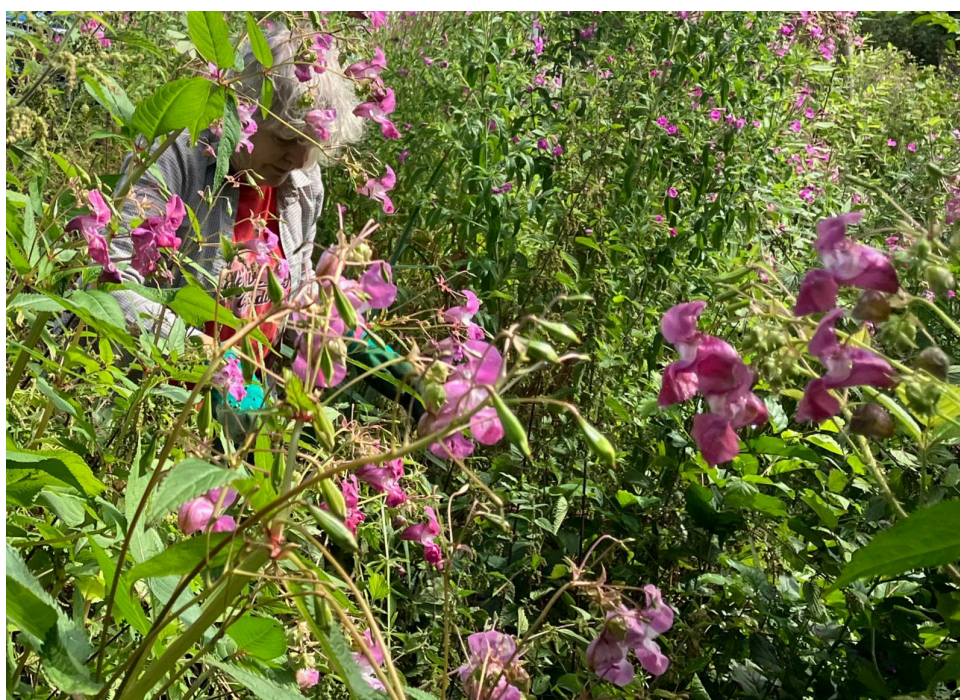




Himalayan Balsam Campaign Report 2024



Introduction

Invasive Non-Native invasive Species (INNS) are recognised as an increasing problem nationally and there are concerted attempts to control them

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/invasive-species-order-2019-consultation-opens>).

INNS are usually defined as those species introduced by humans outside of their natural or native range. They are those which cause unwanted environmental or social impacts by spreading rapidly and becoming over abundant in the environment. It is not well understood why some non-native species become invasive and others do not.

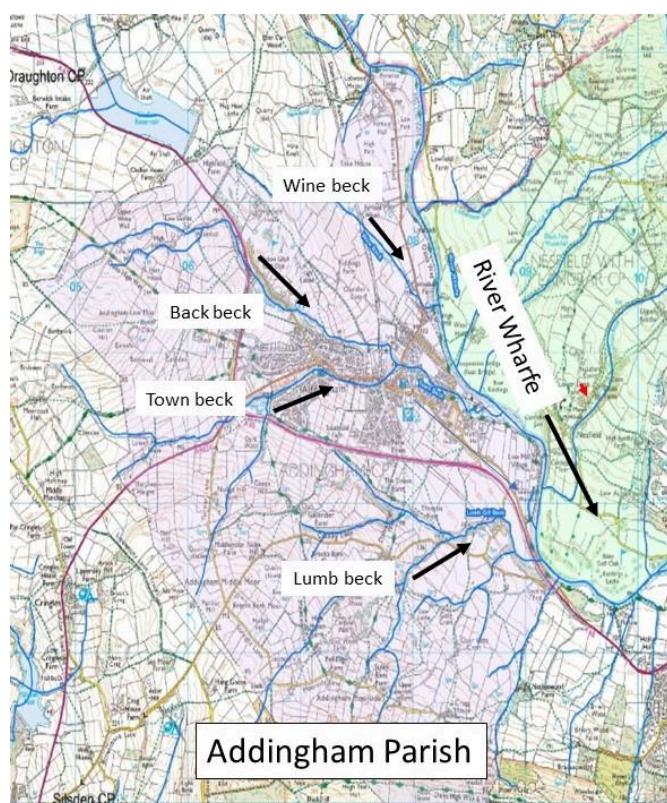
In Addingham we have problems with Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed, Curly waterweed, and Himalayan balsam. Addingham Environment Group (AEG) is working with landowners to tackle them all. The main issue though is Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), which had spread extensively.

