

FoR News July 2020



Happier times. FoR volunteers at the Cosgrove Canal Festive July 2019. Left to Right: Roger Golder, Norman Townsend, Mark Hyland, Robin Bishop, Diana Golder, Kath Wheeler. Picture: Nick Scarcliffe

News

2020 programme

As we announced in the April issue of FoR News, this year's programme is on hold and all our outdoor activities have been suspended until further notice. Since April, we have received confirmation that the Cosgrove, Linslade and Blisworth Canal Festivals have also been obliged to cancel.

So, the only events still in our calendar at that the time of writing are:

September

Sat 19th and Sun 20th at Welford Wharf

Welford Canal Festival (moved from May)

Sat 26th starting at Braunston

50th Anniversary Jam 'Ole Run

Details still to be finalised, see also "Nutfield and the 50th Anniversary Jam 'Ole Run" below

We will publish updates on these events as soon as we have any further information.

Membership news

Apart from those of our members yet to pay by Standing Order, we are pleased to say that all but ten memberships have renewed for this year, which is very encouraging in light these strange times.

If you have not yet renewed, we hope that you still will consider giving us your support, because members' subscriptions and donations may be our only source of income this year.

Finally, we would like to say thank you to one of our long-serving members. William Proctor has been in touch to say that he has recently moved to Devon to be with his daughter's family and felt, understandably, that the time had come to end his long association with Friends of Raymond. William has been a member for more years than many of us can remember and, in saying goodbye, he has kindly made a donation for which we are extremely grateful. So, in thanking William for his years of support, we also wish him every happiness in his new home.

Boat news

Nutfield & Raymond are just as we reported in the April newsletter, still on their mooring at Braunston Marina and still clothed up.

As soon as the lifting of restrictions allowed us to return to the marina, we have checked the boats every two weeks or so and can confirm they remain in good condition. We have also run *Nutfield's* engine periodically, and Norman Townsend has carried out an oil and filter change.



Picture: Norman Townsend

As well as keeping an eye on the boats, Norman has put his lockdown time to good use by making a new set of access steps for *Raymond* (left) because, although the old ones had served us well for 20 years, they were starting to show their age.

Norman's ingenious design features a handrail that can be fitted on either side, or removed when the boats are on the move.

The steps are also lighter and more manoeuvrable than the old ones and can, if necessary, be dismantled completely. They are now on *Raymond* and painted in red oxide to blend with the interior of the hold.

All we need now is an event at which to use them.

And thanks to a generous donation from one of our members, we now have the money for the new set of white ropework for *Raymond* and, when we can get a working party together, we will remove *Raymond's* elum so Tradline Rope and Fenders can make and fit the ropework in their workshop.

Nutfield and the 50th Anniversary Jam 'Ole Run

The Narrow Boat Trust have asked us if we would be willing to loan them *Nutfield* again for this year's Autumn Coal Run, as their motor, Nuneaton, is still undergoing repairs. Under normal circumstances, our answer would be, yes, but this year, the dates clash with the 50th anniversary "Jam 'Ole Run"

However, after some thought, we have a solution. At the time of writing, the plan is that *Raymond* will go on the Jam 'Ole Run paired, not with *Nutfield* but with *Stanton*, another ex-Blue Line boat belonging to FoR members Laura Sturrock and Peter Oates.



Nutfield & Brighton on the Wey, October 2019. Picture: Narrow Boat Trust

Having Laura and Peter in charge of the motor and FoR looking after the butty, will both take the pressure off us to find enough volunteers to fully crew our pair for up to 15 consecutive days, and free up *Nutfield* for NBT to borrow her for their coal run which, in turn, will earn us some much-needed income.

20th Anniversary of Raymond's rebuild

When a boat has been around as long as *Raymond*, it inevitably starts collecting anniversaries. In our June 2018 issue, we covered the celebration of the 60th anniversary of *Raymond's* launch on 11th June 1958. And in April this year we reported how the enforced cancellation of the Braunston Historic Boat Rally, had dashed our hopes of holding a celebration at the rally to mark the 20th anniversary of *Raymond's* recovery and rebuilding.

