

FoR News February 2023



Nutfield & Raymond in the long pound, Stoke Bruerne Locks, 15 August 2022 Picture: David Williams

News

2023 Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM took place on the morning of Sunday 5th February. As we have done for the last two years, it was held online via Zoom. The meeting was well attended, and the nine trustees were joined by 11 members, among whom were four new members that we were very pleased to welcome.

The minutes of the AGM will be posted on the website shortly, where they can be found in the 2023 AGM folder under the Documents & Archives tab. Meanwhile, the 2022 accounts and the reports to the AGM remain on the website, and the next issue of *FoR News* will include a summary of the main points of the meeting.

The boats



Raymond, 1 February 2023 Picture: Graham Newman

Raymond is currently on her mooring in the arm at Braunston Marina, and clothed up for the winter. We have not yet made the most of the opportunity created by Tim Coghlan generously making this mooring available in order to put *Raymond* in the public eye, but we will be addressing this very soon, with some new information boards for displaying on *Raymond* whenever she is on her home mooring.



Nutfield, 1 February 2023 Picture: Graham Newman

Nutfield, meanwhile, is on our old mooring on the far side of the marina, but not clothed up because she had been due to go to Brinklow Boat Services for major work on the engine in early February, but this has now been rescheduled for mid-March.

Forthcoming Events

We already have a few dates in the calendar for this year:

7th to 10th April: Easter weekend working party and sales event

The plan is for *Raymond* to be in the wet dock for some repainting, with the sales stalls set up by the roving bridge across the arm, to catch the passing trade from all directions.

20th & 21st May: Rickmansworth Festival

As we had our best-ever Ricky Festival last year, we're going again this year. Our mooring space is booked and paid for, all we need is a crew – and some sunshine.

w/b 29th May to w/b 21st June: Raymond at Brinklow

Raymond will be having new gunwales and side cloths fitted, and some general woodwork repairs carried out. As *Nutfield* will also have to be there, we hope to have a summertime window for some painting on both boats.

24th & 25th June: Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally

This is always our biggest event of the year, and the one for which we pull out all the stops. We will publish more information about the rally, nearer the time.

We also hope to be attending other events in the second half of the year, such as the Cosgrove and Linslade Canal Festivals in July, and the Huddlesford Gathering in September, together with the “pop-up” events we have successfully organised for ourselves at Braunston. We will publish more details when dates for events later in the year are confirmed.

Review of 2022

We reported on a number of our activities in FoR News last year, but as 2022 proved to be one of our busiest and most financially successful years for some time, here is a review of everything that happened.

January

New cloths for Nutfield

January is usually a quiet time for FoR, but work began early last year, with a set of new top cloths for *Nutfield* being collected from Tarpaulin Supply and Repair in Birmingham.

This was the final stage in the plan we agreed in 2017, to cover *Nutfield* in the winter, and provide shelter for accommodation in the summer.

And the new cloths certainly proved their worth in this respect when we took the boats to the Rickmansworth Festival in May.



Nutfield clothed up for Rickmansworth. Picture: Rich Greenhall

New home for our stuff

Also in January, we were given the keys to the shipping container that was generously provided by Braunston Marina as an easily-accessible storage unit for all our stuff. The container is sited in the car park, adjacent to *Raymond*'s new mooring, and it has proved to be a gift that has simply kept on giving.

February

2022 Annual General Meeting

The 2022 AGM was held on Sunday 6th February, via Zoom. In addition to the trustees, 10 members attended. The minutes of the AGM, together with the accounts and reports are on the website under Documents & Archives/2022 AGM.

Range rovers

One item of expenditure proposed at the AGM was the acquisition of a new range for *Raymond's* cabin, the original having disintegrated in 2017, and the one on temporary loan from Nick Scarcliffe needing to be replaced. So, the trustees set about trying to locate a suitable range, and eventually tracked one down that looked like it might be ideal, having had just been rebuilt by Joe Fuller at Stone.

On 28th February, Brian Seymour and Nick Lake took a trip up there to inspect it, and reported back that it was indeed ideal, and recommended that FoR buy it. Joe agreed to fit a brass fiddle rail around the range top, and the deal was done.

