

FoR News April 2020



Nutfield with Narrow Boat Trust's butty Brighton on the Oxford Canal below Somerton Deep Lock with coal for deliveries along the River Thames, October 2019

Programme for 2020

This year's programme is on hold and all our outdoor activities have been suspended until further notice.

The trustees took this decision in March because of the government's directive to observe social distancing and because news that the Welford Canal Festival had been moved from May to September and that the Crick Boat Show had been cancelled altogether, suggested there would soon be further cancellations.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on 23rd March introducing further restrictions on personal movement, Tim Coghlan informed us of his decision not to go ahead with this year's Braunston Historic Boat Rally due to take place at the end of June.

At the time of writing, the following dates are still in our calendar.

July

Sat 18th and Sun 19th at Cosgrove
[Cosgrove Canal Festival.](#)

Sat 25th at Leighton Buzzard
[Linslade Canal Festival.](#)

August

Sat 8th and Sun 9th at Blisworth
[Blisworth Canal Festival](#)

September

Sat 19th and Sun 20th at Welford
[Welford Canal Festival](#)
Moved from May

Sat 26th to Sat 10th October
[50th Anniversary Jam 'Ole Run](#)

Braunston to Atherstone, Atherstone to Southall, Southall to Braunston over two weeks

We will publish updates to this year's programme as soon as we have further news.

Other News

The boats



The boats at Braunston Marina. Picture Norman Townsend

While the current restrictions are in force, *Nutfield & Raymond* are safely on their mooring at the marina.

They have been checked regularly throughout the winter and are clothed up and well protected.

We had planned an Easter working party to prepare the boats for the summer season, but for the time being, they will remain as they are until the situation changes.

Membership renewals

Membership renewals for 2020 are now due. As this year looks like being one in which our income will be severely reduced owing to the cancellation of our two biggest money-spinning events, we will be relying more than ever on the revenue from Friends' subscriptions and donations to enable us to continue to maintain *Nutfield & Raymond*. We are therefore appealing to all our members who have not already renewed, or who pay by standing order, to renew their memberships as soon as possible. Many Friends who renewed early this year, generously included a donation for which we are most grateful. And if anyone renewing now can afford something extra this year it will help us enormously.

Change of membership renewal date

We received a good number of replies to our request in January for opinions on the trustees' proposal to change the membership renewal date from 6th April to 1st January, all of which supported the idea. And as we report later in this newsletter, the proposal was agreed unanimously at the AGM. So next year's membership renewals will be due on 1st January. But as this will be the first time renewals will fall due at the start of the year, we will send out reminders in November.

20th Anniversary of *Raymond's* rebuild

2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the year in which *Raymond* was rebuilt.

Having been rescued by the newly-formed Friends of *Raymond* in April 1997, *Raymond* was taken to the Black Country Living Museum to await restoration.

In the end, she was dismantled at Dudley in August 1998 and rebuilt at Tardebigge between November 1999 and June 2000.

Raymond returned to Braunston on 3rd July 2000.



Rebuilding at Tardebigge, February 2000. Picture FoR collection

As this year's Braunston Historic Boat Rally would have coincided with the completion of the rebuild 20 years ago, we had planned to hold a celebration at the rally with an exhibition of photographs telling the whole story, and to use the event to launch a fund-raising appeal for the major work that now needs to be carried out to keep *Raymond* going. Regrettably, like so many other things this year, it will have to wait for happier times, but we will publish a special anniversary edition of *FoR News* in June to mark the occasion and tell the story to a new generation of Friends.

Memorial plaque on *Raymond*

By an unhappy coincidence, Phil Babb, who rebuilt *Raymond*, contacted us last year to tell us that Richard Clapham, who assisted him with the work, had died aged 53 and to ask if we would consider displaying a plaque in Richard's memory.



