgrove, our webmaster Jeremy Cooper was shooting video footage of the boating – there will be a short video available to view on Youtube sometime soon, and the intention is to produce a DVD for sale in due course, covering some of our travels during the year. Thanks, Jeremy!

My thanks go to all of our volunteers who turned out over the weekend to help, whether it was with the boating or at the rally, on the sales and show-round front: Neil Hankin, Mike Bowley, Jeremy Cooper, Nick Scarcliffe, Peter Copeland, Jenny Freeman, Tim Wakelin, Carla Wakelin (and friends!), Chris M Jones. And a special vote of thanks to Richard Scarff, who ran our actual event presence almost single-handed, and Diana Golder, who turned out to help him despite trying to pack for their holiday! I don't think I've missed anyone – if I have, I hope you'll forgive me.

Next stop Rickmansworth.....

**Steve Miles**

**STOP PRESS:** Mike Freeman is organising a social calendar for FoR members. The first event was a visit to the archaeological excavation at Nether Heyford on July 5<sup>th</sup>. This is the site of a Roman Villa with two Bath Houses overlooking the canal. Anyone with ideas for future outings, can contact him direct at [mike37@barkerfreeman.plus.com](mailto:mike37@barkerfreeman.plus.com)



Winding Below Calcutt



Singling Out



In Nelson Lock



Tied Up at Boxmoor

## **DOWN THE JUNCTION: RICKMANSWORTH FESTIVAL**

After our successful time at Northampton, we didn't expect that kind of luck to hold – but we were to be mistaken! We'd left the boats at Cosgrove, and Richard Scarff , Merv Brookes and myself met there on Wednesday May 18<sup>th</sup> at 8am. We set off about half past, and then paused in Wolverton to meet Robin Bishop off of the train, and for me to dash to the post office with some urgent mail! On again about half past nine, and we enjoyed a smooth and easy cruise through Milton Keynes and on to Leighton Buzzard. Starting 'up the fields', we tied for the night at Slapton Lock and took a stroll into the village to the Carpenter's Arms.



Les In Charge

Another easy day, with nicer weather, followed (warmer, fewer clouds, no drizzle!) and saw us at Boxmoor outside The Fishery Inn soon after five o'clock. I had a fascinating encounter at Marsworth locks – an elderly chap

got out of a small car and wandered over as the others were getting the bottom lock ready and chatted with me for a few moments, asking after Laura Carter (ex-Blue Line, she now lives in Braunston). As the boats rose in the lock, he stepped onto the gunwale and rode all the way up with us – as I'd guessed, he was an ex-boatman himself. Born to a Harvey-Taylor crew, he had known Arthur and Rose Bray from those days, and remembered them later having the Raymond as a new boat. He himself had left the boats in 1942 and worked on the length for many years – his name, he told me, was Arthur Morris. We talked about the techniques of working 'proper' boats, and I picked up a few tips! He stepped off again at top lock – a delightful, quietly-spoken old gentleman in the true sense of the word.

We'd met Les Houghton in Berkhamsted on the way through, so now the crew was complete! Dinner in the pub (what else?), and we were ready for a good start about half past eight on Friday. Lovely weather, but the boating was a bit slow – our luck let us down, and we were following a succession of slow boats all the way – but it wasn't a problem, we were still tied up in Rickmansworth, the boats winded, by late afternoon

We'd been allocated a different mooring spot this time – I have to admit I wasn't sure about it, but accepted the harbourmaster's judgement that we would be better off further along the line towards the main Festival site instead of close to Batchworth Bridge where we have been in the past. And he was right! We doubled our takings over the weekend – and my own book sales also roughly doubled. So even after a small donation to the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust we have come out with a much improved result for our own trust's funds – very welcome, as we are hoping to see the engine-room and cabin of the Nutfield restored this coming winter. Needless to say, we've asked for the same spot next year!

The return trip this time was just one easy day – we only had to get to Boxmoor, as the boats were to stay there ready for the Wendover Arm Trust festival the next weekend. Richard and I were up and about early, so we took the others by surprise and headed off about half past seven! We did press them into service while pausing in Batchworth Lock to empty the loo and top up with water. We had an enjoyable run on from there, following our old friend Trevor Maggs with the Corona, working with an unidentified tug as far as Cassio Bridge, and John Boswell, an ex-boater from the working days, on the Joseph. After Cassio Park, John and Trevor paired up, with our lock-wheelers (Merv and Richard) chasing them out of each lock. We made Boxmoor in just about six and a half hours – good time, in today's poorly maintained waters.

