

NEWS FROM THE ST CATHERINE'S LENGTHSMAN OCTOBER –2019

Now with the autumn equinox behind us and the hours of daylight growing shorter by the day the character of the river is also changing. The mists are heavier at dusk now and the temperature is falling. The last of the House Martins are gathering in preparation for their long flight back to Africa. Soon we can look forward to the arrival of visitors such as the Fieldfare from Northern Europe and Asia, and Redwings from Scandinavia. The Barn Owl is still to be seen hunting at dusk and is quite a sight quartering the meadows through the low lying mist.



Alongside the usual mowing and strimming along my length this last month there have also been several fallen trees to clear. One large Oak at the bottom of St. Catherine's hill was particularly challenging to remove from the navigation. It had fallen on the steepest section of bank and a narrow section of towpath. With the help of my fellow lengthsmen, Richard from Stoke Lock, the large winch and a chainsaw, we were able to clear the tree.

Towards the end of September we had the Wey River Festival at Dapdune Wharf in Guildford. I helped with the setting up before and clearing away after the event, as well as on the day itself. We were blessed with good weather this year and the event was well attended. Last year it poured with rain. After dark the illuminated boat pageant takes place with the decorated boats heading upstream and mooring by the White House pub prior to heading back

downstream to Dapdune. As it was not raining this year the spectacle was enhanced by a steel band performing on the deck of one of the navigations work boats. It was certainly a surprise for those drinkers outside the pub unaware that the event was happening.

See you by the river.

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