Richard (L) and Phil at Tardebigge in 2000. Picture FoR collection



The amended plaque

As there are already two plaques on *Raymond*, the original one commemorating the launch on 11th June 1958 and a second marking the restoration in 2000 by Phil and Richard, we agreed with Phil that we would have the second plaque engraved with Richard's dates below his name.

We had arranged to hold a small gathering at Braunston on 25th April with Phil and some of Richard's friends and family to replace the plaque on *Raymond's* cabin door, but we will organise another date as soon as we can.

New Friends of Raymond talk

Following requests by a number of IWA branches for us to give a talk on *Raymond* and FoR's work, Chris R Jones and Nick Lake have put together an illustrated presentation called "RAYMOND The Story of the Last Wooden Working Boat".

Research into FoR's archives uncovered a wealth of half-forgotten pictures and information about the formation of the charity and *Raymond's* recovery and eventual rebuild. This, plus Chris's intimate knowledge of the history of the Barlow family and of the Samuel Barlow Coal Company that built *Raymond* at Braunston in 1958, has created a story spanning the 150 years from 1868 to 2018.



Raymond's launch at Braunston, 11 June 1958. Picture Coventry Evening Telegraph

After two trial runs last year to the South London and West London IWA branches, Chris and Nick delivered the final version of the talk to Lichfield IWA in January and to Northampton IWA in March, where they were supported by a pleasing number of local FoR members.



Arthur & Rose Bray and Ernie Kendall on *Roger & Raymond* at Berkhamsted, 1966. Picture FoR collection

We hope that this talk will prove to be a lasting asset because, apart from helping to raise funds from donations and sales of jam and marmalade, it has given us a useful way of extending the educational side of the charity's work.

The talk features over 300 pictures and runs about an hour and a quarter, usually in two parts. We are planning to promote it to a range of societies within reasonable driving distance and hope, in time, to adapt it for schools. So, if anyone is a member of, or knows of a club or society that might like a talk from Friends of Raymond at one of their meetings, please let the editor know.

Review of 2019

Even if 2020 may not turn out to be the year we were anticipating, here is a look back to the key points of the busy and varied programme we enjoyed last year.

Easter working party

19th to 21st April



Spring cleaning *Nutfield* at Braunston, Easter 2019

Helped by a fine, sunny weekend and a good turnout of volunteers, we cleaned out *Nutfield's* engine room, serviced the engine, spring-cleaned both cabins and applied a coat of varnish to *Raymond's* cabin roof.

"Welford at 50" weekend

18th and 19th May

The event was to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the restored Welford Arm in 1969. Another fine weekend attracted a large number of visitors and FoR put on a good show with *Nutfield* & *Raymond* in pride of place in front of The Wharf Inn and with our new signage on display for the first time.



The boats and sales gazebo at Welford, May 2019



Will painting the storage box at Welford

Will Hewitt put on a demonstration of tradition canal painting, decorating an octagonal storage box that he later donated to FoR to be sold.

And after the show closed on the Saturday, 13 FoR members gathered in the Canal Room at The Wharf Inn for a convivial social evening.

Crick Boat Show

24th to 27th May

A new location for the boats and a good pitch nearby for our sales gazebo that attracted a steady stream of visitors and customers over the four days, made last year's show at Crick our busiest and most profitable ever.



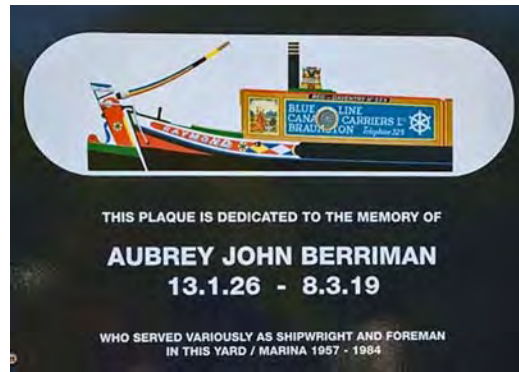
A busy day at the Crick Boat Show, May 2019

Braunston Historic Boat Rally

29th and 30th June



The unveiled plaque of the wall of the wet dock



Plaque detail

Immediately before the rally opened, a plaque was unveiled in the marina to the memory of Aubrey Berriman, who built *Raymond* and whose death we reported last year. The design that Tim Coghlan had commissioned for the plaque featured Chris M Jones's illustration of *Raymond* that he created for the Friends of Raymond logo.