Himalayan balsam (balsam), with its showy pink flowers may look attractive but it is a troublesome 'invader'. Native to the foothills of the Himalayas, it was brought over by plant collectors in the 19th century. In recent years, in many parts of the country including Yorkshire, it has spread along roadsides, riverbanks, becks and in wet woodlands, out-competing native plants. If left unchecked, it rapidly forms dense stands.

As well as taking the place of native wildflowers, it also reduces the variety and abundance of invertebrates in the soil below and can draw pollinators away from native species. Balsam dies back in the autumn leaving bare ground which is then vulnerable to erosion especially along river and stream banks.

It is listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) in England and Wales as an invasive species, making it an offence to plant or otherwise cause it to grow in the wild.

Our report published in March 2021, and updated annually since then, documented our experience, effort and progress since we began our campaign in the summer of 2017 to attempt to eradicate balsam from the parish.



For the first four seasons we focussed on the four main beck systems (Town Beck, Back Beck, Lumb Beck and Wine Beck) which rise on the moors above Addingham and flow into the River Wharfe (Fig 1).

Having made good progress controlling balsam along the becks within the parish, from 2021, while not losing our focus on the becks, we started to work with riparian landowners and communities upstream and downstream to address its removal along the River Wharfe and lower Town Beck where it joins the main river.

Here we report on the work we carried out in the summer of 2024. In total we organised 34 work parties between early-June and mid-August, on Tuesday evenings, Thursday mornings and Saturday mornings, a total of 276 volunteer hours.



The Becks

Town Beck & Back Beck

Our Addingham 4 Becks Stewards kept a watching brief on the becks where they run through the village throughout the summer. Occasional plants and some small stands were found on **Town Beck** from Townhead down to Low Mill Lane.

As in 2023, some denser stands were found on the banks of Marchup Ghyll above the village (behind Townhead Mill and below the stepping stones), which were tackled in two work sessions, taking 10 volunteer hours to clear.



Back Beck remained clear.

Lumb Beck catchment

Over much of the catchment balsam is confined to isolated plants, growing in and alongside the water courses. This year in these areas the recce and removal were done at the same time, with just two or three volunteers undertaking this work for the most part.



There remain some areas of larger scale invasion, notably around Cuckoo's Nest and Ghyll House Farms, and the Beever Pond wetland.

At Cuckoo's Nest, only occasional plants and small groups were found in and along the beck. On the scarp slope behind the farmhouse there is still a substantial amount of

balsam. This was where we concentrated our efforts.

At Ghyll House balsam persists in the wet pasture but is gradually reducing year on year. The very wet summer in 2023 meant water levels were too high to tackle Beever Pond wetland, but we were able to get in there this year, to remove the balsam growing in the reedmace tall-herb fen. Disappointingly, we found some dense stands of balsam on Throstle Nest Beck above Cat Steps for the first time. We made a start here towards the end of the season, but this will be a priority for 2025.

Over the summer of 2024 we went out on 14 occasions from early-June until mid-August, compared to 15 in 2023, 13 in 2022, 16 in 2021, and 24 in 2020. We spent 80 volunteer hours working in the Lumb Beck catchment (110 in 2023), a substantial reduction on the 2020 total of 206 volunteer hours.



The River Wharfe

Lower Town Beck

With the co-operation of landowners along Low Mill Lane, for the fourth year running we tackled the substantial invasion of balsam along the channels of Town Beck where they join the River Wharfe and through the wet woodland habitat on the island between the beck and the main river. This floods in high water, depositing seed from higher up the river. In 2024 the effort needed to clear this area increased to 52 hours. (52 volunteer hours in 2021, down to 33 in 2022 and 24 in 2023).



South bank from Addingham Suspension Bridge upstream to Farfield

There was much less balsam along riverbank at Olicana Park threatening wildflower rich habitat by the Dales Way. Removal took 2 volunteer hours (cf 15 hours in 2023 and 27 hours in 2022).

After that the river bank was balsam free upstream until the steep wooded bank above the river at Longfield. The effort needed elsewhere meant that we did not manage to get to this area in 2024.

North bank from High Mill Weir to Nesfield



For the fourth year running we worked with the landowner at West Hall Farm, to help bring substantial amounts of balsam under control on the main river, as well as on the banks of West Hall Beck. We concentrated our larger work parties here, including a session with Addingham Guides and Scouts, as part of Climate Action Addingham Wildlife Week.