Nevertheless, we cannot let the anniversary pass unnoticed. So we have devoted the rest of this issue of *FoR News* to the story of how *Raymond* came to be rescued by a bunch of enthusiasts calling themselves "friends of Raymond" and how, through their vision and tenacity, they raised the money, had the boat rebuilt, and brought *Raymond* back to Braunston on 3rd July 2000.

Saving Raymond

1970 to 1990 The Years of Retirement

Raymond was launched on 11th June 1958, and was the last wooden working narrow boat ever built. That fact alone, is reason enough to preserve her for posterity, but to explain exactly how it came about that *Raymond* had to be saved, we must begin our story in 1970.

In October that year, the coal traffic to the “Jam ‘Ole”, the dock at Kearley & Tonge’s jam factory in Southall, finally came to an end and Blue Line Canal Carriers, that owned *Nutfield* & *Raymond*, was wound up.



Arthur & Rose Bray and Ernie Kendall with *Raymond* and their first motor boat *Roger* at Berkhamsted in 1966.

Before disposing of the three motors, *Nutfield*, *Renfrew* and *Stanton* – *Nutfield* was sold to The Wyvern Shipping company in Leighton Buzzard where she became a trip boat – Michael Streat, Blue Line’s owner, gave the three butties, *Belmont*, *Lucy* and *Raymond* to the families that had worked them, so that they could continue to live on the boats.



Rose and Arthur Bray on *Raymond* with the extended cabin Braunston 1971

From the day she was commissioned, *Raymond* had been home to Arthur Bray and his wife Rose, together with Rose’s son, Ernie Kendall.

Ernie had lived on the family’s previous motor, *Roger*, and latterly, on *Nutfield*. So, to give them all more living space on *Raymond*, they had an extension added to the boat cabin.

Sadly, Rose’s retirement was a short one. She died in 1972

Arthur and Ernie continued living on *Raymond*, with Arthur’s name now proudly displayed on the cabin side, and throughout the 1970s, *Raymond* was a familiar sight in Braunston, moored by the entrance to the arm, on the spot occupied today by the Gongoozler’s Rest floating café.

Then in 1981, Arthur acquired a modern boat, and sold *Raymond* to Jim and Doris Collins, who had been living on the unconverted *Belmont*.



Raymond and *Belmont* (foreground), Braunston 1979. Picture: Kirk Martin

Jim and Doris now moved *Raymond* into the arm (left), next to the site of the boat-building shed from where she had been launched.

They lived on board for a further nine years until, in 1990, leaks in the roof and, worse still, leaks in the hull forced them to also move on to a modern boat.



1991 to 1995 The Years of Decline

After Jim and Doris had vacated *Raymond* and attempts by Braunston Marina to sell her had proved unsuccessful, an agreement was reached with The Wooden Canal Craft Trust in December 1992, for them to take ownership of *Raymond*, on the understanding that they would carry out a complete restoration.



So the following year, on 31st May 1993, with some ceremony, and serenaded by Jim Collins on the accordion (left), *Raymond* left Braunston behind Ivor Batchelor's *Mountbatten*, bound for the trust's base in Runcorn.

However, the optimism that surrounded *Raymond's* departure, turned out to have been premature.



Raymond leaving Braunston Marina, 31st May 1993.

In October 1995, a commemorative "Jam 'Ole Run" was organised on the 25th anniversary of Blue Line's final coal delivery to Kearley & Tonge, in which a number of ex-working boats took part. And, as a group of boaters stood on the Paddington Arm towpath, at the site of the former entrance to the Jam 'Ole, someone asked if anyone knew what was happening with *Raymond*. No one did. So they agreed to check with The Wooden Canal Craft Trust, and the result of their enquiries was alarming. Owing to lack of funds, no restoration work had happened. Worse still, it appeared that *Raymond* had sunk.

