

FoR News February 2025



Nutfield & Raymond at Hawkesbury Junction Picture: © Andrew Hayward

News

Membership renewals

First of all, a big thank you to all our Friends who have renewed their memberships this year – which is nearly everyone – and to new Friends who have joined us. It may be a cliché to say our people are our greatest asset but without the financial and practical support our members give us year after year, Friends of Raymond simply couldn't function. And with a full programme of events already planned for the year ahead, this support will help to ensure its success.

2025 Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM was held on the morning of Sunday 2nd February. It again took place on Zoom, and 18 members attended, which tends to confirm that online meetings do seem to encourage more members to get involved than was the case when we held AGMs at Braunston Marina.

The minutes of the 2024 AGM were accepted, and Nick Lake was re-elected as chairman for another year. The reports and accounts were then presented by the chairman and the relevant officers. These are available to read on the website under the "Documents & Archives" tab. The meeting also discussed ways of making better use of our Facebook group to publicise and promote Friends of Raymond and encourage greater involvement, points that the committee will take further.

The minutes of this year's AGM will be available to read online quite soon, and there will be a notification when they have been posted on the website.



Nutfield & Raymond at the Three Locks, Stike Hammond Picture: Frankie Morini

The year ahead

Programme for 2025

The first issue this year's events schedule has already been circulated, and the response so far has been encouraging. The main events in the first half of the season are:

Fri-18 to Wed-23-Apr	<i>Raymond</i> in dry dock, and pop-up sales event Easter weekend at Braunston Marina (booked)
Sat-17 & Sun-18-May	Batchworth Boat Rally at Rickmansworth (booked)
Sat-07 & Sun-08-Jun	Harborough '75 gathering at Foxton (booked)
Sat-28 & Sun-29-Jun	Braunston Historic Boat Rally (booked)
Thu-03-Jul	Evening visit by Barby History Group, plus short boat trip (booked)
Sat-19 & Sun-20-Jul	Cosgrove Canal Festival (TBC)
Sat-26-Jul	Linslade Canal Festival (TBC)

We also hope to attend the two events being organised by the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust at Brownhills in August and at Huddlesford Junction in September, and one or more of the events planned by the Saltisford Canal Trust in Warwick to mark their 40th anniversary. And finally, we are still waiting for details of the Banbury Canal Festival which will probably be held on the weekend of 4th & 5th October. We will publish more details of events later in the season when we have more information.

As always, any offers of help either with the events themselves or with moving the boats between events will be gratefully received. Please contact Nick Lake at nickjlak@outlook.com or on 07712 005444.

Plans for Nutfield & Raymond

At the moment, early February, the boats are still winterised and clothed up. Both cabins have been cleared of soft furnishings, with cupboard doors and drawers left open for ventilation and small heaters in the cabin to keep down condensation.

Before the season begins, our main plans for *Nutfield* include painting the inside of the engine room and fitting a new silencer, and getting narrower top cloths to make a more satisfactory job of keeping the hold clothed for accommodation. This will also free up *Nutfield's* current cloths to replace the worn-out ones on *Raymond*. There is a new tipcat fender waiting to be fitted at Easter when we also hope to install a working range in *Nutfield's* cabin.

Work on *Raymond* will mostly take place during the Easter docking when the priorities will be yet more woodwork repairs, repairs to the cabin sides and cabin-side paintwork, painting the top planks, beams, and hatches, blacking, and repainting and decorating the deck board.

Review of 2024

After an exceptionally good year in 2023, we were looking forward to building on that in 2024. However, last year did not go quite according to plan, and turned out to be a bit of a rollercoaster. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that we ended the year in considerably better financial shape than we might have expected, so it was by no means all bad news.

January



Picture: Will Hewitt

The year got off to a good start when the major refurbishment of *Nutfield's* cabin that was started in the autumn was finally completed.

Norman Townsend had replaced a lot of woodwork and put in a new floor, after which Will Hewitt did the painting, graining, and decoration.

The transformation from what had been a rather dingy cabin, into bright, welcoming accommodation has been quite outstanding.

March

In March we lost the last of our members who had been a working boater, when Alice Lapworth died. Several members of the committee represented Friends of Raymond at Alice's funeral in Nuneaton and afterwards at The Greyhound at Sutton Stop.

Born Alice Wain in the cabin of a horse-drawn boat in September 1944, Alice's early years were spent in The Potteries area until her family moved south in the mid-1950s to work for British Waterways, where she later met and married Les Lapworth.



Alice Lapworth steering *Raymond* in 2018

A friend and an inspiration to us all, Alice will be sadly missed,

Easter (late March/early April)

The winter work on *Nutfield* was followed up at a well-attended docking in the two weeks from Easter.



