

Friends of Raymond

Registered Charity no: 1059614



Spring 2014



The Raymond and Nutfield News

Editorial

Spring is here again already and we have another busy season of boating ahead of us. Please check our events schedule and, if we're in your area, come along and say hello.

Unfortunately this edition of the newsletter is slightly shorter than usual, due to a deficit of contributor's articles and pictures. To keep the contents full and lively, the Friends of Raymond committee would very much like to hear from our members as to whether they would be happy to receive just two (fuller) copies of the newsletter per year in 2015, rather than the current three. You can address your comments to me, the editor – my contact details are below – or post them via the FoR Website. Needless to say, any contributions to the newsletter – articles, pictures, memories, first-hand accounts – are always very welcome.

However, size isn't everything(!) and we are pleased to present plenty of substance. For this edition Chris Jones has been busy researching the gradual metamorphosis of Blue Line boat liveries and has presented us with a fascinating closer look at some of these boats and Mike Freeman shares with us memories of his "digging" days in the early years of canal restoration, with some wonderful old pictures to accompany it. So dig in and get reading!

I very much hope to hear back from many of our readers.

Jenny Freeman

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MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL RENEWAL

The end of The Friends of Raymond membership year is fast approaching on 6th April. It would be grand if you would renew your memberships for another year.

The current membership costs are:

Sole membership is £10

Joint membership is £15

There are two ways you can renew:

- **On the website:** www.friendsofraymond.org.uk
Click on the **Join Us** link
You may pay for your membership here via PayPal, using a credit/debit card or your own PayPal account. *Please note: you **don't** have to have a PayPal account to use this method.*

If you are buying a **Joint Membership, we need to know both your names: so please look for the prompt during the process - "NAME OF SECOND MEMBER: add" and put the second member's name in here.
- **Through the post:**
If you would like to renew by post with a cheque you can:
 - download and print a membership form (as a pdf) from the website www.friendsofraymond.org.uk
Click on the **Join Us** link and at the bottom of the page you'll see **Click Here for a Membership Form** (this will open in another window).
 - or let me know and I will post a membership form to you.

(Those members who receive a printed copy of this newsletter will already have found a membership renewal form enclosed - if appropriate.)

Standing Orders

If you would like to set up a Standing Order, so that you never need remember to pay for your membership ever again, then please contact our Treasurer who can send you a Bank Standing Order form for completion:

Peter Copeland: treasurer@friendsofraymond.org.uk

I do hope that you will choose to renew your membership!

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to email me or write to me.

Barbara

Barbara Evans Rees, Membership Secretary
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EVENTS FOR 2014

As usual, we are planning a fairly full round of events for the boats to attend during the coming year. But we're making a few changes - take a look at the list below!

The Boatshare show at Braunston, which we've been supporting for a good few years now, has changed its spots a bit over those years - at first run by Ownerships, it used to take place in February. We had some very good shows - but we had one or two very cold and poorly-attended ones too! Then when Ownerships sadly went under, BCBM took over; fortunately for us the shows continued, but they moved to March a year or two ago. Now for 2014 we are to see another, hopefully bigger, change: BCBM are joining forces with some of the other boatshare operators and putting on a rather bigger show. And after last year's weekend of bitter winds and snowfall, they're moving it again, to mid-April. We will be in attendance as usual, with the boats on show to visitors and a space in the marquee for our sales and promo table.

We have also been going to the local IWA rally every year for a few years. This has since 1974 normally been held in Northampton, on the River Nene at Becketts Park, but they have faced some problems in recent years: in 2012, high river levels led to cancellation of the event, and last year it failed, sadly, for lack of support from the local boating community. So again we have changes for 2014: The Northampton Rally will be held in Braunston! Hosted by our esteemed Patron and landlord Tim Coghlan, the event will be based on the open land west of the Barlows Arm normally used for informal car-parking, and the boats will be accommodated within the arm and along the towpath from the Stop House to the Ladder Bridge. It is hoped that this change of venue will attract a much larger gathering, so from our point of view a bigger platform for the promotion of the Friends of Raymond and what we do. And we are assured of a decent mooring - yours truly is the harbourmaster!

We have decided to go to the Crick Boat Show again - last year we saw the best results financially we have ever had at a show, with people queueing to visit the boats solidly through all three days. It will again be a bit of a scramble to get there after Rickmansworth, so we need a good crew for that week..? And following Crick, we have decided to leave the boats on the Leicester branch to go on to Foxton for their festival later in June before returning to Braunston for the Historic Boat Show. This means we will miss the Stoke Bruerne Gala, but to be frank this has never been a particularly successful show for us, so your trustees have decided to try this new schedule.

