



National
Trust

River Wey Navigations

NEWS FROM THE ST CATHERINE'S LENGTHSMAN – FEBRUARY 2019

The main focus for me during the past few weeks has been to complete the annual vegetation cut back on my length. The relatively dry weather was a big help and I managed to complete the job just before the end of January. Now with the bank cleared it is easier for me to identify those areas of damage most requiring attention.



I had a fallen willow tree to clear at Stonebridge Wharf, which had come down across one of the pathways. Fortunately, being fairly small (the tree, not me) I was able to clear it without using a chainsaw. Whilst there I took the opportunity to clear some of the low overhanging branches that are a nuisance when I am cutting the grass with the ride-on mower.

Back on the length below St Catherine's Lock there was some encroaching bramble I wanted to clear and was keen to get this done before the nesting season starts; officially the season is from February through to August. Having taken the bramble back to the fence line there is still plenty of it left on the field side for nesting birds and it was important to do to ensure the towpath doesn't become too narrow.

The results are very pleasing, having opened up the sight-line downstream from the lock.

On the subject of birds I am getting daily sightings of a Barn Owl at the moment in the meadows surrounding St Catherine's Lock. It has been hunting earlier in the day during the daylight, probably because it has not been catching sufficient food at night during the cold snap we have been experiencing. Also look out for the flocks of Meadow Pippets and Goldfinches at the moment. Normally during the colder weather the Little Grebes also put in an appearance although I have not seen them yet; maybe you will have more luck.

See you by the river.

robert.craig@nationaltrust.org.uk
07786703831