1996 The Year of Action

Over the winter, they decided to find out exactly what was going on. So, in April 1996, some of the group made the journey up to Runcorn, to see for themselves.

FoR's first chairman, Alan Palmer, tells *FoR News* that they found *Raymond* half-submerged, surrounded by flotsam, and rotting away (right). They also learned that, although the Wooden Canal Craft Trust had initially let *Raymond* as a houseboat to raise funds, after she sank, there was no further income. So there she lay, and the group realised that unless something was done urgently, *Raymond* would be lost.



By the mid-1990s, the loss of any of the remaining historic boats would have been a tragedy, but to allow the very last wooden working narrow boat to disappear was unthinkable.

At this point, the group were only "friends" of *Raymond*, but they quickly organised themselves, so that money could be raised for some serious restoration. On 1st September 1996, The Friends of Raymond was established as a charitable trust and, within a month, The Wooden Canal Craft Trust had agreed to allow the new charity to take *Raymond* off their hands.

1997 The Year of Recovery

The trustees' plan was to move *Raymond* to a temporary mooring at the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley, while they organised the restoration. As nothing could sensibly be done until after the winter, it was April when the rescue party arrived in Runcorn led by Ivor Batchelor, now vice-chairman, with his boat *Mountbatten*. Knowing what they might be up against, the party came well-equipped with old carpet and buckets of puddling clay.



Runcorn April 1997, the Fire Service arrives...



...and starts pumping.



Raymond finally afloat.

The local fire service eventually arrived to pump out the water, with the help of the carpet to stop it coming in again. When the water was low enough, all the leaks were plugged with clay and *Raymond* was floating again.

Then, with several bilge pumps at the ready and *Raymond* under tow from *Mountbatten*, the party began the task of moving the boat south from the Bridgewater Canal to Dudley, on the BCN.



The journey begins.



Mountbatten & *Raymond* heading south.

In early editions of *Raymond Recovering* the very first Friends of Raymond newsletter, Alan Palmer paints a graphic picture of a precarious, and sometimes nerve-wracking journey.

Owing to the boat's fragile condition, the numerous narrow locks between Middlewich and Wolverhampton had to be negotiated with considerable care, and the crew were on constant leak alert, with puddling clay at the ready.



Philip Reeves bow-hauling up the Wolverhampton 21.



The journey from Runcorn to Dudley took them the best part of four days, but around midday on Wednesday 16th April 1997, *Raymond* was safely moored at the Black Country Living Museum (left).

The arrangement was that *Raymond* could stay at the museum pending further developments, and from that moment on, things began to develop with surprising speed.



The Friends of Raymond was launched to the public at the Braunston Boat Show in May. The launch was a great success, memberships started to grow rapidly and funds rolled in throughout the summer of 1997. A “boat bits” sale at Whilton Marina in September (left) also raised a significant amount of money.

So prospects for the new charity were looking good.

Back at Dudley, however, things were not looking quite so good. BCLM had informed the trustees that, not long after *Raymond* arrived, she had been flooded by a torrential rainstorm and had sunk again (right).



This was news they did not want to hear, but they reluctantly agreed they would have to leave *Raymond* as she was for the time being, at least until they had appointed a restorer.



Phil Babb (left) and Richard Clapham.

Later that year, after considering three possible candidates, the FoR chairman and vice-chairman proposed that Phil Babb and his assistant, Richard Clapham, should carry out the restoration at Tardebigge Wharf on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal.

In a recent conversation with *FoR News*, Phil recalls some controversy among the trustees over this proposal because he was not by trade, a boatbuilder

although, as he explains, he had worked in traditional, large-scale timber construction all his life, and had built and restored structures as different from each other as travellers’ wagons and post mills.

Having also spent time working in boatyards, Phil was entirely confident in his ability to reproduce the original construction of a wooden narrow boat.

A visit to Phil’s workshop for the dissenting trustees to meet him and discuss their concerns was arranged. Phil succeeded in putting their minds at rest, and his appointment was confirmed.

