

Balsam bashing, trout pool, blister packs, jumble trail

Rick Battarbee writes:

It's been a busy few weeks, bashing Himalayan balsam, something we do every year at this time, dealing with a rogue contractor pumping concrete into Back Beck and, much more enjoyably, playing host to a group of visitors from "Friends of the Dales".

Balsam bashing

We've been bashing balsam now for six years, and still it comes back. This year has been especially bad as it has re-appeared at several sites we thought we had cleared. There must continue to be viable seed in the ground along our becks and river banks and this year germinating and growing conditions I think have been especially favourable. Nevertheless, with the help of wonderful volunteers turning out three times per week in all weather conditions we have made good progress this month clearing sites along the Wharfe, clearing the headwaters of Lumb Beck near Cuckoo Nest Farm and clearing Hall Gill. We also had to deal with some Giant hogweed stands on Hall Gill.

Somewhat further afield we worked with staff from the Real Employment Group in Leeds taking advantage of one of their awaydays to tackle a severe patch of balsam at the Riverside on the Bolton Abbey Estate. Most recently, just over the Addingham border on the Dalesway we held our Big Balsam Bash with friends from Climate Action Ilkley. Much done on that stretch of the river, much still to do, next year!



Back Beck trout pool

Quite unimaginably a few weeks ago we found a Bradford Council Highways Department contractor pumping ready-mix concrete into the trout pool on Back Beck near Bridge 55 in a very much misguided attempt to shore up the road at that point.

We were aghast as this is one of the very few places in the village that trout can be regularly observed and the only site we know for sure where trout build redds.

The engineer's solution for the hole under the road, presumably approved by the Council, was to underpin the road by filling the adjacent pool with concrete.



Thanks first to Jonathan White and then to Parish Councillor Natalie Smith and Ward Councillor Janet Russell we were able to stop the contractor and agree an alternative solution which required digging out the misplaced concrete to re-excavate the pool, pouring new concrete behind a protective curtain to support the road and bringing in river-washed gravels to restore a habitat suitable for trout spawning. But whether trout will ever spawn again there time alone will tell!

We now need to find out what went so badly wrong in the first place. Why was a flawed engineering design adopted? Why wasn't a proper ecological impact assessment carried out and why did Bradford Council not alert our local Parish Council. Our ward councillors are on the case!

Friends of the Dales visit

On a much more positive note on Saturday July 1st we hosted a meeting organised by Friends of the Dales (FoTD). We were asked by FoTD to showcase our work in the village as an example for other community groups and parish councils in the Dales to emulate!

Following an introductory talk in the Memorial Hall the group split into two to walk around the village visiting some of our most successful projects including tree planting in the Memorial Recreation Ground, freshwater habitat protection in Church Field, the new wildflower verge, Ferryman's Green, in North St, the School wetland reserve, the wildflower patch in the Methodist Church Graveyard, the new project with local residents and InCommunities transforming Craven Crescent Green to create a new wildlife and people-friendly greenspace and last but no means least what we consider to be our greatest achievement so far, the wildflower meadow on Old Station Way.



We finished off the event with lunch in the Memorial Hall, hosted by the Civic Society with food from the Sandwich Shop, followed by a lively question and answer session about ponds and wildflowers.

Other news: blister packs

Sadly, the Rowland's Pharmacy is no longer able to take back blister packs for recycling. The system worked by Rachel Brittain taking bin bags of blister packs from the Pharmacy to a collection point at All Saints Church in Ilkley. However, the collection point has now closed as Superdrug in Keighley will no longer accept such large quantities. We're seeking an alternative solution. Thanks to Rachel for her efforts.

Other news: Jumble trail

Our Jumble Trail this year will be on **Sunday 24th September**. Please contact us at aeg@addingham.info if you would like to book a table.

Other news: Climate Action Addingham

Another date for your diary, our village "how are we doing" review on climate change and biodiversity loss will be on **Wednesday 16th November** in the Memorial Hall