The boats at the end of the parade, having just breasted up under Butchers Bridge, with Clare, Will and a young passenger

Members of Aubrey Berriman's family joined *Nutfield & Raymond* in the opening parade, the boats being captained by Will Hewitt and crewed by Clare Hewitt and Ian Mulford.

Having been the stars of the show in 2018, our boats' appearance was comparatively low-key last year, but the FoR gazebo and sales stall were as high-profile as ever. More warm, sunny weather brought plenty of visitors and kept our sales team busy throughout the weekend.

The octagonal storage box that Will had painted at Welford sold before the show had even opened, which played a significant part in helping us achieve another record-breaking event, with total takings being the highest we have ever achieved at the Braunston rally.



Will's painted storage box on display

Raymond docking

5th to 10th July

July was a busy month, with several things happening in quick succession. First on the list was putting *Raymond* into the dry dock at Braunston Marina so we could look again at the problem of the leak that we reported on in 2018 and had been unable to fix in October that year. After consulting Adrian Polglase, arguably the leading expert on wooden boats, he agreed to oversee the work.

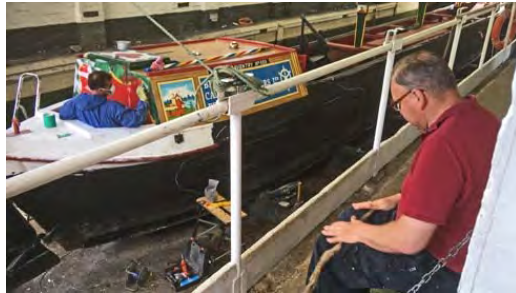
The chine shoe plating that had hindered us before, was cut back so that the seam between the first plank and the bottoms, which seemed to be the source of the leak, could be raked out and caulked. With the help of a handful of FoR volunteers, we were able to caulk all the seams showing signs of deterioration, and Ade also cut out a number of areas of serious rot, plugging the holes with oakum and tar and patching them with protective metal plates.



Gavin Clewer cuts back the chine shoe plating



Ade caulks the bottom seam



Peter Copeland rolls oakum, Will preps the paintwork



Ade expertly folds oakum into a seam

Meanwhile, taking advantage of having *Raymond* under cover for six days, Will Hewitt devoted all his spare time that week to painting the fore end, stern end and elum. And in conjunction with the painting, Norman Townsend remade the rotten parts of the deck lid and fashioned a metal plate to protect the top of the rudder post.



Ade plugs a hole with oakum and tar...



...and finally covers it with a metal plate



Norman arrives with the repaired deck lid



Will adds some finishing touches

The footnote to this story is that, in spite of all we achieved, plus a short emergency docking in October for Ade to re-plug one of the scarf joints, *Raymond* is still leaking, although not quite as badly as before. The conclusion is that water must be entering through the seams between the bottoms. Addressing this problem will involve craning *Raymond* out on to sleepers and completely removing the chine shoe plating so that the bottoms are accessible for caulking, a job that will require some forward planning in terms of both time and money.

Photoshoot at Braunston

13th July

Two weeks after the Historic Boat Rally, the arm at Braunston Marina was again busy with former working narrow boats. This time, the boats were there to recreate historical scenes for a group of serious amateur photographers.

Following the successful photoshoot with *Nutfield & Raymond* that we had set up for Timeline Events in May 2018, they were keen to arrange another one, this time depicting the arm in its working days.