As Phil lived at Tardebigge, the plan was to move *Raymond* there from Dudley. When the money was in place, Phil would arrange for *Raymond* to go into the dry dock at Tardebigge Wharf where the rotten timbers would be replaced.



Phil Babb and Ivor Batchelor at the visit to Phil's workshop.

The question of where the new timber would come from had also been answered through a chance conversation involving one of the trustees. By coincidence and perfect timing, the Essex Wildlife Trust had come forward with an offer to give Friends of Raymond 12 oak trees due for clearance from an area they owned in Epping Forest.

At Phil’s suggestion, the elm traditionally used being in short supply, opepe was chosen as a substitute for the bottoms and the keelson, and this was to be acquired from British Waterways who were importing it from South Africa.

So, apart from the small matter of *Raymond* lying sunk at Dudley, 1997 ended on a hopeful note.

1998 The Year of Disappointment

The main task over the winter had been to write a business plan and prepare a submission to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, but with the arrival of spring, the outdoor activities began again.

In March, Phil Babb and a number of trustees were invited to Epping Forest to identify the trees they would like (right).

As Phil explains, the benefit of choosing the timber while it was still standing, was that it allowed him to point out trees with growth characteristics that could be exploited in creating the shape of the boat.

Phil's 12 chosen trees were marked for felling the following winter.



With that job out of the way, the main task for the year was to move *Raymond* to Tardebigge, which had been planned for June. So, in late May, a number of volunteers arrived at Dudley by boat led, as ever, by Ivor Batchelor. Their aim was to refloat *Raymond* and tow her to Tardebigge Wharf but, as was to become a feature of this project, things did not go entirely to plan.



Black Country Living Museum, May 1998.
The Fire Service (top left) attempts to pump out *Raymond*.

Again with help from the fire service and their pumps, they managed to raise *Raymond*, but found they could not keep her afloat for long.

Then news came through that a marine consultant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund wanted to inspect the boat at Dudley the following week.

However, the single factor which most affected the plans was that, in the year she had been at the museum, *Raymond* had clearly deteriorated even further.

After discussion and expert consultation, everyone agreed that, seeing the condition she was now in, attempting to take her the 22 miles to Tardebigge, which included three locks and four tunnels, one over a mile and a half long, simply posed too great a risk.



May 1998. The deterioration in *Raymond's* fore end...



and in her stern.

So the decision was taken not to move *Raymond* at all, but to arrange to lift her out on to the bank later in the year, carefully dismantle her, and reassemble her at Tardebigge, incorporating the new timbers as part of the reassembly. Although this had never been the plan, by making a virtue of the necessity, the expert opinion was that undertaking the restoration in this way would result in a much stronger boat.

With the change of plan settled, and keen to make the most of the trip to Dudley, Ivor suggested that as the imported opepe was ready for collection from British Waterways, if they were not going to take *Raymond* to Tardebigge, they may as well take the timber instead. So the boats headed for BW's Bradley Workshops at the end of the winding, weed-choked Bradley Arm, off the Birmingham Main Line, about an hour and a half away, where the opepe was craned into *Mountbatten*.

Two days later the timber was unloaded by hand, 10 locks down the Tardebigge Flight from where, with the help of the local farmer's tractor and trailer, it was stowed in Phil Babb's barn.



June 1998. Unloading the opepe from *Mountbatten* at Tardebigge Lock 50.
Note *Raymond's* elum at the right of the picture.

While the volunteers had been at Dudley, they also succeeded in removing *Raymond's* elum, which was delivered along with the opepe.

Phil and Richard made a new elum as an exact replica of the old one, which was then painted and put on display by Friends of *Raymond* at events, as a sign that that some progress was being made:

“We’ve got the rudder, all we need now, is the boat to go with it!”

The first three weeks in August had been booked at the Black Country Living Museum to allow sufficient time for *Raymond* to be dismantled. A workforce of volunteers was standing by as two massive pumps on board the museum’s joey boat *Birchills*, this time succeeded in keeping *Raymond* afloat.



