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River Wey Navigations

NEWS FROM THE ST CATHERINES LENGTHSMAN - JULY 2017

The hot weather experienced during June meant that it has been a particularly busy time along the river with many people choosing to be by the water. The lack of rainfall has meant that I made relatively few adjustments to the weirs, in contrast to the same time last year when we experienced a lot of heavy downpours.

The vegetation growth does seem to be slowing a little now but there is still plenty to be done along the length especially on the narrow sections of towpath. I continue to mow Stonebridge Wharf, Millmead and St. Catherine's locksides, and the visitor moorings. I've also strimmed sections of the towpath, including the sharp bend just upstream of Ferry Lane which aids visibility at that point for boats negotiating the corner.

The battle with the invasive Himalayan Balsam continues with some of it now coming into flower. I shall be dealing with as much of it as possible during this coming month prior to it seeding. Meadowsweet is also growing in abundance along the river bank, a plant once valued medicinally for its aspirin-like qualities.

Amongst the gorse and bramble there are still good numbers of Linnets to be seen. The males are looking particularly handsome with their summer colours of red forehead and breast. The nest is built low down in bushes, close to the ground and sometimes several Linnets will nest close to one another. Although not uncommon it always feels like a treat to see them. Watch out also for the Stonechats often seen perched on top of posts, bushes or tall grasses, the male with his sooty black head making their distinctive call sounding like two pebbles being knocked together.

See you by the river.

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