

Newport Canal Himalayan Balsam Bash

by John Myers of Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust.

Last year I tracked the source of the balsam infestation to Strine Brook Park, where it had probably been brought in with topsoil or something similar.

I checked further up the Strine but did not find any balsam higher up. I therefore decided that this year we would attempt to clear both the canal and the Strine Brook to the east of Town Lock as, otherwise, the canal would keep getting re-infested.

This year's Balsam Bash, which took place on 11 July, was a great success as we managed to cover much more of the overgrown area than expected. We were amazed at how successful last year's clearing of the canal to the east of Town Lock had been, as this year we found very little balsam on this section and three of us cleared it in about 1½ hours.

The bulk of the work party (fourteen all together) went into Strine Brook Park. We were helped by a path that has recently been created through heavy undergrowth along the Strine.

We even had time to clear the towpath to the west of Town Lock as far as Tickethouse Lock, clear the high



walled section of the Strine alongside the cross-over bridge by Town Bridge and to make a small start on the offside to the west of Town Bridge.

If our experience this year is a guide, hopefully next year we will be able to fairly quickly 'police' the canal and the Strine to the east of Town Bridge then move on to make a serious start on the heavily overgrown western sections.