

## HAZELWOOD HOUSE 'BALSAM BASH'

On Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, about a dozen ACA stalwarts assembled at Hazelwood House to live up to the promise of our 'Himalayan Balsam invades the Avon valley' leaflet (see <http://auneconservation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/HIMALAYAN-BALSAM-INVADERS-THE-AVON-VALLEY-9.pdf> ) and start doing something about the spread of this alien invader. The challenge at this beautiful site, as in many other places around the Avon, is that the plant has been left to spread so that the task of clearing it from any particular area is huge, requiring a dedicated and determined effort year on year. Undaunted, we set to work on a stretch of the river bank around the old boat house and managed to uproot or cut back a large pile of the weed, which was then spread in the wonderful June sunshine to wither and dry out (see photograph).



After a couple of hours steady work, enlightened by much social gossip and banter, the group was rewarded by a delicious, thank-you lunch of soup and a salad laid on by the staff of Hazelwood. An additional reward was the invitation to return at any time to enjoy the peaceful grounds of the house at our leisure. All in all, it was an excellent ½-day, doing our small bit for the environment. All those attending resolved to repeat the experience at another site on the Avon in a few weeks' time, before the balsam seeds are set for their annual dispersal.