

2022 AGM Minutes Appendix 1

The Friends of Raymond

Chairman's Report to AGM 06 February 2022

After Nutfield had been loaned to the Narrow Boat Trust in autumn 2020, she spent last winter at Alvecote because of lockdown, and didn't return to Braunston until mid-April – Chris M, Chris R, Sarah, and Norman sharing the crewing.

With no events in prospect for us to attend with the boats, Norman and Kath organised a garage and garden sale at home over Easter from which they donated over £160 to Friends of Raymond – just one of the many, very successful fundraising activities they organised last year.

In early May we received the shocking news that our long-standing member and secretary, Robin Bishop, was seriously ill in hospital following a near-fatal collapse. We received an update on Robin's progress from his daughter, Haley, just before the AGM, and her news will be included in the minutes.

Later in May we learned that the Braunston Historic Boat Rally had been called off. Nevertheless, we held a working party on the first weekend in June to get the boats ready, and on the weekend when the rally would normally have been held (26th/27th June) we put on our own "pop-up" event in the arm at the marina, that proved to be surprisingly successful.

Also in June, Chris R and Nick L gave their talk on "Raymond – the story of the last wooden working boat" online to the London Canal Museum. It was the first time FoR had given the talk online, indeed it was the only opportunity we had to do it at all last year, and it was a good opportunity to fly the flag for the Friends of Raymond, and tell our story.

The one big event of 2021, where we would normally expect to make some serious money, was the Crick Boat Show, which was rearranged from its normal dates in May, to mid-August. Ironically, the only time we could get into the dry dock with Raymond to try again to fix the ongoing leak, clashed with the show. So, sadly, we had to cancel going to Crick. Nevertheless, the work in the dry dock appears to have finally solved the leak problem, and Norman's Boat Maintenance Report has more details about the docking.

So in the end, our main event of the year turned out to be the informal historic boat gathering in the arm, that Tim arranged for the first weekend in September. All round, it was a very successful outing for us and, hopefully, everyone has seen Tim's article about the event for Towpath Talk that we circulated. The highlight of our weekend was undoubtedly Tim's presentation of a cheque for £1,000. In fairness, he did also give similar cheques to The Narrow Boat Trust and The Friends of the Canal Museum, but it certainly helped our otherwise modest season as far as the boats were concerned, to go out with a bang.

Apart from that, we did have a presence at some other non-waterway, fundraising events, such as our stall at the Braunston Scarecrow Trail in September, which was good in that, apart from bringing in some more, much-needed income, it was another opportunity to forge closer links with the Braunston community. We have done similar things in the past, such as having a stall at the Braunston Arts & Crafts Fair, and it is very much in our plans to try to play a bigger part in the community, instead of existing on the fringes of it.

As far as this year is concerned, things do seem to be looking up as events are coming back into the calendar, and we will have more news on that in Item 11 on today's agenda.

Nick Lake
Acting Chairman