

Friends of Raymond A.G.M. January 2024.

Boat Maintenance Report.

A great deal of work has been done to both our boats during the past year with the result that their appearance is generally fairly good. Having said that, we cannot afford to rest on our laurels as there is always much more work to be done, particularly with respect to paintwork. Last March Nutfield was taken to Brinklow where the engine was overhauled and serviced, primarily to sort out an issue of varying oil levels. Several new seals were fitted which have solved this problem and the Lister now starts easily and runs sweetly.

Whilst in dry dock at Brinklow, the back cabin doors were replaced with new steel ones and the side doors were adjusted for a better fit. Our work party were also able to sand down and repaint the whole exterior of the cabin and rear deck area and re-lay the signwriting. We have since had new wooden liner panels made (these were kindly donated by Braunston Marina) which have been fitted to the insides of the steel doors. Over this winter, Nutfield has been moored in the Arm where the cabin has been stripped down internally, various repairs made to the woodwork including new drawer runners and cabin floor, and the whole interior has been redecorated. A new coal box/step has been made and is in process of being decorated. We now just need to obtain a working range to complete the re-fit. Our thanks must go to Will Hewitt for undertaking the redecorating work- he has given us a cabin to be proud of.

Raymond enjoyed two visits to the dry dock this year (by courtesy of Braunston Marina) and the hull was washed down and re-blackened on both occasions. The biggest job undertaken this year was to remove the gunwales along each side of the hold and replace with new Oak wood; then subsequently to fit much-needed new side cloths. This was all undertaken for us by Paul Graves of Brinklow Boat Services who has done a great job. He also replaced a number of rotten boards in the front bulkhead of the cabin before the outer face of which was completely redecorated. A new hasp and staple with padlock now secures the door, allowing easier access to the cabin from the hold when Raymond is moored in the Arm.

We removed and renewed several sections of rotten wood close to the bow and stern posts and both deck areas were repainted, The cabin sides and roof were rubbed down and painted or varnished as necessary and the mast, mast box and stands have been completely repainted this year.

Another important job this year was to fit two new automatic bilge pumps at the stern post, one on either side of the keelson. With the boat now floating almost level rather than nose down, bilgewater collects at the rear from where it is pumped out automatically. The pumps discharge directly overboard and are supplied from a 110 ah battery mounted under the hatches behind a new coal box/step which is currently being decorated. In addition a new 12v cabin interior light has been fitted just in front of the table cupboard, being supplied from the same battery.

Both Raymond and Nutfield are now connected to a mains electricity supply which means that the batteries are being kept in a good state of charge to power the bilge pumps and start the engine. The mains supply has also enabled us to use a small oil-filled radiator in the cabin of each boat over the winter months to try to keep the timbers a little drier. (Radiators donated by Nick Lake)

Clothing Raymond up earlier this winter, particularly with having new side cloths, has meant that the boat has taken in much less water this year. This will result in timbers lasting for longer so that the need for renewal will be delayed. And obviously less pumping out is needed.

Similarly, with Nutfield being left partially clothed over since its trip to Rickmansworth, the deterioration of shuts and hull is less, as also is the need for pumping out.

We have been complimented on the appearance of the boats again this year but much is yet to be done and we rely heavily on your continuing support to keep these boats going for the coming generations to enjoy. On behalf of those generations, I wish to thank all of you who have given of your time and money this year to enable the upkeep of Raymond and Nutfield. Thank You all.

Norman Townsend
22nd January 2024