



National
Trust

River Wey Navigations

NEWS FROM THE ST CATHERINE'S LENGTHSMAN – JULY 2018

I've had plenty of strimming to be done along the towpath (even with the dry spell having slowed growth somewhat!) - downstream of St Catherine's Lock to just beyond Ferry Lane and upstream of Millmead Lock through to Weir House meadow have been done. Another hot job was pulling up ragwort in the field next to St Catherine's meadow; the object being to pull it prior to its seeding thus preventing it from spreading further. It's not a big problem but worth pulling out the few plants that we have before they start spreading.

At the beginning of June I spent a very productive day in Shalford Nature Reserve with a large group of volunteers to help me. We were pulling up the invasive Himalayan Balsam. This is something that needs to be done before August when the plant goes to seed, and by the end of the day with so many helping hands we had managed to pull a large amount. We also had some fallen and encroaching Willows to clear.

Down at St Catherine's Lock the swifts are putting on a wonderful display of aerobatics swooping low over the surface of the water catching insects and amongst the broom and bramble in the meadow there are plenty of whitethroats and linnets to be seen. I was also pleased the other evening to see the barn owl quartering the fields, not having seen it for some time.

Along the towpath the meadowsweet are in full flower and looking splendid, a plant once used for its aspirin like qualities. Also to be seen is hemp agrimony which traditionally had a medicinal use as a claimed cure for jaundice and was believed to cleanse the kidneys and bladder.

See you by the river.

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