A group of 12 photographers assembled at lunchtime and finished shooting about 8pm. It was a long day for us, as it was well after 9pm before we had returned all the marina's boats to the arm and left it as we had found it first thing that morning. But everyone considered it was a great success and we are indebted to our members who did both the hard work and the role-playing and to the owners of the historic boats, *Monarch & Whitby*, *Cepheus*, *Renfrew*, and *Stanton* who made the shoot possible. We are also extremely grateful to Timeline Events for their generous donation.



The photographers in action



Stanton and Renfrew. Picture David Williams



Raymond, Nutfield and Cepheus. Picture David Williams

Cosgrove Canal Festival

20th and 21st July



Cosgrove Canal Festival

First thing on Sunday 14th July, the day after the photoshoot, *Nutfield & Raymond* left the marina heading for Cosgrove and the first of three events we were to attend before returning home. The Cosgrove Canal Festival is never one of the more profitable events in our calendar, but we are always made very welcome by the Buckingham Canal Society and, with help from a decent show of FoR volunteers, we had a pleasant and worthwhile weekend.

The disappointment that followed the event was that, in spite of having more than enough volunteers at Cosgrove, we were unable to muster a crew to take the boats on to Leighton Buzzard for the Linslade Canal Festival the following weekend. So we had to leave the boats on their mooring below Cosgrove Lock until we could move them back to Blisworth.

Blisworth Canal Festival

10th and 11th August

Normal service was resumed at Blisworth in August. Although it is called the “Canal Festival” the event involves the entire village of Blisworth and attracts a large number of visitors. So, we enjoyed a busy and profitable weekend with a good number of volunteers to help run the sales stall and show *Raymond's* cabin to a steady stream of visitors.



Blisworth Canal Festival

Alvecote Historic Boat Gathering

24th and 25th August



Nutfield & Raymond canal-side at Alvecote Marina, August 2019

The gathering at Alvecote Marina on the Coventry Canal near Tamworth is organised by the Historic Narrow Boat Club and attracts one of the year's largest assemblies of ex-working boats. Although it is more of an event at which to see and be seen than one that earns FoR much income, we are always pleased to attend whenever we can. But last August we had two other reasons to take *Nutfield & Raymond* on the two-day journey up from Braunston.

The first reason was to hand over *Nutfield* to the Narrow Boat Trust, as we had agreed earlier in the year. This was so that they could borrow *Nutfield* for their autumn coal run while their motor *Nuneaton* was unfit to load pending repairs. NBT base their pair *Nuneaton & Brighton* at Alvecote so this presented the perfect opportunity to move all our gear from *Nutfield* on to *Raymond* and re-equip *Nutfield* with everything NBT would need from *Nuneaton*.

The second reason was to use Alvecote as a staging post en route to our ultimate destination of Huddlesford Junction, further up the Coventry Canal, where we were due in September. So, after *Nutfield* had joined *Nuneaton* and *Brighton* on their moorings, we left *Raymond* on the canal side of the marina until we were ready to move on.

Braunston Waterways Literary Festival

14th September

While *Nutfield & Raymond* were lying idle at Alvecote, Friends of Raymond were busy with an event of a different kind. Saturday 14th September was the day of Tim Coghlan's Braunston Waterways Literary Festival. Held in two marquees at the marina, the festival featured seven sessions with authors in conversation about their recent books which were, as you might expect, mainly on waterway-related subjects.



Marquees at the Braunston Waterways Literary Festival

The headline session in the afternoon featured Timothy West and Prunella Scales talking to Tim Coghlan about their book “Our Great Canal Journeys”. And Tim and Pru returned in the evening to treat us to some of their favourite passages from Shakespeare accompanied by songs and music from Shakespeare’s plays.



