

monthly, currently on a Monday, and usually break for the summer holidays. My contact details and those of Refurbishment Secretary, Jeremy Cope, are in the front of this Newsletter. The Dover Society includes many rural areas around the town, and it would be good to have your voice regarding the area that you live to promote the –

- High standards of planning and architecture
- Interest in the geography, history, and natural history

- Protection, development, and improvement of features of historic or public interest
- Commitment to the belief that good environment is a good investment therein.

I would especially like to thank our Dover Society member Carol Duffield for her help and support at the Urban Fete where we were seeking to recruit new members. Many thanks Carol.

River Dour Partnership

— Deborah Gasking —

Japanese knotweed, a sheep in wolf's clothing, beautiful but deadly, has been described as having the biodiversity value of concrete! Brought to Britain from Japan as an ornamental garden plant in the mid-nineteenth century, it has become widespread in a range of habitats, particularly roadsides, riverbanks, and derelict land.

Its creeping roots spread rapidly, and stem growth is renewed each year from the stout, deeply penetrating rhizomes (creeping underground stems). Although it rarely sets seed in this country, Japanese knotweed can sprout from very small sections of rhizomes.

In spring, reddish-purple fleshy shoots emerge from crimson-pink buds at ground level and grow rapidly, producing dense tall bamboo-like canes up to 2.1m (7ft) tall.

Famed for pushing through tarmac, concrete and drains, its effect on native species is often devastating as it covers large tracts of land to the exclusion of the

native flora and associated fauna. Very few, if any, insects, or fungi can be found on the plant.

Its dense summer foliage causes heavy shading of small streams, reducing aquatic plant communities. Then, in winter, riverbanks become exposed when the knotweed dies back, increasing erosion and silting fish spawning gravels.

Control of, and damage caused by, Japanese knotweed costs Great Britain an estimated £165m every year. Under the provisions made within Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is an offence to cause Japanese knotweed to grow in the wild. Contaminated soil should be treated as controlled waste under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, requiring disposal at licensed landfill sites. Fines up to £5,000 or a maximum prison sentence of 2 years can be passed if contaminated soil or plant material is transferred to spread into the wild.

The plant usually takes at least three to

four seasons to eradicate, using a weed killer. Professional contractors, however, will have access to more powerful products that may reduce this period by half.

So why this discussion of Japanese knotweed? The tiny island alongside Pencester riverbank has been invaded by this beast. White Cliffs Countryside rangers have been spraying for the second year and, fortunately, some reduction has been noted after last year's spraying.

Our Finest Dour has been extended until April 2023 due to the under-spend during the COVID19 pandemic. Education activities are commencing on the river now that White Cliffs Countryside staff have been double vaccinated.

The Buckland River Dour Education Centre is being re-considered to determine how such a small space can open safely. Because the river has been at a record high this summer, the steps at the centre have still not been fully completed (although they largely are).

The illegal poaching and bad fishing practices we are seeing now along the Dour, is a constant problem. Thus, following talks with The Wild Trout Trust,



A River Dour Brown Trout

a cunning plan has been put together.

Catch and release fishing.

Fish are too valuable to be caught only once. The only way that trout are going to survive is if they aren't all caught and killed. Beyond the survival of any one fish or even any single population of trout, catch and release has helped fishing continue to grow as a sport. Many once-dwindling fisheries in popular spots have rebounded after being designated as "catch and release only" areas. That relieves pressure on the trout population, while still allowing anglers to enjoy the sport. And when more people can enjoy fishing for trout, more people have an interest in conservation efforts to protect trout habitats.

Moving this concept on, a pilot river fly-training group took place in August so that people learn to fly-fish on the river rather than badly fish. Fly-fishing is a way to enjoy the sport without harming the fish. It is the Dour's best chance at being policed:- if the group is successful, their constant presence should deter illegal poaching and the bad fishing practices we are seeing now.

Another river fly session is planned to be held this October and a further fly-fishing course next year.



Trout in The Town Silver Certificate