

PENNYWORT POST - April 2022

Yet a further update on the Yateley Pennywort.

Mill Lane. The water level in the lagoon was a little higher than usual, due to the outlet screens being slightly blocked. The inspection was facilitated by the lack of surface debris whilst the marginal vegetation is still at an early stage of spring growth. Only two relatively small plants were found, within a metre of where the plants were found last year. Although not a zero return it is still very encouraging to find so few plants.

Derby Green Pond. This site was checked and no floating pennywort was seen.

Wyndhams Pool. The vegetation is still only just beginning its spring growth, which as mentioned above greatly assisted the inspection. No plants were actually removed during the visit but a number of very small plants were seen. However incidence is very much reduced from 12 months ago and it is hoped that further manual removal may continue the progress towards total elimination. It would be a huge achievement if we were able to meet this target, simply through manual removal. An early season visit before the other plants get to high may be a sensible first action this year.

Wystaria Lane. Yet again no pennywort was found, one of those rare occasions when a 'failure' is the desired result. It is however intended to continue the monitoring, particularly through the oncoming summer, probably the most likely period for any dormant rhizomes to become active.

River Blackwater. No incidents have been reported. The short section at Mill Lane was checked and nothing seen

Further afield:

Basingstoke Canal – Fleet. The canal was inspected from the Reading Road overflow in a westerly direction to the Fox and Hounds Pub. Only one small fragment of pennywort was seen and removed. However it would be impossible to be sure that there were no fragments lurking along the bank opposite the towpath. However no significant rafts were seen, which has been the case during previous visits. An inspection to the east of the Reading Road would be useful, but the whole reach is covered by regular volunteer patrols by the Basingstoke Canal Association, which provides a further valuable level of monitoring.

This is a somewhat briefer report than those of the past, possibly a reflection of the fact that we are achieving some success through everyone's efforts. It is worth noting that the visits do seem to be getting shorter and less demanding at each site, which I believe is simply a reflection on the lack of plants present. BUT the Pennywort is still present, work should continue, and it is only after a prolonged period of zero reports that we can perhaps relax. We are certainly lucky in the Loddon / Blackwater river catchments that the problem was not worse when our efforts commenced. To appreciate how much greater the challenge could be one only needs to peep over the watershed into the River Wey, or slightly further afield, read about the efforts in the Colne Valley:

[Floating Pennywort - The not-so-lucky pennies covering our rivers - Colne Valley \(colnevalleypark.org.uk\)](http://colnevalleypark.org.uk)

THANKS as ever to everyone who has been contributing to this effort, even if it is in the slightest way.

Martin