The well-attended session with Prunella Scales & Timothy West in conversation with Tim Coghlan



While outside, Brian Seymour minds the shop

Friends of Raymond’s contribution to the festival was to provide one of the sales stalls outside the main marquee, which did steady business in the late summer sunshine, and to run the first session of the day featuring Tom Chaplin in conversation about his book “Narrow Boats” with FoR’s Nick Lake.

Huddlesford boat gathering

21st and 22nd September

The original plan had been to borrow NBT’s *Nuneaton* to tow *Raymond* from Alvecote up to the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust’s gathering at Huddlesford Junction. But as we were also going to take Nick Lake’s boat *Fandango* for additional accommodation, we decided that, as mooring spaces were already tight at the gathering, we would dispense with *Nuneaton* and use *Fandango* instead.



Fandango & *Raymond* near Hopwas. Picture Diana Golder

The sight of a modern boat with a wooden butty in tow raised a few eyebrows along the way, but we got *Raymond* to Huddlesford and back to Braunston without mishap.

The weekend at Huddlesford proved to be a game of two halves. Glorious sunshine on the Saturday brought out the crowds.

But with an overnight change in the weather, the Sunday was something of a washout, but at least it presented an opportunity to put Norman Townsend’s new rain-cover framework to the test – which it passed with flying colours. So, in spite of Sunday’s weather, the Huddlesford event was one that we had not attended for a few years and it made a pleasant and worthwhile change from our routine.



Raymond by the roving bridge at Huddlesford Junction



Roger Golder guides *Raymond* into the lock at Sutton Stop, September 2019. Picture Diana Golder

Loading *Nutfield* at Braunston

4th October

Raymond was back home for the winter by Wednesday 25th September, but *Nutfield's* season still had a long way to go. And something else that was a complete change from our routine took place just a week later. On the morning of Friday 4th October, *Nutfield & Brighton* tied up in the marina arm and soon afterwards, 16 tons of coal arrived by truck. There then followed a period of hectic activity as NBT and FoR volunteers joined forces to load the boats



Starting with *Nutfield*, the loaders get into their rhythm



The last bags for *Brighton*. Picture Tim Coghlan

In just over two hours all 16 tons had been shifted. *Brighton* already had about seven tons on board and by 3pm the pair had been trimmed and clothed up, and they left the arm loaded with 23 tons – 11 tons on *Nutfield* and 12 tons on *Brighton*.



The loading crew. From left to right: Tony Pancost (NBT), Peter Lovet (NBT), Ray Oakhill (NBT), Norman Townsend (FoR), Nick Lake (FoR/NBT), Stephanie Goodacre (NBT), Howard Williams (NBT/FoR).
Picture Tim Coghlan

Nutfield & Brighton to Oxford

5th to 8th October

The following day, Saturday 5th October, *Nutfield & Brighton* set off on the first leg of their journey down to Oxford and the River Thames, crewed by NBT's Howard Williams and Michael Daltry and FoR's Will Hewitt. Howard is also an FoR member, so it was a truly collaborative effort. And volunteers from NBT and FoR gave further help along the way.



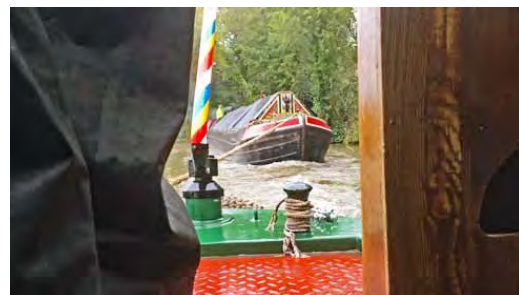
Michael Daltry accelerates away from Cropredy lock



Negotiating a lift bridge near Kings Sutton



Nutfield & Brighton near Somerton



Cracking on towards Lower Heyford

The boats reached Oxford on the Tuesday evening to await a change of crew, before setting off downstream to make deliveries at, among other places, Burghfield on the River Kennet, Guildford and Godalming on the River Wey and Eel Pie Island on the tidal Thames at Twickenham.