March

Raymond comes home

Having kindly been granted a mooring for *Raymond* in the arm at the marina, something that has been an aspiration for several years, in early March, we moved her to a spot conveniently adjacent to the shipping container, and directly opposite the site of the boat-building shed from where she was launched in June 1958. She was also moored in the arm for much of the 1980s when Jim & Doris Collins lived on her, so it felt very much as if *Raymond* had come home.

Home with the range



In mid-March, Joe Fuller informed us that the range was ready for collection. So, on Wednesday 16th March, Brian and Nick took another 150-mile round trip up to Stone to bring it back to Braunston.

Candle Bridge Fabrication, who are based in the marina, made a new flue pipe, and carried out the installation, after which everyone agreed that the new range, with its brass fiddle rail, sets off *Raymond's* cabin perfectly.

Trustees get their hands dirty

On Sunday 27th March the trustees met in the Executive Suite at the marina, their first face-to-face meeting since Lockdown, and afterwards forewent Sunday lunch at The Boat House to form an impromptu working party to move the piles of FoR's possessions, accumulated over many years, from the loft by the wet dock to the new shipping container, where Norman Townsend had expertly installed wide shelving to accommodate it all.

Tom Lapworth

The one low point in March was the news that Tom Lapworth had died. An ex- working boatman, and an honorary member of The Friends of Raymond, we were proud to have had Tom captain *Nutfield & Raymond* on many occasions.

Tom's funeral was held on the 31st at the "boaters" church of St Thomas's. Longford, where the packed congregation included many former boat people, and he was laid to rest in Lentons Lane Cemetery beside his brother Les, another well-known boatman. Brian Seymour attended on behalf of FoR.



Tom Lapworth Picture: Tim Coghlan

April

Nutfield docking

April was very much a working month beginning on the first weekend, when *Nutfield* was in the dry dock for blacking, painting, and general cleaning. The cabin top and sides were also prepared and undercoated for re-scumbling.

An energetic Easter



Chris M Jones, Ian Mulford, and Norman Townsend hard at it

Two weeks later, over the Easter weekend, the scumbling and painting on *Nutfield* were continued in the open, while *Raymond* was in the wet dock to have rotten timber cut out around the stem post, plugged with new wood, filled, and painted, together with other painting, and a thorough cabin spring clean.

Meanwhile, our stalls were set up by the roving bridge over the arm, where the sales team were kept flat out all weekend.



Left to Right: Brian Seymour, Kath Wheeler, and Frankie Morini

May

Ready for Ricky!

With the build-up to our trip to the Ricky Festival gathering pace, we produced new information boards for fundraising at the festival and at other events over the summer, continued with cosmetic work on the boats, and serviced *Nutfield's* engine.

Down to Rickmansworth



Nutfield & Raymond having just left the arm Picture: Matthew Deer

On the morning of Monday 16th, there was a scene of much last-minute activity. *Nutfield's* newly-painted mast and stands were installed, and she was clothed up with the top planks at low level, for tents and a great deal more to be stowed beneath them.

At 1.30pm *Nutfield & Raymond* left the arm, crewed by Roger & Diana Golder, Rich Greenhall, and Nick Lake.

With some welcome help "over the hill" from Neil Hankin and Norman

Townsend, they were tied up by Weedon Bridge at 6.30. At this point, Rich had to say goodbye, and the crew headed to the pub for supper, only to find they weren't serving, but the excellent Chinese takeaway next door saved the day.

A relaxed 8.30 start on Tuesday 17th got the boats to the Top of Stoke soon after midday, where Neil was waiting to help with the locks, and they were at The Black Horse at Great Linford by 6pm.

With a 12-hour day planned for Wednesday 18th, the boats were on the move before 8am, reaching Fenny soon after 10, where Kevin Alder had the lock and swing-bridge open for them,



Nutfield & Raymond passing through Bulbourne Picture: Nick Scarcliffe



A cheeky pint at the Rising Sun, Berkhamsted. L-R: Kevin, Roger, Nick, and Mike Picture: Diana Golder

They were at The Three Locks around midday, where Paul Weal also joined. Kevin and Paul stayed with the boats through to Marsworth, which would have been reached on schedule at 8pm, but for a mishap.

Looking directly into the low, evening sun, Nick became momentarily disorientated (or so he claims!) and managed to steer the motor too close to a blackthorn bush that took away *Raymond's* cabin shaft, causing a 30-minute delay while it was recovered.