August 1998. The big pumps get *Raymond* floating.



On the bank at last



The extent of the disintegration.

Raymond was manoeuvred into position below the slipway and, inch by inch, was hauled out of the water.

Great care was taken in the lifting operation, but in spite of it, as *Raymond* emerged, she began to disintegrate.

Everyone who had gathered to watch, looked on in dismay, as the realisation began dawn on them that *Raymond* was probably beyond any kind of restoration.

This sad conclusion was confirmed the following day by Phil Babb and an independent examiner. Phil recalls that, when he went through the boat with a probe, every piece of timber he tested was like sponge.

This was also the moment that the National Lottery Heritage Fund broke the news that they had turned down FoR’s application, on the grounds that they had granted funding the previous year for the restoration of *Roger*, and felt it was inappropriate to fund the restoration of another wooden narrow boat. This meant that Friends of *Raymond* were not only looking at a total rebuild instead of a restoration, but doing so just as their main hope of funding had disappeared. Now was not the moment to dwell on setbacks however, because the clock was ticking and the job in hand had to be finished within the three-week window.

While *Raymond* was still more or less in one piece, Phil Babb took photographs, notes, and careful measurements (right) of all the details and dimensions that would be essential in reproducing the boat as accurately as possible.

He also identified critical timbers such as the stem and stern post and the wooden knees, that he wanted kept as templates, and every single item of ironwork that would have to be retained.





When Phil was satisfied he had everything he needed for the rebuilding, the volunteers began the painful task of, not now dismantling *Raymond*, but simply breaking her up (above and below). As had been predicted, not one single timber was fit to be reused. Apart from the ironwork, only a cupboard door from the cabin was kept for sentimental reasons, and is still in *Raymond*'s new cabin, still with its original paint on the inside. What usefully remained of *Raymond* was loaded on to *Mountbatten* and taken to Tardebigge. The rest was cleared away and scrapped.



While the dramas at Dudley were unfolding, FoR members had not let up on the essential task of fundraising, and had continued to work hard to raise money for the restoration. By midsummer 1998 they had £22,000 of the then-estimated £100,000 required, and were aiming for the work to start in 2001.

Summer soon gave way to winter, and it was time for the tree-felling. Over several weekends in December 1998 and January 1999, FoR volunteers made the trek to Epping Forest to clear scrub (below left) in return for receiving the trees, which were felled on the same weekends (below right).



The trunks were transported to a local sawmill which, by happy coincidence Phil tells us, was where he had worked in school holidays as a boy and where he was well known. And here, the timber was planked under Phil's supervision, and stacked ready for collection.

1999 The Year of Decision

There is no doubt that, in the space of little more than two years since their formation, the Friends of Raymond had come a long way towards achieving their aim of seeing *Raymond* fully restored. Although the ride had been a bumpy one at times, with numerous disappointments and disagreements, perhaps the most divisive issue the trustees had to contend with was that of transporting the sawn timber from Epping to Tardebigge.

On the one hand there were those who argued that all materials should be transported by boat, not only because it was traditional and environmentally friendly, but also because of the opportunities for publicity and fundraising it offered. On the other hand, some reasoned that keeping the largely-unseasoned timber in the hold of a boat for up to six weeks, ran the serious risk of it warping and becoming unusable. This group advocated transporting the timber by road, and restacking it as quickly as possible.

So deeply-held were the divided opinions that some committee members felt compelled to resign. In the end, the water-transport lobby won the day after expert advice suggested that, if bundles of timber were tightly bonded, with spacers between the planks, it would survive the journey by boat. Fortunately, this advice proved to be correct.



With the issue of transportation settled, in April, the oak from Epping Forest was brought by road to a wharf at Edmonton on the River Lee and loaded on to Ivor Batchelor's *Mountbatten* and his *butty Cedar* (left).