Autumn and Winter

Around midday on Sunday 3rd November, *Nutfield & Brighton* arrived back in Braunston. We were very relieved to see *Nutfield* return unscathed and grateful to NBT for taking good care of her.



Nutfield & Raymond at Braunston Marina
Pictures Norman Townsend

A small working party gathered the following weekend to cloth up *Raymond*, to prevent rainwater and windblown debris collecting in the hold, and to remove the soft furnishings from the cabin and leave cupboard doors open and floorboards up to encourage air circulation over the winter. But as we do not yet have top cloths for *Nutfield*, she had to remain exposed to the elements, and to the rainwater which accumulates in the hold at an alarming rate.

Regular pumping over the winter kept the situation under control until February this year, when Norman Townsend, our new boat manager, had the brilliantly simple idea of using tarpaulins weighted with engineering bricks to provide temporary cover. This arrangement has solved the rainwater problem and the need for frequent pumping, and the tarpaulins will remain in place until we are ready to move the boats again.

Finally, we would like to end this review of 2019 by thanking each and every one of our members, too numerous to mention individually, who volunteered to help in many different ways during the past year.

Annual General Meeting 2020

Our AGM at Braunston Marina on Sunday 26th January 2020 was attended by 14 trustees and members.

Chairman's Report



Clare Hewitt

We were pleased, and relieved, that Clare Hewitt consented to continue in the chair for the coming year and, in her first report since taking over from Chris R Jones at last year's AGM, Clare paid tribute to Chris for his years of involvement with The Friends of Raymond.

Chris joined in 2002, before we had even acquired *Nutfield*, making him one of our longest-serving members and certainly our longest-serving trustee, and Clare said, "During this time Chris has had two spells as chairman which, together with his in-depth knowledge of the Samuel Barlow Coal Company that built *Raymond* in the first place and his professional experience of the charity sector, makes him a very hard act to follow. We are indebted to him for his leadership and for the time and effort he has devoted to The Friends of Raymond. And we are relieved that, while work commitments have forced Chris to step down as chairman, we are not losing him as a trustee."



Chris R Jones

Looking back over a year in which we had had several very profitable events, Clare noted that there had been a few lows as well. One of these was learning that *Raymond* is in need of a large amount of restoration work at a time when our resources are low owing to the amount we have already spent on the boats. And another was the fact that we were unable to muster enough volunteers to move the boats to and from the Linslade Canal Festival or run the event, which forced us to cancel our attendance and lose the income.



Diana Golder

But in spite of that, we had enjoyed two unusual departures from our routine. The first one was our involvement with The Braunston Waterways Literary Festival in September, and the second was loading *Nutfield* with coal for the Narrow Boat Trust in October.

As she had agreed to take over the additional role of Volunteers Coordinator from Diana Golder, Clare expressed the thanks of all the trustees to Diana for "her many years of trying to herd cats and keeping her head when all about her were losing theirs and blaming it on her, not forgetting her sterling efforts in managing our involvement in the Braunston Historic Rally."



Nick Scarcliffe

And she also thanked Nick Scarcliffe for the years "he has managed and captained the boats often, in earlier days at least, with little or no assistance. Although we will be seeing a bit less of Nick in the future as he concentrates on fulfilling his lifelong ambition as a working boat captain, in which we all wish him luck, we will still have him with us as a trustee and know that we can continue to count on his knowledge and experience to help and support us whenever he is able to."

Clare ended her report by thanking everyone who had done something to help Friends of Raymond in the past year, and left us with the thought that, "With a challenging year ahead of us, I hope we can look back at this time next year and say it was a successful one."

New Trustee



Norman Townsend

We also welcomed Norman Townsend as a new trustee. And in thanking Norman for taking on the role of Boat Manager as well, Clare said, "I will not spare Norman's blushes when I say that he is a shining example of what we want our volunteers to be. He does what he can, without compromising his personal life. But what he does, counts." And recalling the first morning we were docking *Nutfield* in October 2018, Clare added, "He surprised everyone by walking in saying, 'Hello, I'm Norman, give me a job.' Naturally, we grabbed him with both hands, and have not let him escape."