The crew were in The Red Lion by 8.31, to be told the kitchen closed at 8.30. In spite of their fervent pleas, the young lady returned from the kitchen with the news that, "Chef says, no." So a liquid supper was taken while Kevin and Paul waited for their taxi back to Leighton Buzzard.

Kevin and Paul returned to help on the Thursday and Friday, now joined by Mike Bowley with his bike. Their help ensured easy runs down to Fishery Inn on the Thursday, and from there to Rickmansworth on the Friday, where the boats were tied on their festival mooring by 4pm.

The Ricky Festival, 21st & 22nd May



Roger with Alice Lapworth Picture: Diana Golder

Roger, Diana, and Nick were joined for the weekend by Brian. The festival was well-attended by many historic boats, and many old friends. The hot, sunny weather brought out crowds of visitors with money to spend, resulting in the most successful Ricky Festival we have ever attended.

A mini Jam 'Ole Run



Nutfield & Raymond at the site of the "Jam 'Ole", 23 May 2022

Because the 50th Anniversary "Jam 'Ole Run", planned for September 2020, had to be cancelled owing to the pandemic, it was felt that, if we were taking the boats as far south as Rickmansworth, we really should go all the way.

So on Monday 23rd, instead of heading north, Roger, Diana, and Nick took the boats south to Bulls Bridge, and turned into the Paddington Arm.

After about 150 yards, they stopped, because around there somewhere had once been the entrance to Kearley & Tonge's Mitre Dock, the "Jam 'Ole", where *Nutfield & Raymond* had unloaded their last delivery of coal in October 1970, *Raymond* having done the run since 1958.

Over the 52 years since then, the area has changed dramatically, from grimy industry to suburban business parks. The dock was filled in when the site was redeveloped not many years after the jam factory closed, so all that can be seen today as a clue to where the entrance to the dock once was, is a subtle change in the concrete piling along the towpath. Nevertheless, the boats were manoeuvred on to what appeared to be the right spot, and the achievement was toasted with a cup of tea before they returned to Cowley.



With Bulls Bridge in the background, Diana & Roger toast their achievement



The former Mitre Dock roving bridge at Cowroast Marina

Not every trace of the Jam 'Ole has disappeared, however. The roving bridge that once spanned the entrance to Mitre Dock, now graces the entrance to Cowroast Marina.

After a good day in which the "geriatric crew" had taken the boats from Rickmansworth to Bulls Bridge on schedule despite the condition of some of the locks on the lower Grand Union and,

after a week of mostly glorious sunshine, it was perhaps inevitable that it was all too good to last. And sure enough, the crew were drenched by a sudden downpour as they were tying up below Cowley Lock at 7pm. Then Frankie Morini arrived to join the boats for the return trip, and things started to look up again because Frankie's presence was to prove invaluable.

Up to Stoke Bruerne

In a last-minute change to the schedule, it had been decided that, instead of going to the Crick Boat Show over the Platinum Jubilee Weekend, *Nutfield & Raymond* would stay at Stoke Bruerne on the way back from Rickmansworth, to be on show outside the Canal Museum over the jubilee weekend.

So, when the boats set off from Cowley on Tuesday 24th, it was expected that they would be at Stoke Bruerne around 6.30pm on the Friday, but things did not go entirely to plan.

First of all, an emergency stoppage at Cassiobury Park locks, kept them at Rickmansworth for half a day, but an early start on Wednesday 25th, saw them passing the damaged lock in the park by late morning.



The boats about to leave Cowley Lock, 8am Tuesday 24 May
Picture: Sarah Mallett



The CRT team at work at Lady Capel's Lock Picture: Frankie Morini

However, when they reached the next lock up, Lady Capel's, the bottom gates would not shut tight, and no amount of raking around would clear whatever was obstructing them. And this is where Frankie came to the rescue.

Working for CRT, she knew one of the team at Cassiobury Park, and from him, got the local CRT number, and called them direct.

The CRT team were there in under an hour, and eventually cleared the obstruction, although they were unable to work out what it was. Having been delayed by less than two hours, the boats made good headway for the rest of the afternoon, and tied up at Winkwell that evening.

With a 7am getaway from Winkwell on the Thursday, and with the now-regular team of helpers, the aim was to make up for lost time and reach Leighton that evening, but luck was still not on their side. As the boats were approaching Bushes Lock above Berkhamsted about 10.30, *Nutfield's* engine died, and refused to restart.