Their eventual destination was Tardebigge, but the Ivor and his boats had other appointments to keep first.

From Edmonton, the pair headed for Little Venice, via the Hertford Union and Regents Canals, to be the main attraction in a publicity and fundraising event at the IWA's Canalway Cavalcade over the May Bank Holiday weekend (right).

They then continued on to Braunston for the Braunston Boat Show at the end of the month, where the boats and their special load drew still more attention.



After Braunston, the final leg of their journey took them via the Grand Union, North Stratford, and Worcester & Birmingham Canals to Tardebigge (left), where they arrived in early June.

As with the opepe, the oak planking was unloaded to be stored until required, a day that came much sooner than anyone had dared to dream.

By July that year, fundraising had exceeded all expectation, with the total received or pledged standing at over £45,000. Although this figure was still about £20,000 short of the revised estimate, Phil remembers that once the oak had been delivered and all the materials were in place, everyone was spurred on by the prospect of *Raymond* being rebuilt and returning to Braunston in the millennium year. As he and Richard were as keen as the trustees for the work to begin, Phil agreed they would go ahead, on trust that the rest of the money would be forthcoming in due course. So the momentous decision was taken.

Phil was to book the dry dock at Tardebigge Wharf as soon as it was available for six months, which was from November to the end of April 2000. The expectation was that the work would actually begin in late November, as they needed time to clean and prepare the dock first.

As they were impatient to make a start now they had the go-ahead, Phil tells us that he and Richard laid out the bottoms on the floor of the barn, cut them to size and bolted them through to the keelson so, as soon as they had access, it could all be easily reassembled in the dry dock.

At last, on 26th November 1999 and nearly two years ahead of the original schedule, the dry dock was ready (right).



2000 The Year of Triumph

Phil and Richard immediately began reassembling the bottoms, from which the boat would grow. Work continued throughout the winter and the boat grew steadily:



Phil and Richard lay out the bottoms



Before Christmas, the iron knees are in place.



January 2000, and the boat starts to take shape.



Richard (lost in the steam) and Phil position the second plank.



Richard secures the plank to the stem post.



Late February, and the planking is almost complete.

By the end of February 2000, the hull was almost complete, which was the ideal moment for an open day. On Sunday 5th March, a group of over 30 members and friends arrived at Tardebigge to get, what was for many of them, their first sight of the work.



March 2000, Phil explains the work in progress to visitors.

Writing in the FoR newsletter of April that year, Irene Reeves who, with her husband Philip is our longest-serving member, reported that, "The day was a great success, enjoyed by all. Phil and Richard answered questions enthusiastically and were obviously pleased by the warmth of an appreciative audience."

She also observed that, "It was an emotional time, probably more so for Aubrey Berriman." Aubrey, whose death we announced in last year's March

issue, had built Raymond in 1958. So, when he pronounced the standard of workmanship to be "first class", it was praise indeed. Phil recalls their first meeting when Aubrey expressed surprise that there were only going to be the two of them doing the work. "You'll have a job getting the long planks out of the steamer and on to the boat," he said. "We had four men on it and another four in the yard we could call on. And even then I got a hernia." All the same Phil and Richard did manage it on their own although, twenty years on, Phil admits that he too, suffered a similar injury!

Irene ended her newsletter article by saying that, "...what a lot of people thought might never happen, has now become a reality." And those who thought it might never happen, did not have to wait much longer.

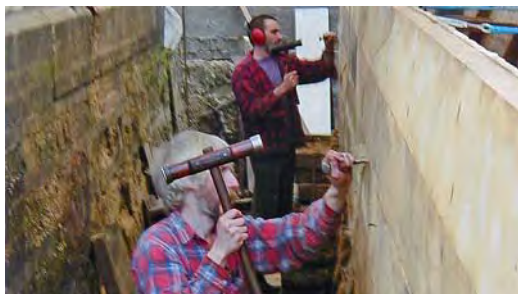
On the Wednesday after the open day, 8th March 2000, Phil and Richard fitted the last plank into the hull. Then it was all go to complete the work in the dry dock by the end of the month.



