

# Friends of Raymond

Charity Number: 1059614



## FoR News July 2018

After a hectic June, culminating in the Braunston Historic Narrow Boat Rally, the first half of July was very quiet. We cleared the accumulated rubbish from Raymond and took it to the tip, had Pete Boyce round to inspect the leak and pumped out the water lying under the cabin floor. Meanwhile, the boats sat in the marina collecting leaves and cobwebs, as boats always do, until Thursday 19th July, when they once again sprang into life.

### Cosgrove Canal Festival 21st and 22nd July



Nutfield & Raymond at Cosgrove, 21 June 2018

On the morning of the 19th, *Nutfield & Raymond* headed off to Blisworth, crewed by Robin Bishop, Roger Golder and Nick Lake, with Neil Hankin helping at Braunston and Buckby locks. After a reasonably uneventful journey, in spite of hold-ups due to heavy traffic in the locks, the boats were tied up just south of Mill Bridge soon after 7pm.

With a good start the next day, the journey down from Blisworth was easy going, with all the Stoke Bruerne locks in our favour, but it was sad to see how badly overgrown the pound from the Bottom of Stoke to Cosgrove has been allowed to become, and it seems to get worse every year. The cut is generally very wide in this pound, but the growth on the off side is so extensive in places, it scarcely leaves room for two boats to pass.

All the same, *Nutfield & Raymond* were in position below Cosgrove lock by lunchtime and Friday afternoon at Cosgrove was spent cleaning, polishing and having a general make and mend, so that by 6.30 the boats were all ready for the show. At this point, the heavens opened in the heaviest storm of the summer so far, filling the boats with water and soaking the crew heading off for supper.

Fortunately, Saturday 21st dawned bright and sunny, and the weather remained good for the rest of the weekend. So, apart from having to pump out the gallons of rainwater from Friday evening's downpour, all was well.



Raymond at Cosgrove, 21 June 2018

The sunshine brought out a good number of people and we had a steady stream of customers and visitors on both days and also recruited two new members.



Raymond at Cosgrove, Chris R Jones in the hatches, 21 July 2018

Cosgrove is never our biggest money-spinner, but it is a useful staging post to the more-profitable Linslade Canal Festival. So, as we packed up on Sunday evening, we felt it had been a worthwhile weekend and, with Nick Wolfe and Sarah Mallet on *Aldgate* directly in front of us and the beer boat directly behind us, a sociable one as well.



The FoR Sales Team, Robin Bishop (L) and Brian Seymour, Cosgrove, 21 July 2018

FoR volunteers for the boat movements and the show at Cosrove were Robin Bishop, Roger & Diana Golder, Neil Hankin, Will & Clare Hewitt, Chris R Jones, Nick Lake and Brian Seymour.

## Linslade Canal Festival 28th July



*Nutfield & Raymond* at Linslade, 28 July 2018

*Nutfield & Raymond* remained on the mooring at Cosgrove until the following Friday when Robin Bishop and Nick Lake returned to take them down to Linslade.

Mike Bowley was waiting to meet the boats at Fenny and had the lock ready as they arrived. Then, with a neat combination of car and bike, Mike went ahead to help the boats through Talbots (Stoke Hammond) Lock, the Three Locks and Leighton Lock, before coming on board to help breast up and wind below Grove Lock and tie up at the festival site around 7pm.

At this point we realised we had a problem. With water levels down by more than six inches, we could not get the boats up to the wall of the former sand wharf, which is our traditional place for the festival. As nothing could be done at that moment, we decided to sleep on it and see if the level came up overnight.

At 8.30 on the Saturday morning, the yawning gap between the bank and *Raymond* was still there, an impassable barrier to anyone wanting to come on board, and a real problem as visitors are an important part of the event.

But Robin and Nick hit upon a cunning plan and devised a suitable safe access utilising the spare top plank from *Raymond*, a couple of barrier pins, and one of the long shafts.



The "safe access" to *Raymond*, Linslade, 28 July 2018

This construction obviously did the trick because, between 11am and 5pm, the continuous stream of visitors to *Raymond* left a generous amount in the donation pots.

So, it was another successful Linslade festival, with the total income from the day more than justifying the effort in taking the boats there.



Mind the gap! Visitors to *Raymond* depart safely, Linslade, 28 July 2018

FoR volunteers for the boat movements and the show were Robin Bishop, Mike Bowley, Roger Golder, Will & Clare Hewitt, Nick Lake and Shea Richardson. After packing up, the boats were moved up to The Globe Inn at Old Linslade where the remaining crew (and Diana who had driven over to pick up Roger) gathered for supper.

## Back to Blisworth 29th July

On the way down to Linslade on the Friday, Robin and Nick had sweltered in blazing sun, but on the trip back on the Sunday, they were literally soaked to the skin.



What a difference a day makes!  
Above, near Great Linford, Friday 27th.  
Below, near Stoke Hamond, Sunday 29th



The boats left The Globe at just after 7.30am to be met at the Three Locks by Mike who had very kindly turned out again, on a wet Sunday morning, to see us through to Fenny.