The problem was evidently due to fuel starvation, but why? Once again, Frankie came into her own.



Approaching Berkhamsted Top Lock, Thurs 26 May Picture: Mike Bowley



Mike Cornish working on the engine Picture: Frankie Morini

No one the crew had called was willing to come out at short notice, but Frankie knew a boat engineer at Hilperton Marina on the K&A, who dropped everything, drove up from Wiltshire, and was there by 5pm.

Within an hour, Mike Cornish had traced the fault to disintegrated washers in the fuel lift pump, and had the engine running again. Not only that, but he would only take money for his petrol, and afterwards, joined FoR as member.

After all that, what else could possibly go wrong? Fortunately, nothing did, other than the usual slow going through Milton Keynes. The boats went from Bushes Lock to The Globe Inn at Old Linslade on the Friday and, with help from Neil Hankin at Cosgrove and Stoke Bruerne, were tied up outside the Canal Museum by 8pm on Saturday 28th, only one day behind schedule.

Pictures below: Top L, Bottom L & R, Frankie Morini; Top R, Diana Golder (and a passer-by)



Off to a good start on Friday 27th, the boats leave Cowroast Lock around 10.00



Marsworth, 27 May, L-R: Roger Golder, Nick Scarcliffe, Diana Golder, Nick Lake, Allison Cockerill, Paul Weal, Frankie Morini



Diana & Roger enjoying the ride on a sunny day, with the boats between Peters Two below Marsworth, 27 May



Eight o'clock on a Saturday evening and Roger and Neil still manage a smile, Stoke Top Lock, 28 May

June

Platinum Jubilee at Stoke Bruerne, 2nd to 5th June

Warm sunshine on the Thursday and Friday attracted a fair number of visitors to the boats, but while we did some good business on those two days, the deteriorating weather produced a disappointing day on the Saturday, so we decided to cut our losses and not open on the Sunday. Nevertheless, we returned the boats to Braunston on Monday 6th June, satisfied that we had made the right call in not going to Crick.

Home comforts

While on the Ricky trip, Diana had observed that, beautiful as the fiddle rail on *Raymond's* new range was, it left no room for the camping gas stove that had always sat conveniently on the top of the old one. So, while he was replacing the bed slats that had mysteriously collapsed on Roger at Rickmansworth, Norman made an ingenious sliding shelf to take the gas stove, that allows it to be stowed away under the range when not in use.

Historic preparations

Then it was time to start gearing up for the big one, the Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally. The rally is always our most ambitious sales and fundraising event and, with this in mind, we had bought a new gazebo earlier in the year to replace the old one that was long past its best.

On the day before the rally, the new gazebo was erected, and the sales stalls were set out in our market area between *Raymond's* mooring and the shipping container. Nearby, with the brass and paintwork cleaned and polished, with the holds tidied up and *Raymond's* cabin looking immaculate, and after a couple of rehearsals to make sure nothing would go wrong on the opening parade, *Nutfield & Raymond* lay ready and waiting for the big day.

Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally 25th & 26th June



The cheque presentation. Left to right: Tim Coghlan, Diana Golder, Roger Golder, Liz Coghlan, Ian Mulford, Prunella Scales, Nick Lake, Timothy West, Richard Parry Picture: Simon Ainley

The morning of Saturday 25th June dawned bright and sunny, and the FoR team were there early laying out the sales stalls. By 10.30 *Nutfield & Raymond* were singled out between the Stop House and the Gongoozler's Rest floating café, ready for Tim Coghlan's guests, including his guests of honour, Timothy West and Prunella Scales, to embark for the opening parade.

But first, Tim presented Friends of Raymond with a cheque for £1,000 and, as it was Pru's 90th birthday, FoR presented her with a birthday card.



Pru appreciates her birthday card! Picture: Tim Coghlan



Pru opens the rally, with Roger steering *Raymond*, and Diana in attendance. Picture: Sheryl Denman-Taylor



Tim West on *Nutfield*, with Nick, ready to take the boats through the marina. Picture: Tim Coghlan

As the Braunston church clock struck 11, *Nutfield & Raymond* moved off at the head of the parade, with Tim West on the motor and Pru enthroned on a specially-constructed dais in front of the butty's cabin, from where she declared the rally open as the boats passed under the roving bridge across the arm, while the brass band struck up "Happy Birthday to You".