The last plank drops into place.



The sheering is fitted.



Over 700 feet of seams are caulked.



By mid-March, the construction is complete.



Two coats of tar.



A final lick of primer, and the hull is ready for the launch.

On Sunday 2nd April 2000, just four weeks after the open day, another expectant gathering assembled at Tardebigge, to watch as the traditional bottle of cider was cracked on the bows, the stop planks were lifted, and there was *Raymond*, or at least the hull that would soon become *Raymond*, afloat at last.



As water floods the dock, the hull lifts... and floats!



The hull emerges from the dock to the delight of the onlookers.



2nd April 2000. The hull tied at Tardebigge Wharf.

For everyone who had lived through the highs and lows of the previous four years, it was a moment of considerable emotion and, for Phil and Richard, one of immense satisfaction. They had more than answered anyone who might have doubted they could do it. Not only had they had built a boat to proud of, they had done so using entirely traditional methods. Even the spikes and nails were handmade, wrought in Phil's own forge.

With three months' work still ahead of them, however, there was no time for Phil and Richard to rest on their laurels. When the euphoria of the launch had subsided, the hull was bow-hauled down thirteen of the Tardebigge Locks to Phil's house, where the work of making the cabin, and the general fitting out, continued outside.



Richard and Phil build the cabin.



Phil fits beading to the bed cupboard panels.



Richard makes the shuts...



and attaches a beam saddle using the handmade nails.



Nearly there. Phil and Richard finally fit the elum.

Although it was a fine spring that year, with the open-air work seldom interrupted by bad weather, Phil recalls one dark cloud that nearly brought everything to a halt. He received a phone call from Friends of Raymond to say they had run out of money and were unable to pay him, so work would have to stop immediately.

It appeared that the trustees' enthusiasm to give the rebuilding a green light before all the money was in, had come back to bite them.

For Phil and Richard, rebuilding *Raymond* had, by this stage, become as much of a vocation as a job, so they decided they were going to see it through together, come what may. And their dedication was rewarded only a few days later when a fairy godmother appeared bearing, not gifts, but camera equipment. This was Peter Andrews. Peter had been diligently recording every chapter of the recovery and rebuilding in still photographs and video and, when he heard that Phil and Richard were now working for nothing, promptly wrote Phil a cheque for what he was owed.



Peter Andrews

Peter was a generous benefactor in those early days, even though he somehow managed to fall in and out of love with the charity as often as he bankrolled it in times of emergency. Peter's was one of the resignations over the issue of transporting the Epping Forest timber.

Nevertheless, in spite of his periods of disgruntlement, Peter continued to give The Friends of Raymond substantial donations right up to the time of his death in January 2018.

He always asked to remain an anonymous donor, a request that, of course, we respected, but it would also be in respect to Peter's memory to say that, without his support, The Friends of Raymond might never have survived.



30th June 2000, *Raymond* is finished and ready to leave.

By the end of June, the job Phil and Richard had been commissioned to undertake was finished.

In the three months during which work had continued outside Phil's house, with the boat squeezed between Locks 44 and 45 in the Tardebigge flight, they had transformed the bare hull into a fully-practical working boat.

More than that, in just over seven months since the rebuilding began, The Friends of Raymond had a boat they could justifiably call "*Raymond*" again.

On 1st July, the willing hands of Alan Palmer and Philip Reeves helped to bow-haul *Raymond* back up the locks to Tardebigge Wharf, where Richard's boat, *Cepheus*, was to take her home to Braunston.



Saturday 1st July. *Raymond* between Locks 48 & 49, W&BC.



Sunday 2nd July. *Cepheus* & *Raymond* in Hatton locks.

Writing in the newsletter later that year, Philip recalled that a 6am start, and more bow-hauling with Alan at Lapworth, ensured they were down Hatton and at The Cape of Good Hope on the Sunday night. Their getaway from The Cape on the Monday morning was even earlier, at 5am, and as a result, *Raymond* arrived in Braunston Marina soon after midday on Monday 3rd July 2000, seven years and one month since she had left.



