



News

Newsletter for March 2026

Dear Friends

Here is an update on what's happened since the February issue of *FoR News*, and what's coming up in the near future.

Last month

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on the morning of Sunday 8th March. A total of 15 members attended, including the majority of the committee. This is a short summary of the proceedings, the minutes of the meeting will be posted on the website very soon.

Nick Lake agreed to continue as chairman and was duly re-elected. In his Chairman's Report, Nick noted that in spite of the setbacks we encountered with locks, unforeseen leaks and mechanical failures, and water shortages that prevented *Nutfield & Raymond* from going anywhere between August and November, we managed to attend every event in our programme, and did a great deal of improvement work on the boats, especially *Raymond*, finishing the year with more money than we started with, and with the boats in better shape than they were in a year ago. Thanks were due to everyone who had worked behind the scenes, or had helped with the boats and with the sales and fundraising, and to the generosity and support of all our Friends.

Tracey Little presented the 2025 Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report which showed that, with a total income for the year in excess of ?14,000, FoR had ended the year with a surplus of income over expenditure of ?1,400. Our bank balance at the year end was ?8,200 and the total worth of the charity, including the value of the boats, was ?83,200.

Brian Seymour reported that, in spite of the setbacks, we had managed to attend no fewer than 23 events in 2025 and had achieved another year of very successful sales and fundraising.

Michele l'Anson reported that we had ended 2025 with a total 87 paid-up memberships, having gained seven and lost only one during the year.

Nick delivered the Boat Maintenance Report, the key points of which were that *Raymond* had been docked twice in 2025, during which there had been a considerable amount of repair work to the timbers, extensive caulking to address the leak issue, and a complete repaint of both ends. A new range had been installed in *Nutfield's* cabin, and a refurbished gearbox had been acquired which was to be fitted in early 2026.

After further discussions on events for 2026, including a proposed members' gathering to celebrated FoR's 25th anniversary, the frequency of newsletters, and the upturn in activity on our Facebook group, a vote of thanks was given to Jeremy Cooper, our outgoing webmaster, for his years of service and his valuable contribution to developing the appearance and functionality of our website.

Nutfield

On Thursday 13th February, *Nutfield* was delivered to Brinklow Boat Services by Iain Mulley (a new member, and former owner of *Nutfield*) to await the work outlined in the February *FoR News*.

This month

Raymond docking

As we announced last month, *Raymond* will be going into the dry dock at Braunston for three days on Monday 16th March – that’s next Monday! The work mostly involves some small woodwork jobs and some additional painting that are still outstanding from the docking in October. Norman and Nick will be organising the work party and we’ve received a number of offers of help. But if anyone who hasn’t already volunteered can spare a day (or two) and would like to come along, their presence would be very welcome. So do please let me, Nick Lake, know if you can help.

Next month

Nutfield

At the time of writing, we understand that Dave Ross has made a start on the work on *Nutfield*. They have so many jobs ongoing at Brinklow at any one time that Dave won’t be working on it continuously but he assures us that he’ll have completed the gearbox installation by the end of April.

Norman and Nick had a site meeting with Dave and Rex Wain last week mainly to discuss the gunwales, which we have all agreed would be better done in steel than wood. We also agreed that, as there’s no immediate urgency – the gunwales certainly need replacing, but they’ll last the summer – we will give *Nutfield* back to them in early October (assuming we are able to go to the Banbury Canal Festival) and they can then have her for as long as it takes. Meanwhile, Rex will make a running repair to refix the lose guard on the port gunwale, and we’ll slap some more red paint on the gunwales to see us over the summer.

Napton Lock 12

The issue with *Nutfield* not being able to get into the lock continues to concern us. CRT carried out some major reconstruction work at the tail of the lock in February so our fingers are crossed that this will have resolved the problem. However, we won’t know for certain until we have made yet another trial run, and this we intend to do in the week or so we should have between getting *Nutfield* back at the end of April and leaving for the Batchworth Boat Rally on 11th May. We will report as soon as we’ve been able to do it.

Other news

Update to this year’s programme

Apart from next week’s docking, which is definitely happening, the latest version of our schedule is looking like this.

Fri-03 to Mon-06-Apr	Easter weekend work party – CANCELLED (Nutfield not back)
Sat-16 & Sun-17-May	Batchworth Boat Rally at Rickmansworth (confirmed for boats and gazebo)
Fri-26 & Sun-28-Jun	Braunston Historic Boat Rally (confirmed) Setting up Friday, parades and sales stalls Saturday/Sunday
Sat-18 & Sun-19-Jul	Cosgrove Canal Festival (TBC)
Sat-25-Jul	Linslade Canal Festival – NOT GOING THIS YEAR
Sat-15 & Sun-16-Aug	Brownhills Canal Festival (confirmed for boats and gazebo)
Mon-31-Aug	FoR’s 25th anniversary members’ gathering (probably at Braunston, details TBC)
September	Saltisford Canal Trust event – NOT HAPPENING THIS YEAR
Sat-03 & Sun-04-Oct	Banbury Canal Festival (TBC)

Issue 2 of the more-detailed Events & Volunteering Schedule will go out to the volunteers’ list shortly.

New webmaster

At the time of publishing the February issue of *FoR News* with its appeal for someone to take over from Jeremy, we were very doubtful about finding anyone. But no sooner had the newsletter gone out than our newest member, Mat Luterek, was in touch to say that he would consider it. A brief phone conversation followed in which Mat's hand was well and truly bitten off. Being an IT professional of a good number of years' experience – as well as an enthusiast for historic boats – Mat was the perfect candidate. We consider ourselves fortunate that Mat joined when he did, and we're delighted to have him on the team.

More news next month.

With kind regards

Nick

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