



**South
Cumbria
Rivers
Trust**



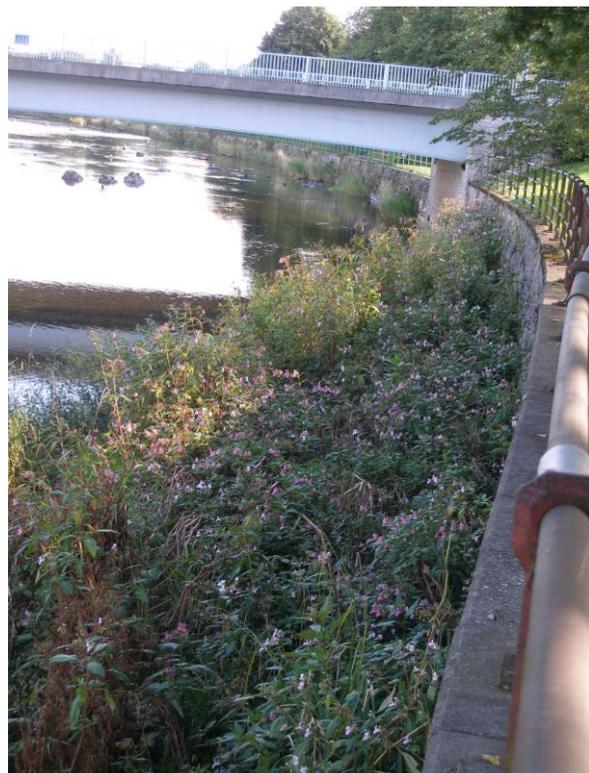
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Kent Invasive Plants Action Group. Himalayan Balsam Report 2011

Summary & Highlights

- We organised 35 work parties between May and the end of September. 24 of these were scheduled and a further 11 were organised in response to alerts of balsam infestations in Ings and Kentmere. (2010, 19 work parties)
- Over 30 volunteers undertook more than 385 hours (equivalent to 55 person days) in work parties, or working individually, controlling balsam along the Kent (2010. 250 volunteer hours). In addition approximately 50 volunteer hours were spent in planning, surveying and supervision of contractors.
- Through the Probation Service, individuals carrying out Community Service orders undertook 15 days work in July (approximately 350 hours).
- BTCV organised two work parties on our behalf (approximately 100 hours).
- Progress has been made with some areas, such as the grassy area south of Carus Green on the west bank, the riverbank areas at Carus Green Mintsfeet and Dockray and the Cowan Head gorge having very few plants. Patches strimmed last year at Minsfeet meadows, along the Mintsfeet Industrial estate boundary and the woodland area at Mintsfeet were also much improved.
- However we were alerted to some significant infestations in the Green Quarter at Kentmere, the southern end of Kentmere Tarn and the whole length of a tributary to the Gowan at Ings. Additional work parties were arranged to tackle these areas in July and August.
- Work continues through Kendal and new stretches of river between Nether Bridge and Romney Bridge were tackled for the first time.
- Using the Probation Service work began on the serious infestation around the Waste Water Treatment Works in Kendal.

Moving downstream. This large patch at Romney Bridge was tackled this year by volunteers.



Progress

Kentmere to Staveley. *4 work parties. Approx 40 volunteer hours*

Following reports of infestations in a meadow alongside Nunnery Beck and in the adjacent small gill in the Green Quarter, we organised two additional work parties to support the Kentmere village volunteers. In addition we cleared part of a garden that backed on to the river Kent up from Low Bridge as the owners were not able to deal with the plant themselves. Unfortunately we also were alerted to some serious infestations in the woodland south of Kentmere Tarn and some patches at the northern end of the tarn. We organised two further work parties to deal with these. The river south of the tarn seems clear.

Staveley to Burneside including the Gowan. *6 work parties, approx 88 volunteer hours, plus 6 hours contractor time.*

Thanks to individual volunteers the riverbanks in Staveley and down to Burneside are largely clear. We organised several additional work parties to clear the stream at Ings down from Hugill and the Gowan. A contractor was used to strim the roadside verge by Hugill Hall clear of balsam. One of the islands at Bowston had balsam and a patch was found and tackled up a stream near Braban House. Impact Development once again helped with Cowan head gorge and removed a small number of plants.



Tackling Himalayan Balsam in the tributary of the Gowan at Ings July 2011

Carus Green and Kentrigg meadows including the Sprint. *7 work parties, approx 40 volunteer hours plus 2 BTCV work days and 2 days contractor time.*

The west bank south of Carus Green down to Kentrigg is now very clear. The patches at Carus Green that had previously been strimmed are much improved. Bad patches were tackled on an island at the Sprint confluence and in bramble thicket alongside the Sprint. Volunteers checked and tackled other minor infestations in the Sprint. BTCV tackled an awkward patch at the southern end of the golf course near where the Gilt comes in. We had hoped that the golf club would strim the roughs back from the river but, as they were not able to do so in their busy summer schedule, we used a contractor to strim one of the areas before the plants set seed.. The patches in the two gardens opposite the golf course had partly been tackled by the owners.