There were a few interesting sights along the way – at Willowbridge, we passed the Hood, an ex-Barlows wooden motor boat looking nice, with an under-cloth conversion (pity!). At Nash Mills, now that demolition of the old mills has begun, we could see John Dickinson's house at the far side of the site, surrounded by scaffolding – I assume it is to be preserved in the redevelopment. And it was very good to see Trevor's Corona not only looking superb with a smart new paint job, but carrying 17 tons of fuel for the first time, he tells me, in twelve years. The coal was going to Stoke Bruerne, for Martin O'Callaghan on the Kestrel, on behalf of Candle Bridge Carrying.



Picking up the Tow

I think, overall, a good time was had – my thanks go to Richard, Robin, Les and Merv, and to Brian Seymour who drove down with extra stock(!) and to help out on Sunday.

**Steve Miles**

# BOAT NAMES – JUST WHERE DID THEY COME FROM??

We are all familiar with our boats – Raymond and Nutfield – but how often do we actually think about how the names of the boats came about?

**Nutfield** is quite an easy name to trace the origins of.

The Grand Union Canal Company in the mid 1930's had a major expansion of their fleet and naming of the new boats was strictly grouped between three major classes of boat.

The first group constructed from 1931 was given names with connections with the Royal family and hence became the Royalty Class.

From 1934 the next part of the expansion of the GUCC fleet was planned to coincide with widening of the Grand Union towards Birmingham. This class amounted to some 88 boats built by Walkers, Yarwoods and Harland & Wolff in various sizes. This class has left us with some memorable (and sometimes unpronounceable) boat names such as Betelgeuse, Astraea, Hyades, Phaethon and Arcturus to name but a few. The class all had astronomical names and so became the Star Class.



By March 1936 GUCC placed an order for a further 86 pairs of boats from the same builders as the Star Class and the first ones of the class – Aber, Alperton and Barrow – were completed by July 1936. The boats for this fleet were named after various places around the country, some with canal

connections – such as Paddington, Wellingborough, Berkhamstead and Banbury – but on the whole the locations seemed to have little or no relevance to the GUCC activities. Boats were named for Gretna, Brighton, Beverley, Downham and even Aboyne (in Aberdeenshire).

Our Nutfield was one of the boats in this class and also has no apparent connection with canals – quite how the names were selected can only be guessed at - but presumably someone at GUCC had connections with these places. The new class became known as the Town Class, though the size of many of the settlements was in many cases only villages.

Nutfield is one of these villages and lies near Reigate in Surrey. The village can trace its origins to Saxon times and features in the Domesday Book

**Raymond** however has a more complicated history and has more connection with the Samuel Barlow Coal Company.

In 1957 Barlows decided to build a new fleet of boats at Braunston using the wooden butty boat design that they favoured over the steel boats used by most other companies. The first of the fleet to be built was launched in 1957 and was named Hazel after the daughter of the Managing Director – Raymond Stephens senior. Hazel, who was a shareholder in the company, launched the boat herself with a bottle of cider.....

The next in the fleet was to be another butty ready for completion in 1958. However in February 1958 Raymond senior passed away and his son Raymond junior proposed that a fitting tribute to his late father would be to name the boat after him.

Raymond senior had started at Barlows in around 1920 as a trainee clerk following military service in World War 1. He worked his way up the company and became the Company Secretary after World War 2. The Stephens family took over the major shareholding in Barlows in the early 1950's from the Patterson family.

Raymond Stephens was well known amongst canal carrying companies having represented their interests when negotiating rates of pay with the Ministry of Supply during World War 2 – as well as supporting the establishment of the Inland Waterways Association.

With Captain Patterson he arranged the purchase of the lease of the Braunston yard in 1943 and worked closely with the former Nurser boat builders to continue to build new boats for the fleet in the 1940s. Raymond



was a tireless supporter of the Nursers' style of construction and without his support for the use of wood in construction of butty boats we would not have seen the construction of Hazel or Raymond.