The boats having just passed under Butchers Bridge. Picture: Mike Cornish

The boats having successfully negotiated their way through the marina and out under the Ladder Bridge, Tim Coghlan suggested that everyone might enjoy staying on for a ride up to Braunston Turn and back.

Unfortunately, the log-jam of boats tailing back from the turn was such that, after waiting half an hour opposite The Boat House, the majority of the passengers were feeling the call of an early lunch and were allowed to

disembark. This was a wise decision as it turned out because by the time the boats had performed the traditional three-point-turn manoeuvre around the island at Braunston Turn and were back in the arm, it was gone 2pm. *Nutfield* also joined the parades on the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning.

While the boats and their crews were taking part in the parades, the sales team were equally busy. Brian's sales operation centring on the new gazebo, together with the stalls set up in our market area between the arm and the shipping container, did a roaring trade on both days, which was thanks in no small part to, as ever, the contribution of Norman and his partner Kath Wheeler.



Nutfield on the Sunday parade. L-R: Ian Mulford, Christie Thompson, and Will Hewitt. Picture: Tim Coghlan



Norman serves a young customer in the market. The cabin stools were made and painted by Will Hewitt. Picture: Diana Golder

The 2022 Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally was another very successful event for us. In addition to our record-breaking takings on the stalls and in the collection buckets, and as well as Tim's generous donation, we received several other sizeable donations from exhibitors and well-wishers.

July

Raymond docking



After the euphoria of the rally, noses were soon back to the grindstone. On the weekend following the rally, 1st to 3rd July, it was *Raymond's* turn in the dry dock. The remaining rot that had not been dealt with at Easter, mainly around the stem and stern posts, was cut out and filled. While Norman was attending to the more-specialised work, other volunteers blacked the hull, painted the gunwales, and cleaned the hold. With time running out on the Sunday, it was possible to do no more than thoroughly prime the repairs, but completing the painting is on the list for Easter this year.



All pictures: Frankie Morini

The 'Watertite' marine filler used to fill the holes created by cutting out rotten timber, is far superior to the ubiquitous P38 epoxy body filler because it is waterproof, as its name suggests, and because it expands and contracts like natural timber, and therefore tends not to crack and ultimately fail. Although in time, the timbers will need to be replaced completely, Norman's method of reinforcing the filler in deep holes with blocks of hardwood, makes a repair that will be good in the medium term, and will prolong the life of *Raymond* at a time when we do not have the funds to cover major structural work. In the picture above left, Norman digs out rot around the anser pin, while Nick realigns the red flash on the hull prior to painting. Above right, Norman sands and shapes the filler around the stern post. The finished result on the starboard side in the foreground, can be clearly seen.

Hopes of sweeter dreams

Before the boats set off on their travels again, we took delivery of a new mattress for *Raymond's* cabin. Norman cut the mattress to fit and, although it is of four-inch, high-quality foam, we were pleased to find it rolls up perfectly for stowing in the "bed 'ole".

To Cosgrove

Over the weekend of 16th and 17th July, another scorcher, Will & Clare Hewitt, Frankie, and Rich moved the boats from Braunston down to Cosgrove, where they were left on the mooring for the Cosgrove Canal Festival the following weekend. And having given *Raymond's* new mattress its first try-out, Will & Clare pronounced it to be very comfortable.



Buckby Bottom Lock, Saturday 16th, Will on the motor
Picture: Frankie Morini



Early morning, Sunday 17th, Frankie takes the pair down
Stoke locks Picture: Rich Greenhall

Cosgrove Canal Festival 23rd & 24th July



Cosgrove has not always been one of our better events, but another fine weekend brought out lots of visitors resulting in yet another record-breaker.

To Linslade

After the festival, the boats remained at Cosgrove until the following Friday when Frankie and Nick, with help again from Mike and his bike, moved them down to the festival site at Linslade.

Not having been used since 2019, our regular mooring spot against one of the old Leighton Buzzard sand wharves had become rather overgrown.

But while the crew were scratching their heads, who should happen along but FoR member Christine Thompson.



Frankie on *Nutfield* approaching Old Linslade Bridge, Friday 29th
Picture: Mike Bowley



Christine strims the towpath – with the boats at a safe distance
Picture: Frankie Morini

Christine was there for the festival with her boats, *Andromeda* & *Cygnus*, and as they were nearby, she was back in no time with a strimmer – as if this was something all good boaters should carry – and set about smartening up our pitch.