Treasurer's Report and 2019 Accounts

Nick Lake presented the Treasurer's Report and the 2019 Accounts, confirming that our total income in 2019 was £7,217 and our total expenditure was £8,655, which meant that we had ended the year with a deficit of £1,438. Our total cash balance at the end of 2019 was £3,203. So, taking account of the estimated value of the boats, the total worth of The Friends of Raymond on 31st December 2019 was £108,203.

Sales & Marketing

Brian Seymour reported that we had returned a profit of £1,152 in 2019 and that, although this figure was down for the first time in several years, it was due to higher-than-usual sales costs, which included the range of new signage featuring the new logo and three new A-boards. Brian also confirmed that our takings at the Crick Boat Show and the Braunston Historic Boat Rally had broken all previous records and singled out Mike I'Anson for particular thanks for his work on the market stall at Braunston, the revenue from which had played an important part in boosting our profit from the event.

Sales of Jam 'Ole jam and marmalade had held up well in 2019 with over 400 jars sold. And we were pleased to hear that Nicki Walton, our jam supplier for the last six years, was willing to hold her prices to us for 2020, which meant we can continue with our offer of £3 per jar or two for £5.

Membership

Nick Lake reported that our membership numbers increased in 2019 for the first time in four years. At the end of the year, total memberships stood at 71, compared to 65 in 2018, and this figure represented 93 individual members compared to 89 at the end of the previous year. This rise in our membership had been due in part to six memberships that had lapsed in 2018, agreeing to renew in 2019 following our appeal early last year. So as well as welcoming our new members we are very grateful to those who rejoined us.

We then took a vote on the proposal that the membership renewal date should be changed from 6th April to 1st January with effect from 1st January 2021. This was carried unanimously by the 14 members present which, together with the 15 votes from members received by email made a total of 29 votes in favour, with none against.

Volunteering

As the outgoing Volunteers Coordinator, Diana Golder reported on the difficulties she had faced in 2019 trying to assemble crew members at times during the season. Early on in the year, we had been almost overwhelmed by the numbers turning out to help move the boats, but as the summer progressed fewer and fewer people had volunteered. As a result of the lack of volunteers, both to crew the boats and staff the show, we had had to turn down attending the Linslade Canal Festival in July and only just managed to scrape a crew together to take the boats to the gathering at Alvecote in August. We all agreed this was a serious concern and something that needed to be addressed.

Diana then handed over to Clare who announced the results of the survey we had conducted to discover how many volunteer hours had been contributed last year.



Clare reported that, although the results necessarily contained some estimates, they indicated that a total of 41 volunteers had, between them, contributed approximately 2,500 hours of volunteering time in 2019. This meant that nearly half the existing membership had given help to Friends of Raymond at some point during the year, which was far more than any of us had expected.

We all agreed that this was an excellent result, for which the trustees were grateful to everyone who gave their time. Although the figures seemed to contradict the difficulties that Diana had encountered, analysis showed that the hours were distorted to a considerable extent by the time put in by the officers in carrying out the administration of the charity and by volunteers working on boat maintenance. We will continue the practice of recording volunteer hours this year on a more accurate basis.

Boat maintenance

Nick Lake reported on boat maintenance, with the principal item being the work undertaken when *Raymond* had been docked in July.

As well as summarising what was achieved with the help of Adrian Polglase, as reported in the Review of 2019, Nick noted that, because Will had had to remove the white ropework from the rudder post to allow him to paint it, we would now need a new set.

£50,000+

The amount that may need to be spent on *Raymond* in the next 5 years

Although it was disappointing that our efforts had not entirely stopped *Raymond* leaking, the conclusion from Adrian's examination was of greater concern to us because it suggested that upwards of £50,000 might need to be spent on *Raymond* in the next five years or so to contain the rapid deterioration that was taking place.