Later, we will be at Cosgrove and Linslade as usual, and then back to Blisworth for what has to be one of the most enjoyable and successful 'village' festivals around!

A full list for you:

April 12-13th:	Boatshare Show, Braunston Marina
May 3rd-5th:	IWA Northampton Rally, Braunston Marina
May 17-18th:	Rickmansworth Festival
May 24-26th:	Crick Boat Show
June 21st-22nd:	Foxton Festival
June 27-29th:	Braunston Historic Boat Show
July 19-20th:	Buckingham Canal Society, Cosgrove
July 26th:	Linslade Festival
August 9-10th:	Blisworth Festival

There may well be more to come later in the year - the possibility exists of going to the Alvecote Festival again, another big gathering of historic boats which is slowly building into a more popular event, and then there is the Stoke Bruerne Village at War weekend in mid-September. Watch this space!

Boat movements will of course be fitted around the event dates as above - some will of necessity be mid-week, others may take place over the weekends, depending upon what crew is available. If you have boating skills and would like to help, you know what to do! Just get in touch. And of course we need volunteers to help with the events themselves - on the sales stand, showing people over the butty, talking to visitors - and extra people to fill in, to cover lunch breaks and provide 'I've got to sit down for a bit' cover..! Again, if you can help please do get in touch.

And as always we are delighted to meet any FoR members at the shows - come along and introduce yourselves! But be aware that we may be busy and short of time to stop and chat - and in that event you might find yourself pressed into service...

Steve Miles



Here's a change from all those boat pictures: Blisworth Festival – 1930 Ford Truck!

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE COUNCILLOR DAVID GRIFFIN

I would like to add my own tribute to the late Councillor David Griffin. As well as his responsibilities for twelve long years as a District Councillor for Woodford Halse, he was also a great supporter and lover of our rich canal heritage in the Daventry District, which in his earlier days, had few other voices of support on the Council.

From the start of our Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rallies in 2003, he came every year, joining our official guests in the opening parade of boats - until his illness prevented him this year. He rang me shortly before that rally to apologise, cheerfully and bravely explaining his illness – the last time I spoke to him.

He didn't just come to the rallies for the ride. He used them not only to support the *Friends of Raymond* in preserving this important Braunston-built wooden narrowboat for posterity, but also in promoting his 'pet-project', the building of the canal link into Daventry. That link was on the original plan for the Grand Junction Canal in 1793, but never implemented due to pressure from the vested interests of local road carriers on the London-Hollyhead Turnpike through the town. (It then unbelievably ran through Sheaf Street!) We provided David with a free stand space, and he and others would man it to promote the project. Some of that link infrastructure is now in place, and the route secured. Hopefully one day it will achieve fruition, as an important new leisure facility for the town, but also as a fitting monument to David's endeavours and his outstanding commitment to public service.

Tim Coghlan



Our Patron Tim Coghlan's tribute to the late David Griffin was first published in the Daventry Express

BLUE LINE LIVERY VARIATIONS

When looking at photos of boats in the Blue Line fleet they look much the same at first glance. Their Baltic blue cabin sides, white lettering, light oak graining, and bright primary colours are all familiar to us. But look a little closer and you will notice variations in the livery between the different butties, and also the different motors. Some are quite noticeable whilst others are quite subtle, and only by studying photographs can these various differences be seen.

Below I have recreated ten of these variations which appeared on the Blue Line boats over several years. They are not intended to be in chronological order and are by no means definitive, and the colours shown are only approximate.

Picture 1: **(all these pictures are set out over the page on pages 8-9)**

One of the earliest cabin side layouts was this one for HAZEL in 1963, painted by Ron Hough of Braunston. For many years the cabin sides of Blue Line boats carried the company name of Blue Line Cruisers Ltd., only later was it changed to Blue Line Canal Carriers Ltd.

Picture 2:

LUCY also carries the Blue Line Cruisers Ltd. name and address, but with but with an unusual variation of advertising both Michael Streat's carrying and cruising business. Because the cabin was longer than the other butties she has been painted with an extra panel containing the ship's wheel logo.

Picture 3:

LUCY was paired with motor boat IAN which also carried the a similar layout but without the telephone number. Motor ROGER also carried a similar layout to this for a time.

Picture 4:

Another version of LUCY but with a much simpler layout.

Picture 5:

BELMONT also had a similar layout to LUCY above but because the cabin was shorter the ships wheel logo was incorporated into the main panel. In a later repaint BELMONT's main panel was lettered Blue Line Canal Carriers Ltd., Braunston, the same as the third image of LUCY below with no ships wheel logo and white panel borders.