Christine is nothing if not resourceful because, when *Raymond's* bed slats collapsed on Roger at Rickmansworth, it was Christine who produced a piece of plywood of exactly the right size to cover the hole, much to Roger's relief.

Linslade Canal Festival, Saturday 30th July

Frankie and Nick were joined on the Saturday morning by Brian, Clare, Will, and Norman. The Linslade Festival is only a one-day event, and unusual in that we have to have our stall on the bank between the boats and the towpath because the height of the sand wharf makes selling off *Raymond* impractical.



The Linslade crowds were out early



Mind the gap! Brian demonstrates how we do it at Linslade

In spite of our unorthodox set-up at Linslade, or maybe because of it, we took almost as much in the one day as we had taken in two at Cosgrove, so it was with a sense of achievement that the team moved the boats down to the Globe Inn on the Saturday evening for a celebratory supper, the first in three years.

Back to Cosgrove

In past years, the next stop after Linslade has been the Blisworth Canal Festival in August but the festival had to be cancelled last year and, sadly, may not come back. However, we had something else up our sleeve for August.

So, on Sunday 31st July, Frankie and Nick, with yet more help from Mike, returned the boats to Cosgrove, where they remained for two weeks.



Leaving Talbot's Lock, Stoke Hammond, Sunday 31st
Picture: Mike Bowley



Don't look down! Frankie and Nick breasting up on the Iron Trunk aqueduct
Picture: Frankie Morini

August

The Great Engine Mystery Part I

While the boats had been on the move during the summer, *Nutfield's* engine appeared to be using a considerable amount of oil, the last dregs of what we had on board being poured in at Linslade before the move back to Cosgrove.

While the boats were sitting at Cosgrove, Nick went over with a new can of oil to top the engine up before they moved again, only to find that far from needing to be topped up, the oil level was way above the upper mark on the dipstick, to the extent that a considerable amount had to be pumped out to bring it down to a safe level. Although the oil pressure was normal, something very odd was going on, but whatever it was, it going to have to wait for a more convenient time to be investigated.

Boats in the picture

After the two successful photoshoots with *Nutfield & Raymond* at Braunston in 2018 and 2019, Timeline Events, who specialise in arranging events for amateur photographers on the theme of historical transport, had approached us early in 2022 to see if we could fix up another one, with the boats at a different location. We had suggested a combination of Cosgrove and Stoke Bruerne in August, so David Williams, the organiser, paid us a visit at the Cosgrove Festival to see what we had in mind. David was very happy with our suggestions, and confirmed Monday 15th August as the date.

On the Saturday before the shoot, Diana, Roger, and Nick spent a very hot morning making *Nutfield & Raymond* presentable, and early on the 15th, crewed by Will & Clare and assisted by Frankie, Mike, and Nick, the boats were backed up to the Iron Trunk Aqueduct, where they were joined soon after 09.30 by the group of about 12 photographers.



Picture: Peter Quinn



Picture: Frankie Morini

After two passes across the aqueduct (above left) to allow the photographers to shoot the boats from below, down by the river, and from the canal side, they moved up through Cosgrove Lock to the ornamental Solomon's Bridge, Br.65 (above right).



Picture: Mike Bowley



Picture: Frankie Morini

When the group were happy they had covered every angle, they boarded *Nutfield & Raymond*, and the boats set off (above left) towards their next location, Bridge 62, near Yardley Gobion (above right). While they were there, along came Nick Scarcliffe and his partner Mary on their fuel boats *Bletchley & Bideford* (below left and right). They were heading south after loading at the Bottom of Stoke, and the photographers were very happy to get two pairs of working boats for the price of one.



Picture: Peter Quinn



Picture: Ralf Edge



The FoR photoshoot crew at Blisworth Tunnel. L-R: Nick, Will, Clare, Frankie, and Mike Picture: David Williams
[Boat crew's outfits styled to reflect 1960s boaters! – FoR Fashion Ed.]

Nutfield & Raymond arrived at Stoke Bottom Lock about 2pm and began heading up the flight, slowly, so the photographers could keep ahead of them and not miss anything. The top was reached about 4pm, when the photographers decided on an unscheduled ice-cream break.

After 20 minutes, they were rounded up for the final location, the entrance to Blisworth Tunnel, and the shoot wrapped about 5pm.