Mintsfeet and Dockray including the Mint. 7 work parties approx 68 volunteer hours plus ½ day contractor time.



The east and west riverbanks and the areas between the footpath and the river at Mintsfeet and Dockray are now very clear. The land adjacent to the Industrial estate is also clear helped by both Heinz and Mintsfeet Property management carrying out strimming/ weed killing in the early summer. The areas strimmed last year in the Mintsfeet field were also quite clear and the woodland area towards the southern end was much improved. Scattered plants were removed from the

northern part of the field. A dense nettle and balsam patch in the central part of the meadow was strimmed in July by a contractor and this was subsequently hand pulled a few weeks later. We also removed plants from the dense raspberry/ bramble and hawthorn scrub near the fisherman's carpark. The Mint has been checked and the minor infestations dealt with, with the exception of the gardens on the northside of the Mint which will need to be dealt with next year.



Mintsfield meadows progress between August 2009 with 2011

Kendal Town. 6 work parties, approx 49 volunteer hours

Apart from the infestation under the Kentgate flats south of Victoria bridge, the river banks are relatively clear of balsam down as far as Miller bridge. Work parties tackled the Kentgate flats patch and the river banks and gravel beds between Miller bridge and Nether Bridge including the bad patch by Abbott Hall. Whilst these areas are much improved, vigilance is required as plants continue to appear.

Kendal south of Nether Bridge. 5 work parties (approx 55 Volunteer hours) plus Probation Service and 2 days contractor time.

The volunteer front moved downstream this year, tackling infestations under and beyond the new K shoes development and a very large patch on the gravel beds by Romney Bridge. It was good to note that the infestation at Natland Mill Beck behind the National Parks Office has been tackled by staff from NE/National Park/FOLD.

A contractor was used to strim the balsam patches adjacent to the footpath on the land side of the west river bank from Romney Bridge to the Water treatment works. These areas were subsequently checked by volunteers and regrowth dealt with.

Kendal Town Council has kindly secured a contribution towards to costs of spraying a very large clump of Japanese knotweed that is threatening to spill into the river banks south of Romney bridge. The spraying of the knotweed took place in October for 3 large stands.

In addition, individuals carrying out Community Service Orders, and supervised by the Probation Service, began work on the serious infestation around the Kendal Waste Water Treatment Works. United Utilities also strimmed and sprayed the balsam within their main fence line.



Around Kendal Water Treatment Works before treatment, just after and now.

South of Scroggs Wood. *Approx 47 volunteer hours*

Whilst formal work parties are focussing on the northern stretches of the river, some work continues to be undertaken by individual volunteers to reduce and contain the spread of the plant southwards for example around Hawes Bridge and Sedgewick.

Focus for 2012

- Check and deal with any further infestation in Kentmere Village and around Kentmere Tarn
- Check and tackle any repeat growth in the Tributary at Ings and in the Gowan
- Check the Bowston islands, Braban House and patches at Burneside below the barn conversions.
- Continue work at Carus green giving priority to the island at the Sprint confluence and the patches in the brambles opposite, strimming major patches in the roughs and tackling the two hollows by footbridge.
- Continue work at Mintsfeet field area strimming remaining patches towards the southern end, and using contractor to brush cut raspberry canes to allow better control.
- Check and tackle the infestation in the un-culverted section of stream at Jewsons Builders in the north of Kendal and the area around the skateboard park
- Continue work in Kendal moving farther down-stream as resources permit.
- Work with the Probation Service and use contractors where appropriate to tackle extensive balsam stands around the Kendal Water Treatment Works
- Monitor and report on Japanese knotweed and Giant Hogweed sightings
- Hold an awareness raising/ balsam pulling event in the meadows south of Scroggs Wood

Funding

We are grateful for the continued support of this work by **Natural England** and the **Environment Agency**. This funding is key in enabling us to employ contractors to tackle dense and difficult areas and to work with BCTV and the Cumbria Probation Trust.

Support from the dedicated **Cumbria Freshwater Invasive Non-Native Species Initiative Coordinator** funded by **Natural England**, **DEFRA** and the **Environment Agency** has also been extremely important. Examples of support to our group includes provision of publicity material and posters, organising loan and sharing of equipment (eg waders) between different control groups, liaison with the Probation Service, carrying out risk assessments, organising volunteer training eg in outdoor first aid, liaison with Environment Agency to tackle reports of Giant Hogweed, with contractors to tackle patches of Japanese knotweed, liaison with other organisations such as Kendal Town Council and the Water treatment Works management.

We also appreciate the continued support provided by the following businesses: **Impact Training and Development** for continued help with the Cowan Head gorge; **Croppers Paper Factory**, Burneside, the **Heinz Factory**, Mintsfeet and Mintsfeet Property Services for tackling the plant within their boundaries; Carus **Green Golf club** for allowing access to the river; **South Lakeland District Council** for collecting bags of pulled plants in Kendal; **Cumbria Wildlife Trust** and **Friends of the Lake District** for help with advertising work parties.

Janet Antrobus and Judith Wallen
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