Chris M Jones graining *Nutfield's* cabin top



L-R: Norman Townsend, Chris M Jones, Will Hewitt, Keith Astley



Gill Astley restoring Ron Hough's painting on *Nutfield's* table



New cabin coal boxes - made by Norman, painted by Will

And also over the Easter weekend, Brian Seymour and Kath Wheeler ran a successful "pop-up" stall next to *Raymond* in the arm, with *Raymond* displaying the new banner that chronicles the boat's life.



Kath and Brian on the pop-up sales stall



The new banner for *Raymond*

May

It was in May that we encountered our first set-back. We were due to take *Nutfield & Raymond* to Rickmansworth for the new-look Batchworth Boat Rally, but for various unforeseen reasons, we could not muster enough crew and helpers over the two weeks it would have taken us to get there and back, so we had to cancel taking the boats. However, that did not stop us having a presence at the rally. With thanks to Norman and Kath, and to Christine Thompson for organising us a pitch, we took the gazebo by road, and did a roaring trade on the Saturday, which was the one day we were able to be there.



June

June always means the Braunston Historic Boat Rally, which is the high spot of our year. The sun shone as it usually does on that weekend, *Nutfield & Raymond* took part in the parades on both days, carrying the rally's guests and VIPs on the Saturday morning opening parade, afterward which Tim Coghlan presented us with a generous donation.



September

On a hot day in early September we took *Nutfield & Raymond* to Warwick for the Saltisford Canal Trust's event in the Saltisford Arm on Sunday the 8th. But in spite of the exhausting journey – it took us over 12 hours – it was worth the effort. Norman and Kath had the gazebo set up next to the boats and we attracted a large number of visitors to both, ending the day with a decent profit and two new members. And to round off the weekend on a high, we flew home on the Monday, and were back in the marina at 6pm.

October

If set-backs tend to come in threes, they certainly did last year. On Thursday 3rd October, *Nutfield & Raymond* set off from Braunston bound for the Banbury Canal Festival on the weekend of the 5th and 6th, but got no further than Lock 12 at Napton. As the boat was entering the lock, *Nutfield* jammed fast between the walls at the tail of the lock, and had it not been for the spirited crew of a hire boat who agreed to come down in the lock and repeatedly ram *Nutfield's* stem post until she eventually came free, we might have been there all weekend.

The upshot of this incident was, of course, that we had to forego what was, by all accounts, a very well-attended, and potentially profitable show. But with a crew of seven on the Monday morning, we recovered the boats by reversing them back down four locks and round to the winding hole. All went perfectly and we were back in Braunston by lunchtime.

The footnote to this story is that, as a result of our reporting it to CRT, although *Nutfield* was not the first historic boat to jam there last year, they mounted a stoppage in the last week of January to cut back some of the brickwork to relieve the pinch point.



CRT work in progress at Napton Lock 12 on 30th January

We will arrange a trial run in the spring to see if *Nutfield* can now get through the lock, and if she can, we will book the boats for this year's Banbury Festival.

Volunteering

Although we had some difficulties with crewing at certain times last year, at others we had a good turnout of volunteers, among them some new faces and some old friends coming back to us. In all, 26 members, a third of our membership, gave us their time in one way or another last year. They were:

Kevin Alder, Gill Astley, Keith Astley, Mike Bowley, Jeremy Cooper, Peter Copeland, Diana Golder, Roger Golder, Rich Greenhall, James Griffin, Neil Hankin, Will Hewitt, Michele l'Anson, Chris M Jones, Chris R Jones, Nick Lake, Tracey Little, Becky Longford, Frankie Morini, John Onions, Nick Scarcliffe, Brian Seymour, Christine Thompson, Norman Townsend, Paul Weal, and Kath Wheeler.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who helped in 2024, and from the responses to the 2025 Events Schedule received so far, we are quietly confident that this year will go largely as planned.

New faces on the Management Committee



Tracey Little



Michele l'Anson

We are delighted to welcome Tracey Little as our new Treasurer, and Michele l'Anson as our new Membership Secretary. Tracey and Michele joined the committee last year and have already made their mark. Both are very experienced and well-qualified to take on their new roles, and the committee is pleased and very relieved to have been able to spread the workload and pass the responsibility into their capable hands.

FoR News and newsletters

A note from the editor

Your editor would be the first to admit that communication last year fell a long way short of ideal. In fact, it was all but non-existent. However, having now been relieved of my duties as Treasurer and Membership Secretary by Tracey and Michele, there is no room for further excuses.

My intention, starting now, is to send out monthly newsletter emails between March and October, and at other times when there is news to report. I will issue a full version of *FoR News* in November and, will aim to issue a mid-summer edition in July after the Braunston Historic Boat Rally.



Nutfield & Raymond in Atherstone locks Picture: Frankie Morini

FoR News Editor: Nick Lake

Tel: 07712 005444

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