Picture 6:

In this livery STANTON also carries the firm's name as Blue Line Cruisers Ltd., and was paired with BELMONT above. In most cases it was Ron Hough's distinctive castle landscapes and flowers that adorned the cabin sides of Blue Line boats, but not always. On this unusual cabin side of motor boat STANTON the roses are by another hand as is the lettering. Later STANTON was repainted with the same layout as shown for NUTFIELD below.

.../...



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5



Picture 6



Picture 7



Picture 8



Picture 9



Picture 10

.....continued from page 7

Picture 7:

RAYMOND's cabin side shows a name change to Blue Line Canal Carriers Ltd., but still retained the firms wheel logo and telephone number.

Picture 8:

ROGER was paired with RAYMOND and also carried the Blue Line Canal Carriers Ltd., although the address was written in a different type face.

Picture 9:

Another view of LUCY but this time she too carries the firm's name as Blue Line Canal Carriers Ltd. The telephone number has gone as has the ships wheel logo and replaced with a bunch of Ron Hough's flowers, plus the colour of panel borders was changed to white.

Picture 10:

Similar to the LUCY is NUTFIELD with similar lettering and a bunch of Ron Hough's flowers instead of the logo. Both motors RENFREW and STANTON were also painted in the same manner.

Although the Blue Line carrying fleet was not in existence for even ten years, the variation in cabin side lettering and details is consistent with the many carrying companies that had gone before.

Perhaps readers have seen other livery variations not shown here, if so I would like to see them if possible to get a more complete record of the Blue Line fleet and share that information with other members.

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A BIG DIG – “ASHTAC” 25th-26th March 1972

Mike Freeman’s Nostalgia

Prologue

After nationalisation in 1948 the future of the waterway network was in doubt and the IWA was formed as a result. From the mid- fifties to the late sixties the threat of closure for much of the system became greater. There were a number of canal societies formed during this period to try and thwart this threat. The London and home counties branch area did not contain many threatened waterways and as a result, work parties were formed to help the efforts of individual restoration projects. This was originally led by Tim Dodwell (Brother of CRT Trustee John Dodwell). This resulted in my working on the Southern Stratford Canal, wielding a chain saw in preparation for the new lock at Burgfield on the Kennet & Avon and taking part in the initial survey of the K&A locks in Bath. The scope of these work parties gradually increased and the organisation of them also developed. In 1968 a work party of some 200 hundred had sufficient publicity and impact to lift the threat of closure of the peak Forrest Canals. Meanwhile Droylsden Council , part of the Greater Manchester Administration, wanted to fill the Ashton Canal in. To counter this threat the largest work party to date was organised and is known historically as ASHTAC. Interestingly enough 1974 was the year that the Cheshire ring reopened and Droylsden Council vanished through local government reorganisation.

The Dig



I had travelled to the worksite with a friend and in a recent chat he mentioned that he had some pictures of Ashtac. It is alleged that I am the person with long hair and baseball cap behind the monorail truck! These photos were the seed to my writing of this article, which also resulted in me having to do some research such as when was it etc.

During the two days of Ashtac - a large number of volunteers (some sources say over 1,000) - some 2,000 tons of rubbish were removed from one and a quarter miles of the Ashton Canal from its junction with the Peak Forest, at Dukinfield, working towards the junction with the Rochdale Canal at Ancoats (near the centre of Manchester). A smaller effort also took place there over the same two days. In addition to all the usual items tipped into canals there were signs of the nearby railway yard, these included many fish plates and a large number of shunter's poles used for hooking and unhooking goods wagons. Despite the lack of hard hats, high viz jackets and steel toe capped footwear there no injuries or fatalities, to the best of my knowledge. H&S had not raised its head at this time.

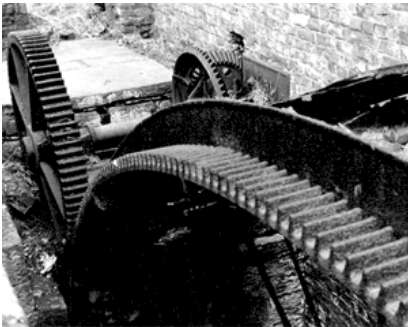
This dig was the largest that IWA had organised at this time, under the auspices of the London and Home Branch of IWA. (Waterways Recovery Group was formed later the same year). The plans for it were very good. A local Territorial Army depot was to be used for sleeping accommodation and the serving of food by provided by a firm of caterers . Sadly this was not to be as the IRA was still active at this time and had recently attacked the barracks at Aldershot. Because of this attack the Army had cancelled the use of the hall, this being only a few days before the event. After extensive searching, alternative arrangements were made. The deluxe alternative was the disused gas company showroom. Electricity was provided by two generators which powered the odd light bulb and two gas fired fan heaters. The running water was supplied by hosepipe from the adjacent pub. Instead of caterers cooked meals, there was nowhere for them to serve, we were fed in shifts at a nearby café. The weekend' activities were of getting exceedingly mucky and rather tired. One of the visual memories retained is of the dull glow of the propane heater and the single light bulb high in the ceiling. At the end of events such as this one was left with a sense of satisfaction that progress had been achieved