The section upstream of the suspension bridge to High Mill Weir and West Hall Beck required a similar volunteer effort to that in 2023.



Most of our volunteer time was spent on the section downstream of the suspension bridge, where there are dense stands growing in amongst willow, along drains and in wet flushes where water drains from the hayfield. Although we succeeded in clearing more patches we did not achieve our goal of getting all the way down to Nesfield. We spent seven sessions on this section of river bank. In total we spent 90 volunteer hours at here (70 hours in 2023).



Downstream of Addingham



In early July, as part of Climate Action Addingham Water Week, we linked up with The Ilkley Clean River Group supported by Climate Action Ilkley for the fourth 'Big Balsam Bash' to help clear the substantial stands of balsam on the south bank. Ten AEG volunteers joined the work party to clear balsam from along the Dalesway from Ilkley Old Road towards the Tennis Club.

Upstream of Addingham

The Bolton Abbey Estate is immediately upstream on the Wharfe from Addingham. In 2022 and 2023 we organised work parties with the Estate's River Keeper who is tasked with keeping balsam under control. In 2024 we decided that we needed to focus our efforts on our own stretch of the river.

Other invasives

While balsam has been the main task, we continued to work with landowners to control other invasive plant species. On the golf course we worked with Bracken Ghyll Golf Club staff to remove **curly waterweed** for the fifth year. Although there was very much less to remove this summer, we expect an annual clear will be needed.

We continued to work with several landowners to remove invasive **giant hogweed** growing in a small number of places in the Lumb Beck catchment. This is largely under control and for the most part we are now dealing with small patches appearing in the spring as dormant seed already in the soil germinates.



Conclusions & future plans

We remain confident that Himalayan balsam is coming under control along the Addingham becks and that we are closer to just needing to keep a watching brief each summer, apart from a few more persistent patches which we will continue to work on in 2025. In the Lumb Beck catchment it was pleasing to see balsam under control along the whole of the Hall Gill tributary for the first time.

On the north side of the River Wharfe next summer, we aim to work with the landowners higher up West Hall Beck to recce and control balsam on this system, as well as continuing to work on the Wharfe where West Hall Beck joins the river downstream as far as Nesfield/Low Mill. We will also continue to work with landowners in the parish on the south bank of the Wharfe.

Our experience working on the main river for a fourth year, suggests that it will prove difficult to eradicate from the riverbanks entirely. Here, we suggest the priority should be to control spread inland especially where it threatens valuable woodland ground flora and wildflower rich grassland habitat, as well as spread up the beck systems.

In 2024 as well as working on the Addingham stretch of the Wharfe, we will also continue to collaborate with Ilkley Clean River Group downstream. The Big Balsam Bash will be on Saturday July 19th, part of our Climate Action Addingham Water Week.

The tables in Annexe 1 summarise our work since 2020 within Addingham Parish, and our stretch of the River Wharfe. Going forward we will use the traffic light system below to give an indication of progress in controlling Himalayan balsam on the becks, riverbank and adjoining land. The categories are as follows:

Green: under control, isolated plants only - watching brief

Amber: coming under control, some larger groups of plants anticipated

Red: not yet under control – continuing effort needed.

Our aim is to year on year increase the 'green' length of beck and riverbank and reduce the area of other land invaded by balsam in the 'red' category.