The boats were left tied near the tunnel for the night. But before they went home, the photographers gave us a generous whip-round, as well as nearly cleaning us

out of marmalade. This, together with the official donation from Timeline Events, netted us over £500, so it had been a very worthwhile, and enjoyable day.

Back to Braunston

On the day after the photoshoot, Norman and Nick returned to Stoke Bruerne to take the boats home. They were met at the Bottom of Buckby by Neil and Paul who helped them back to Braunston, and although the start from Stoke had been delayed waiting for two wide boats to clear the tunnel, *Nutfield* & *Raymond* were in the arm by 6.30pm.

Bank Holiday staycation, 28th & 29th August

The last outing of the year involving boats required us to do no more than haul *Raymond* from her mooring up to the roving bridge for our stay-at-home August Bank Holiday Bank event. The sales stalls were set up on the boat, and on the path by the bridge. Business, if not brisk, was reasonable, and very worthwhile seeing that it was all on our doorstep. More than that, it made a further contribution to our bank balance which, by the end of August, was sufficiently healthy to give the trustees the confidence to proceed with some of the work on *Raymond* that had been outstanding for too long.



September

Raymond under inspection

Raymond's side cloths have been in a sorry state, and in need of replacement, for some time but the condition of the gunwales is also very poor in places, and the trustees were agreed that it would be false economy to attempt to fit new side cloths to the old gunwales, and that they too would have to be replaced.

To start the ball rolling, we contacted Rex Wain at Brinklow, an acknowledged wooden boat expert who had carried out work on *Raymond* in 2021. Rex readily agreed to come to Braunston to inspect the state of the gunwales, and to give us his view on exactly what needed to be done, and how much the work would be likely to cost, including fitting new side cloths.

On 9th September Rex and his assistant Paul Graves duly arrived to give us the benefit of their wisdom. Paul has been Rex's protégé for a number of years, and is now largely taking over the work to allow Rex to step back, so it would be Paul who would be responsible for any work carried out. Paul's view was that only certain sections of the gunwales would need to be replaced, which would save costs, although he pointed out that some adjoining timbers, such as the beam saddles, would inevitably be damaged in the process, and so would also need to be replaced. And Rex spotted that the lowest three boards in the cabin bulkhead were showing signs of rot, so we agreed to include their replacement in the specification.

The expenditure on this project has now been approved by the trustees, and we have ringfenced £4,000 to cover the approximate cost of Paul's work, plus the acquisition of new side cloths and side strings. The work will be carried out during the three weeks between the boats returning from the Ricky Festival and the Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally.

September Scarecrows



Over the weekend of 24th and 25th September, it seemed that everywhere you looked in Braunston village there was a scarecrow, because this was the weekend of the Braunston Scarecrow Trail. FoR had been invited to take part and were given pride of place on the green, where we pitched the gazebo, and set up our very own contribution to the trail, a scarecrow... called Raymond, of course.

This was our last event of the year and, with the combination of Brian's and Norman's sales, donations in the collection buckets, and the proceeds from the sale of trail guides, which the organisers generously allowed us to keep, our takings for the weekend were not far short of those at Cosgrove and Linslade. So we ended the season on a high.

October

The Great Engine Mystery Part II

In mid-October we set about trying to solve the mystery of why the oil seemed to disappear and reappear at random times. Dave Ross from Brinklow came down to take a look for himself, and was as dumfounded as we had been to find that, after topping up the oil and running the engine for 10 minutes, there was nothing on the dipstick.

Dave agreed that there must be something stopping the oil from draining back into the sump, and that the only way to find out what, was to dismantle the engine.

The expenditure on this essential work has been approved, and a further £1,000 has been ring-fenced to cover it. Originally planned for early February, the work has been rescheduled for mid-March so that we can take advantage of the availability of Brinklow's dry dock, and paint *Nutfield's* cabin sides at the same time. Because the need for a repaint is pressing, and the window of opportunity too good to pass up, practical ways of covering the cost of the dry dock and the signwriting will be discussed by the trustees.

Footnotes

The trustees held their last meeting of the year at Braunston Marina on 27th November, when they approved the proposed expenditure on the boats in 2023, and considered plans for the coming year. Afterwards all the soft furnishings were removed from *Raymond's* cabin to be either stored in the shipping container or taken home by Diana.

