

PENNYWORT POST – Spring 2024

An update on the ongoing Yateley Pennywort project.

Further to the July 2023 round up, we have the following updates.

Mill Lane. No Floating Pennywort has been found. The inspection was again carried out in conjunction with Adrian Bicknell from the Environment Agency. There has been some considerable clearance of the banks around the lagoon, this improving access and facilitating the inspection. There is a chance that this clearance could stimulate growth of pennywort through disturbing buried rhizomes and by letting more light into the affected area. This could be a useful test of the removal efforts to date, and if a continued absence of re-growth is observed confidence in the success of the project could be strengthened.

Derby Green Pond. This site was checked and no floating pennywort was seen. Although there have been a great number of negative visits to this site, and it is probable that no floating pennywort is now present, it is felt that inspections should be continued. They will build on the certainty of successful removal and due to the size of the pond are not a big commitment.

Wyndhams Pool. This continues to be a challenging site to inspect due to the boggy conditions and the profuse growth of other plants in the affected area, which makes spotting the plants difficult. 5 separate plants were removed and it is noticeable that despite a long period during which they could have produced strong growth, they were all small. This could be due to a struggle against the competition offered by the other plants, coupled with the regular removal visits. It is thought that the most likely reasons for the survival of these few plants is that they are growing from rhizomes that may have broken off during previous removals, or from rhizomes that are dormant in the silt and are only able to commence growth following the disturbance of the silt, possibly from the visits to check the area. However the incidence appears to be declining arguably due to the steady reduction of any remaining viable fragments. It is to be hoped that we may soon start to record an absence at this site.

Floating Pennywort
'hiding' amongst the native
Vegetation
(but all leaves from one rhizome)



Wystaria Lane. A further blank visit. There has been some limited silt removal and vegetation clearance towards the northern end of the pool. As with Mill Lane this could facilitate re-growth and will provide a useful test of the success of removal efforts.

River Blackwater. No plants were seen in the river at Mill Lane, nor have there been any reports of incidents in the river

Further afield:

Basingstoke Canal – Fleet. A further check along parts of the towpath was carried out. The Reading Road Bridge and Gelvert Stream overflows were both visited as it was considered that these were the most likely locations for any accumulation of drifting fragments. In addition the Gelvert Stream was checked downstream to the first major debris dam, again a location that could concentrate any fragments. No plants were seen in any of these locations. In fact the only plant seen (and removed) was roughly 100 metres west of Pondtail Road Bridge. It was evident that some bank clearance has recently occurred and it is conceivable that plants could have been removed during this work, which could account for the absence of plants.



The Gelvert overflow

The Basingstoke Canal Authority are continuing to lead efforts on the canal and their ranger patrols are looking out for pennywort. They have reported a sighting of a mat of pennywort between Pondtail and Eelmoor, and are suspicious that it may have originated elsewhere.

There is still work to be completed but we are continuing to make progress

Martin