In the end Raymond was the last boat to be built as the programme for the rest of the fleet was cancelled when contracts could not be found for the new boats. Therefore, ironically, the boat named for the man who optimised the traditional boat companies was to be the last one ever built.

In the next article I will examine the origin of more of the Barlow fleet back to its early days in the 1880's.

**Chris R Jones**

## **RESTORING THE NUTFIELD POSSIBILITIES!**

It is now eight years since the Friends acquired the Nutfield. As I am sure you all know, this was the last motor boat to work with Raymond under Arthur Bray's captaincy, from the end of 1968 until the last carrying contract ceased in October 1970, so it is most appropriate that we are now able to run together the last pair of boats to unload from a long-distance canal contract!

Over those eight years, much has been done to our motor boat. Not that you might think so – practically all of that work has been below water! The hull has been completely rebottomed, under the hold with new riveted steel, under the engine-room and cabin overplated in 6mm steel. In the spring of 2009, Steve Priest craned the boat out at Stretton Wharf and carried out a magnificent job of repairing the thin, corroded plating around the counter, in such a way as has completely preserved the external appearance. But as you will have noted, the boat still looks as shabby as ever to the casual observer! This spring, some of our volunteers did rub down and repaint the old cabin after doing what they could to stop the leaks, which has made it look quite a bit more presentable – but at best this was only a very temporary fix.

But that, I hope, is about to change. The Trustees agreed at the last meeting to look at the possibility of having Steve tackle the badly-corroded steel of the

original engine-room, and he is going to examine the existing structure at the Braunston Historic Boats weekend and give us an updated quote for the work. His previous estimate was £1500 – but that was two years ago!



Nutfield in April this year

And I was able at the Northampton Rally to have a long talk with James Griffin of Wyvern Shipping. Wyvern ran the Nutfield as a passenger boat from 1970 until 1977, having acquired it from BW directly after the termination of the Jam 'Ole contract, so he knows the boat very well – and Wyvern still run some hire boats with wooden or composition cabins....In the course of our chat, he reminded me that the Blue Line cabin on the Nutfield would have been clad not in plywood as it is now, but with 'oil tempered hardboard' – the same material they use for those hire boats. And his staff still have the necessary skills to strip and reskin such cabins. The result was that I have now received an estimate from him for them to refurbish our cabin in the dock at Linslade, stripping off the plywood, making good any damage to the underlying structure and reskinning in the original material – and very favourable it is, too!

For the doubters, this would be a properly-sealed job, structurally sound and weatherproof to the same standard as their own boats – and hirers do not like being dripped on! Such a restoration should have a considerable lifespan, especially if we obtain, as is planned, a cover for the cabin similar to the one

we have for the Raymond. And it does allow us to save much of the old cabin – it never ceases to astonish me how it has survived a number of other owners and indeed careers since 1970! Most of the inter fit-out is still what was built by Blue Line in 1968; only the outer skin has been replaced, with a few of the inner planks of the cabin shell. Over forty years old, and that with a rather spasmodic standard of maintenance – and that's perhaps being generous!

The hope is that we may be able to have both stages of the job done during the coming winter – first the steelwork, and then the cabin. Wyvern will also carry out a complete repaint of the finished job, in the correct livery of course. This will leave us with the interior to be tackled later, once the funding is available.

Talking of funding – we have a reasonable sum put aside for the Nutfield's restoration, enough to approach these jobs over the next twelve months. And I have some hope of obtaining support from National Historic Ships, with whom both of our boats are registered – they offer grants towards such partial restorations, given a sensible estimate of costs and timescale for the work to be done. They have a deadline of September 1<sup>st</sup>, with decisions given by October 1<sup>st</sup>, which will allow us time to get the quotes in and draw up our plans. That said, we will still need a lot more money to finish the job – the cabin refit, new gunwales and running gear, new cloths, the hull shot-blasted and repainted, and so on....And of course we have to think about ongoing maintenance for both boats!

So it is possible that we may have a nice shiny-looking motor boat on the water for 2012 – very appropriate, as it will be the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of Blue Line Canal Carriers! And I'm thinking about trying to organise a re-run of the Jam 'Ole trip for real – yes, with a load on the boats! Only possibilities as yet, but watch this space....

**Steve Miles**

## **Grateful thanks to our Patrons for their support**



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Winding Below Calcutt



Raymond & Nutfield with The Stanton