Jan Hindle & Rick Battarbee, Addingham Environment Group, May 2025

Annexe 1

Lumb Beck Catchment – Addingham Moorside

YEAR			2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	LENGTH OF BECK (M)	AREA OF ADJ LAND (M ²)	VOL HOURS BY BECK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND	VOL HOURS BY BECK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND	VOL HOURS BY BECK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND	VOL HOURS BY BECK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND	VOL HOURS BY BECK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND
Lumb Beck: LG1 headwater to Moorside Lane												
No Himalayan balsam present												
Lumb Beck: LG2 Moorside Lane to field boundary north of Stegghouse Fm (at GR SE07814810)												
	325		1		1		1		1		1	
Lumb Beck: LG3 Stegghouse Fm (at GR SE07814810) to the Stegholes to Gatecroft footpath												
	348		14		8		4		3		3	
		400		4		38		2		19		8
Lumb Beck: LG4 Stegholes to Gatecroft footpath to Cocking Lane												
	578		9		4		9		4		2	
Lumb Beck: LG5 Cocking Lane to Lumb Gill Lane												
	752		32		8		8		6		5	
Lumb Beck: LG6 Lumb Gill Lane to the A65												
	500		14		1		1		1		1	
Cuckoo's Nest Beck: CB1 Field boundary NW of School Wood Fm (GR SE07094809) to Cuckoo's Nest Farm bridge												
	318		14		8		4		14		6	
Cuckoo's Nest Beck: CB2 Cuckoo's Nest Farm bridge to confluence with Lumb Beck												
		600						20		26		33
	300		12		10		11		6		1	
	420								1		1	
Throstle Nest Beck: TNB1 Below Street Farm to Cat Steps												
	220										14	
Throstle Nest Beck: TNB2 Cat Steps to Lumb Beck												
	475		16		3		1		1		1	
Gatecroft Beck: Ghyll House Farm to woodland and wetland above Low Lathe to confluence with Hall Gill												
	968		22		14		16		20		13	
		2000		6		16		6				6
Hall Gill: HG1 Cragg Farm to Copping Lane												
	1,152		50		30		20		5		7	
		317		6		2		2		2		1
Hall Gill: HG2 Copping Lane to confluence with main Lumb Beck												
	236		6		2		2		2		2	
TOTAL	2717	2917	190	16	89	56	77	30	63	47	42	48

Marchup/Town Beck

YEAR			2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	LENGTH OF BECK (M)	AREA OF ADJ LAND (M ²)	VOL HOURS BY BECK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND	VOL HOURS BY BECK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND	VOL HOURS BY BECK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND	VOL HOURS BY BECK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND	VOL HOURS BY BECK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND
MB1: Dark Wood Beck to Marchup Beck												
	173				4		4		2		2	
MB2: Marchup Beck steppingstones to Townhead Culvert												
	454		2		2		17		16		10	
TB1: Downstream from Townhead Culvert to Church Field												
	1900		4		4		4		6		4	
TB2: Lower Town Beck to River Wharfe												
		9000			52		33		24		52	
TOTAL	2527	9000	6		62		58		48		68	

River Wharfe – Addingham stretch

YEAR			2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	LENGTH OF RIVER (M)	AREA OF ADJ LAND (M ²)	VOL HOURS RIVER BANK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND	VOL HOURS RIVER BANK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND	VOL HOURS RIVER BANK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND	VOL HOURS RIVER BANK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND	VOL HOURS RIVER BANK	VOL HOURS ADJ LAND
North Bank - High Mill to Suspension Bridge												
	630				32		12		10		10	
West Hall Beck - to Nesfield Rd												
	493				24		10		8		10	
North Bank - Suspension Bridge to Low Mill												
	650				58		63		70		90	
South Bank - Farfield to Olicana Park												
	1902				10		8		0		0	
South Bank - Olicana Park												
	166						27		15		6	
South Bank - High Mill to Suspension Bridge												
	296				1		1		1		1	
TOTAL	4137				125		121		104		117	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Addingham Moorside Landowners

Judith Wallbank

Sally & Jonathan Priestley

Jill Feenan
 Richard Solomons
 Liz Merrick
 Graham Lingard
 Robert Lofthouse
 Mrs Stapleton & Mark Stapleton
 Ellis Bros.
 Sue & Richard Hobson
 David Hargreaves
 Luke Winterburn
 Jamie Crabtree
 Michael Flesher

Lower Town Beck Landowners

Alan Jerome
 Liz Clayton

River Wharfe Landowners

Chris & Nick Harker
 Olicana Park
 Ellis Bros.



Balsam Bashing Volunteer Team 2024

Peter Miller
 Jessica Penrose
 Jackie Olive
 Douglas McCowan
 Maire O'Donnell
 Jan Hindle
 Richard Hindle
 Rick Battarbee
 Gill Battarbee
 Christine Makowski
 Ian Viner
 John Fontana
 Jane Shaw
 Lesley Loughlin
 Christine Smith
 Rob Smith
 Fran Valliant
 Cherry Bartlett
 David Bartlett
 Judith Ellis
 Trish Breen
 Mike Valliant
 Val Clayton
 Susan Penny
 Chris Cobby
 Lorraine Robinson
 Sarah Ashelford
 Sylvia Kenny
 Andy Payling
 Ian Thursford
 Melanie Taylor

DofE Volunteer -Ben Olive