Monday 3rd July 2000, *Cepheus* brings *Raymond* into the arm at Braunston Marina

Footnotes

3rd July 2000 may be the end of our story here, but it is also the day on which life for The Friends of Raymond changed forever and a whole new story began. That story has continued for 20 years, and will be told in a future issue of *FoR News*.

After *Raymond* returned to Braunston, money was in short supply, so completing the work took a further two years. Painting, fitting out the cabin, and equipping the boat, was done entirely by FoR volunteers. Only the more specialised work was left to professionals such as Pete Flockhart of Tradline who made and fitted the decorative white ropework and, of course, the late Ron Hough who did the signwriting and decoration in his unique style.



Arthur Bray (left) and Ernie Kendall on *Raymond*, late 1970s

Neither Arthur Bray nor Ernie Kendall lived to see their old boat afloat again. Ernie, died in 1996 at the age of 68, and Arthur died on Boxing Day 1998, two days after his 93rd birthday.

In this year's April issue of *FoR News* we announced that Richard Clapham died last year and that, at Phil Babb's suggestion, we had had the plaque commemorating the rebuilding engraved with Richard's dates below his name (right). Now that restrictions have been lifted to a large extent, we are hopeful of being able to rearrange the gathering at which we will remount the plaque on the cabin door to *Raymond's* hold.



Finally, it is easy to speculate that if it had been possible for the restoration work to have started immediately *Raymond* arrived at Runcom in 1993, much of the original boat might have been preserved. But in light of what did happen, by stepping in and saving *Raymond* in the nick of time and having her rebuilt in less than four years, those early Friends of Raymond achieved an outstanding feat. All of us who have followed in their footsteps are forever indebted to them.



May 2002. Newly painted by Ron Hough, *Raymond* looks much as she had done 44 years earlier.

Editor's comments

We hope in time, to produce a complete, detailed, and accurate chronical of The Friends of Raymond and of the boat that gives our charity its name. So, although "Saving Raymond" is the 'middle' of the story, think of it as the first instalment. We will produce a 'beginning' and an 'end' in due course.

"Saving Raymond" is based on past writings in the FoR archives and recent conversations with some of those involved at the time. While we believe dates are correct and that events described are presented in the order in which they happened, if any of our readers are able to correct any errors or can add further information, please let the editor know, because the more accurate and complete we can make the story, the better. If any errors or omissions are pointed out, they will be included in the next issue of *FoR News* due in October.

The pictures included in the article are drawn from our archive collection and, in the majority of cases, we do not have a record of the photographer or copyright holder and, we accept that we may be infringing copyright in publishing some of the earliest pictures, although we hope copyright holders would allow it in the context of a charity newsletter. We believe we can identify some of the Friends of Raymond photographers and these include Peter Andrews, Ivor Batchelor, John Hicks, Alan Palmer, Irene Reeves, and Arthur Taylor, but again, if anyone can shed light on the source of any of the pictures, please let the editor know.

The next issue of FoR News

The next issue of FoR News will be published in October.

This year is the 50th anniversary of Blue Line's final delivery of coal to the "Jam 'Ole" at Kearley & Tonge's factory in Southall, just beyond the turn into the Paddington Arm at Bulls Bridge. If, as we hope, the commemorative "Jam 'Ole Run" goes ahead as planned in late September, the October issue of *FoR News* will carry a full report.

That final delivery was also the end of *Nutfield & Raymond's* working career. So, we will be devoting the next issue mainly to the story of the events that led up to it and how, but for the outcome of the general election in June 1970, it might never have happened at all and *Raymond's* story might have taken an altogether different turn.



Nutfield & Raymond on the Grand Union near Winkwell, summer 1970.

If you have any questions or comments on this newsletter or on anything to do with The Friends of Raymond in general, please contact the editor, Nick Lake.

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