After a brief stop at Cosgrove to transfer Robin's bags and several boxes of sales items to his car which he had left there on Friday, the Bottom of Stoke was reached about 6pm, where Roger was waiting with the lock ready. We made good time up the locks and were finally tied up opposite Mill Wharf at 7.45pm. Roger then took Robin and Nick back to their cars at Cosgrove and Linslade, and the job was done.

The boats will now stay at Blisworth (with CRT's blessing) until the Canal Festival on the weekend of 18th and 19th August.

FoR volunteers on the trip back to Blisworth were Robin Bishop, Mike Bowley, Roger Golder and Nick Lake.

## More on Raymond's leak

On the Friday afternoon at Cosgrove, we had a chance to make another inspection of the leak, before the rain masked what was happening. Most of the water under the cabin floor had been pumped out a few days earlier, and the hot weather had completed the job, so the bottom of the boat was dry, except where a leak was obviously occurring.



Evidence of the leak – note trickle of water on the right, 19 July 2018

On this evidence, there is little doubt that water is seeping in between the bottoms and the first plank. And, as so much water has been accumulating below the cabin floor, it is safe to assume that similar leaks are occurring on both sides of the cabin. We have, therefore, booked the dry dock at Braunston for three days from Monday 1st October to carry out the necessary re-caulking.

## Volunteering

Volunteering is the lifeblood of The Friends of Raymond and without the work of our volunteers, the charity would simply not exist, so we are aiming to make volunteering news and issues a regular feature of FoR News. In future editions we hope to talk to some of our members who volunteer, to find out how they got involved, what they do, and why they enjoy doing it, but this month, we want to start by looking at our volunteering situation as a whole.



Roger Golder and Nick Scarcliffe with *Nutfield* on the Wendover Arm. Picture: Peter Cox, Wendover Arm Trust

In each of the show and boat-movement reports in FoR News, we are trying to credit everyone who turned out to help. However, although this is only the second issue of the new-style FoR News, readers may have already noticed certain names appearing repeatedly. This is because we have such a small base

of active volunteers that the “usual suspects” always feel obliged to turn out, knowing that if they do not, nothing will happen.



Neil Hankin with *Raymond* at Hillmorton Locks

A report to the trustees earlier in the year, looking at how the charity may need to adapt to survive the next ten years and beyond, noted that, “. . .the volunteer base we rely on to move the boats and staff the events is both dwindling and aging which is making the [aims of FoR] increasingly hard to fulfil.”



Robin Bishop and Peter Copeland clearing *Nutfield* after grit blasting at Stretton Wharf

As FoR Chairman, Chris R Jones, says, “Those of us with busy jobs and family commitments simply can't help on every occasion, no matter how much we might like to. But if we rely solely on the same small group of retired members to staff the shows and move the boats, we're an accident waiting to happen because the time is fast approaching when they may no longer be able to continue. And when that day comes, The Friends of Raymond will grind to a halt unless we have the next generation of volunteers in place. If we can just encourage more of our younger members to get involved, and by 'younger' I'm including retired members looking for something useful to do, even if they can only give us one or two days a year, we could spread the load and reduce the risk.”



The sun doesn't always shine! Diana Golder at the Salford Festival, Warwick

Volunteers Coordinator, Diana Golder, adds, “We may have given the impression in the past that volunteering with FoR is mainly about boating but, in truth, the most important thing we do in the summer season is attending events to raise money from sales and from the donations given by members of the public when we talk to them and invite them to see Raymond’s cabin. So, before I ask for volunteers to help move the boats, I need to be sure I have enough volunteers to cover sales and show-rounds, because there’s no point in us taking the boats to an event, if we can’t manage it when we get there. Of course, moving the boats is still important and we need all the help we can get – even if it’s just driving out to help with locks. We’re trying, if possible, to arrange boat movements at weekends to give more people a chance to get involved and we always have cars at each end of a trip, so there’s no need for anyone coming on the boats for a day to worry about being stranded. All I need is for more people to say, yes, to my emails.”



Chris M Jones and Will Hewitt decorating *Raymond* at Braunston

Volunteering with FoR does not only involve helping with events and moving the boats. If you have talents in things like carpentry or painting, or if you are handy with electrics or mechanical maintenance, or if you have transferable business skills in areas such as IT, bookkeeping, fundraising, publicity and PR, project management etc, or indeed anything you think might be of use to us, we would love to hear from you.

## Dates for August

*Nutfield & Raymond* will be attending the following events:

Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th August: Blisworth Canal Festival

Saturday 25th to Monday 27th August: Stoke Bruerne

This is an informal, FoR-only event, for which we have arranged a mooring with the Waterways Museum, to take advantage of the volume of visitors to the village and the museum expected over the bank holiday weekend.



The Blisworth Canal Festival

If you would like to volunteer to help at either of these events, please contact Diana Golder. Or if you are in the area on either weekend, please pay us a visit.

The boats are already at Blisworth and will be moved into position for the festival when we have instructions from the organisers. They will be moved to Stoke Bruerne in the following week and will return to Braunston at a time to be arranged, after the bank holiday weekend. Diana will be announcing arrangements and dates for moving the boats in due course.

For more information about events, when we are moving the boats, or anything concerning The Friends of Raymond, please visit [www.friendsofraymond.org.uk](http://www.friendsofraymond.org.uk) or contact our Volunteers Coordinator or the Editor.

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