Finally, and later than they really ought to have been, the boats were "put to bed" for the rest of the winter, and they remain as we reported in the News section.

End credits

Everything we achieved in 2022 would not have been possible without the help, both financial and practical, from our patron, our supporters, and above all, our Friends. Over the course of the year, no less than 31 FoR members volunteered in one way or another. It was not feasible to name everyone in the Review so, for the record, here they are in alphabetical order:

Kevin Alder, Mike Bowley, Alison Cockerill, Jeremy Cooper, Peter Copeland, Mike Cornish, Diana Golder, Roger Golder, Rich Greenhall, Neil Hankin, Clare Hewitt, Will Hewitt, Michele I'Anson, Mike I'Anson, Chris M Jones, Chris R Jones, Nick Lake, Becky Longford, Sarah Mallett, Frankie Morini, Ian Mulford, Mo Murray, Graham Newman, John Onions, Nick Scarcliffe, Brian Seymour, Christine Thompson, Norman Townsend, Paul Weal, Kath Wheeler, and Howard Williams.

Thank you everyone. And thank you also to Kath's dad, Jim Andress, who is not a member but nevertheless put in a decent shift at both of the dockings.

A message from the trustees

In his report to the AGM our Chairman, Graham Newman, raised the issue of the charity having too few officers doing too many jobs, which is a situation that has been worrying the trustees for some time.

The officers are volunteers whose roles have a direct bearing on the running of the charity day-to-day and, at the moment, in addition to Graham, they are the Secretary (Chris R Jones) and the Treasurer (Nick Lake) together with the Sales Manager (Brian Seymore), the Boat Manager (Norman Townsend), the Webmaster (Jeremy Cooper), and the Membership Secretary, the Volunteers Coordinator, the Events Organiser, and the Newsletter Editor, which are also Nick's responsibility.

Except for Chris, all the officers are aged 70 or over, and six of the roles are in the hands of people over 75. The sudden loss, due to ill health in 2021, of Robin Bishop who was both Secretary and Events Organiser, must serve as a wake-up call to the very real risks to the charity were we to suddenly lose any of the other officers, particularly the Treasurer.

Worse still, having just one person carrying out five of the officers' roles, multiplies the potential risks by five. Quite apart from the workload this imposes on your editor – the only excuse he can offer for the sometimes sporadic publication of *FoR News* – it is far from ideal for the charity to be in this situation.

In order to spread both the workload and the risks, we urgently need more people to get involved in helping to run the charity. In an ideal world they would be younger people with a longer shelf life, but the bottom line is, we simply need more people, right now.

So, we are appealing to anyone who may have the time and the inclination, to give some serious thought to taking on one or more of the officers' roles. None of the present officers is standing down immediately, but we are anxious to try to find replacements for at least some of the following: Secretary, Treasurer, Sales Manager, Membership Secretary, Volunteers Coordinator, and Events Organiser. Possibly Newsletter Editor as well, although the current editor would be happy enough to continue, and to devote more time to the role, if he could shed some of his other duties.

Previous experience or transferable skills may be a help, but a willingness to get involved and to be part of the team are the essential things. And, while it is fair to say that the Sales Manager does need to be involved in organising stock and attending events, the other roles can largely be done from home.

It is not essential for officers to live within easy reach of Braunston, nor do they have to be trustees. And no one would be dropped in the deep end either. We have specifications for each position that set out what is involved, and there would be a period of induction to ensure a smooth handover once a new officer was happy to carry on.

So, if anyone feels that they might be willing to offer their services, or would simply like more information before deciding, do please, get in touch with the chairman, the secretary, or the editor. The editor's phone number is given below and he would be more than happy to talk to anyone who would prefer to call.

The next issue of FoR News

After so many broken promises and missed deadlines in the last six months, it may seem like tempting providence to talk about the next issue. However, your editor is reasonably confident in saying that the next issue really will be out around mid-March, with a summary of the AGM, updates on forthcoming events and, among other things, a short piece about an intriguing find that came to light in the book-sharing "library" in the laundry room at Braunston Marina.

Meanwhile, 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.



Sunrays on Braunston Summit. A photograph by Frankie Morini

FoR News Editor: Nick Lake

Tel: 01869 338619

Email: newsletter@friendsofraymond.org.uk

Photographs are by the editor unless otherwise credited

© The Friends of Raymond

No part of this newsletter may be copied or reproduced without written permission from the trustees