At the time, we had considered the possibility of taking *Raymond* out of service during the summer of 2020 so that a start could be made on some of this work, but it was clear from the treasurer's report that we did not have sufficient funds available for major repairs this year.

We therefore agreed that the work would have to be postponed for at least a year, but a meeting with Adrian would help us clarify exactly what work that would need to be done and the likely costs involved. We would then be in a better position to make plans. Meanwhile, we would spend money that was available on other pressing needs which included new side cloths for *Raymond* and top cloths for both boats, a new range for *Raymond's* cabin and new white ropework.

As last year's Easter work party had been such a success, we agreed that we should hold another one at Easter this year.

Finally, Nick thanked everyone who had helped with the docking in July, especially Will for the painting. Thanks were also expressed to Norman and John Onions for regularly checking on the boats and pumping out rainwater over the winter, to Norman again for, among many things, designing and making new frames for the boat cabin covers, and to Howard Williams for his electrical work on *Nutfield*.

If you would like a copy of the full minutes of the AGM, including the 2019 accounts and reports, please contact our Secretary Robin Bishop or the editor.

From the editor

Clare concluded her report to the AGM with the thought that, "With a challenging year ahead of us, I hope we can look back at this time next year and say it was a successful one." Although these words were delivered only two months ago, they now sound uncannily prophetic and sadly ironic.

There is no doubt that 2020 will be a far more challenging year than the one Clare had in mind, but at the end of January, few of us could have envisaged how quickly life would change. And at a time when people everywhere are facing difficulties of all kinds, no one could be blamed for saying that worrying about a pair of old boats is hardly a priority. While in the bigger scheme of things this is true, we will not be reducing our commitment to preserving *Nutfield & Raymond*. Nor will we be losing touch with reality. We will be doing our best to stay on top of managing The Friends of Raymond alongside whatever else is happening in our personal lives.

Fundraising is the number one priority for every charity, because, without funding the charity cannot fulfil its aims. So when we say that the cancellation of the Crick Boat Show and the Braunston Historic Boat Rally has lost us potential income in the order of £3,600, this is every bit as critical to our ability to survive and carry on as the loss of orders would be to a commercial business.

We live with the hope that, whenever the current restrictions are eventually relaxed, we will be able to return to what remains of this year's programme. However, even if the events scheduled from July to the end of the season do go ahead, it is realistic to say that, on the evidence of past years, the total income they might produce is unlikely to amount to much more than £1,000. This would certainly help us to cover the essential bills due later in the year, including *Nutfield's* licence and the marine and public liability insurances, but it is also realistic to suppose that little cash will be available to continue with the on-going programme of restoration and maintenance which the boats so urgently require.

We are looking at the possibility of using the current period of enforced inactivity to apply for funding grants. But we are not blind to the fact that many other small charities in our position are probably doing the same thing and, with demand outstripping the funds organisations are able or willing to grant, especially for niche projects like ours, success is not guaranteed. So we hope that we can continue to rely on the financial support of all our Friends in this challenging year and that, when we look back on it at our next AGM, we can measure its success by the fact that Friends of Raymond survived to continue our work in the years ahead.

Next issue of *FoR News*

The next issue is already in preparation for publication in June when, as well as giving the latest information on our activities for the rest of the year, we will mark the 20th anniversary of the rebuilding of *Raymond*, with the story of how it came about.



Raymond being rebuilt in the dry dock at Tardebigge by Phil Babb and Richard Clapham, February 2000.
The full story will be told in the next issue of *FoR News*. Picture FoR collection

Meanwhile, we send our best wishes to all our Friends and look forward to meeting again later in the year.

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.

FoR News Editor: Nick Lake

Tel: 01869 338619

Email: newsletter@friendsofraymond.org.uk

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