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The Occasional Newsletter of the Cam Valley Forum

<http://www.colc.co.uk/cambridge/cam.valley.forum/>

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**The Bourn Brook:**

**Himalayan balsam** For the second year running, from July until August, whatever the weather, teams of volunteers have been 'pulling balsam' in an attempt to rid the Bourn Brook of this strikingly pretty flower, one of the UK's most

prolifically invasive species. Teams have targeted stretches (along 12 kms) of the stream on its way past the villages of Bourn, Kingston, Toft, Comberton, and Barton to Byron's Pool where it joins the Cam, and are on track to visit the whole of the brook. The workers in the main photograph near Kingston in July were, at that moment, distracted by the glorious sight of a kingfisher. Groups were led by **Vince Lea, Ruth Hawksley** and **Iain Webb** on behalf of the **Countryside Restoration Trust (CRT), the Wildlife Trust, and Cambridge Conservation Volunteers.**

**Bourn Brook and River Rhee (or Cam) Restoration Project** The first phase of the survey, which originally covered only the Bourn Brook, but expanded in 2012 to cover the River Rhee, was continued this summer by **Ruth Hawksley (Water for Wildlife Officer of the Wildlife Trust).** The project aims to improve habitats and control invasive species. Involved have been the Wildlife Trust and CRT in partnership with the EA, local landowners and other organisations, with expert input from Rob Mungovan (South Cambs District Council Ecology Officer. See [http://cambridgeppf.org/river/material\\_21.6.13.pdf](http://cambridgeppf.org/river/material_21.6.13.pdf)). The survey was made possible by funding from DEFRA, Anglian Water and the EA. The River Rhee is maintained by the EA from Byron's Pool up past Haslingfield, Barrington, and Wendy all the way to the Bedfordshire border.



This year's survey continued looking for signs of water vole and invasive plants on the River Rhee upstream of the 2012 survey stretch. The project now has this data mapped for the Rhee from Byron's Pool to the Bedfordshire border near Guilden Morden, plus lengths of the rivers Mel and Shep. A report will be produced later this year. The photograph shows a sinuous stretch of the Rhee with good water vole habitat extending up into the generous field margins. The project is discussing with EA what, if any, steps to take to control floating pennywort and water fern. Mink control is continuing on the Bourn and Rhee, although there is no trapping in the summer when females are likely to have young.

(See <http://www.countryside restoration trust.com/userfiles/news2011/Minkreport2012CRTwebsite.pdf>)