The prime movers of the event had been the late Graham Palmer and his team and they were very well organised. Supervision was such that it seemed obvious what individuals had to do. As the picture shows a monorail system of tipper trucks had been provided and when filled these were moved along to a "wharf" where the contents were transhipped into lorries to be taken to a prearranged spoil dump. Sadly the first trip went into the wrong field. Uhhmmmm!! Another downside was that somebody removed the monorail system before its owner had collected it. Fortunately Graham, being in the Insurance business, had arranged suitable cover that included such an eventuality.

It is quite possible that but for the efforts of the early IWA, canal societies and restoration volunteers many of today's canals, related societies and trusts would not exist as they do today, even Friends of Raymond

Opposite the entrance to the Lower Peak Forest is Portland basin and warehouse. Inside the warehouse there were cranes and other machinery for loading and unloading boats plus lifting

into the upper storey. This machinery was powered by a waterwheel at the edge of the basin, the waterwheel being driven by water from the canal. At the time of the dig the upper part of the building was occupied by a carpet sales firm. Shortly afterwards this caught fire. However today the warehouse has been rebuilt and is now "The Portland Basin Museum". All the machinery has gone, probably destroyed in the fire, but there is a token crane such as would have been used in transhipment and the waterwheel is still in place outside.



If you would like to know more of this event google ASHTAC and numerous posts come up with different people's experiences and pictures. The WRG web site has copies of all the newsletters (Navvies Notebook, which later became plain Navvies) and issues 35 and 36 cover the event



Portland Basin Museum

A WARNING & Confession

I originally became involved with canal restoration because I had been captivated by boating when taken on a canal trip by a friend. I was captivated to the extent that I was thinking of buying a boat. I was working and living in London at the time and joined the London & Home Counties Branch of IWA. This was with the view of finding out something about the canals and the people who thought them worthwhile. I did buy a boat and stuck with the IWA for a long time, eventually being Chairman of the Milton Keynes branch for a while. It was in this role that I suggested forming the Buckingham Canal Society in 1992. Prior to this I had also been secretary of a Community Boat Organisation also in Milton Keynes. So be careful entering the world of canals, it can take hold and can be reluctant to let you go.

Mike Freeman

(All the photographs in this article are here courtesy of Mike Freeman – all other photographs in this edition are by Steve Miles)

And finally, Neil has been taking some periodic dips into the Log :-

WARMING UP FOR 2014?

At the beginning of April 19 years ago we were at Sutton Stop, having come up the Oxford Canal. We turned onto the Coventry to go north, and reversed back onto the loading wharf in the afternoon, and, it says, polished the boat!

Sunday began badly. We were woken at 03.20 by banging on the roof at the front end. The first assumption was that it was a very late client from the Greyhound, or that it was drug induced. By the time I was dressed a third lot of banging and shouting had stopped and a peek through the curtains revealed a dark shape staggering across the wharf towards the cottages, from which a light was shining. A door opened and the man disappeared inside.

A short time later blue lights began disturbing the night and two fire tenders and an ambulance appeared. Being a nosey sort I wandered down the wharf to the hire boat from Coventry moored behind us, and where the firemen were congregated. The officer in charge asked for assistance from me to locate the heating system and to open the front door. He thought the odd smell was probably stale water in the shower tray, but I said that I had heard the mother in the hire party tell her daughter that she was to have a shower before bed.

The fireman told me that the man, wife and two children had been taken to hospital. On returning to our boat I felt very nauseous and had a severe headache which took over an hour to recede. At a late breakfast the following morning the man called to apologise for the disturbance. His wife and children were being kept in hospital and apparently he was only wakened by his wife falling on him!

The moral of the story is: Check Your Heating Pipes and Flues before your first trip in the Spring, or it could be your last. Incidentally we heard later that after a night in a hotel they continued their holiday on another boat!

Neil Hankin



oliomedia



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Rickmansworth (top)

Alvecote 2013 (below)

