

PENNYWORT POST - October 2021

The Yateley Pennywort, continued

Mill Lane. Autumnal leaf fall is just starting, but a good inspection of the lagoon was not affected. 4 small plants were removed and all appeared to be growing from large stolon fragments that have remained hidden in the mud. They were all found in an area where this mud may have been disturbed by water movement, allowing them access to light, whilst there was little competition from other plants in this small area. Close inspection in the surrounding vegetation revealed no other plants. It is hoped that there are not too many such fragments hidden from site waiting for their chance to sprout. This demonstrates the value of continued inspection, not a big commitment of perhaps 3 or 4 visits per year, each lasting less than one hour.

Derby Green Pond. This site has not been recently checked, but this will be carried out in the near future.

Wyndhams Pool. There has been a further visit by the contractors, plus a small group activity during Loddon Rivers Week. Both these days were encouraging, and the second visit resulted in two sweeps through the whole area with very few plants being seen during the second foray. Many of the plants being removed are small and due to the dropping incidence it is very worthwhile and strangely satisfying, to spend time teasing the whole of a stolon out of the mass of surrounding vegetation. This also results in getting close up and personal with some of the inhabitants of this swamp, one of the more striking species being the raft spiders.



A brief inspection, 3 weeks after the last group day, revealed 3 plants visible from the path. Remaining plants are not expected to grow significantly during the winter, so it is currently intended to hold back on further group efforts until next spring. However monitoring will continue and this proposed strategy amended if required. Given the challenges of attempting a manual eradication on this site, results so far are encouraging. If this eradication can be achieved with the use of no chemicals or more invasive methods it would be a noteworthy success, particularly given the presence of some locally significant other plant species.

Wystaria Lane. Another thorough sweep around the pond was carried out. Conditions were good and no plants were found. Some native plant species are becoming more noticeable with the removal of competition from Floating pennywort.

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

Further afield:

Basingstoke Canal – Fleet. There have been further sightings, and removals, from the canal in Fleet. A thorough inspection of the canal, on foot from the Barley Mow car park at Winchfield to the Reading Road in Fleet was carried out and no pennywort was seen until a point to the east of the Fox & Hounds pub in Fleet. This walk was complemented with a boat based inspection conducted by the Environment Agency (EA), starting near the A325. They removed nearly 100 separate fragments either caught on vegetation or drifting in an easterly direction from the point near the Fox & Hounds. This location had the largest established raft of plants seen, was growing out from the bank and may be 'ground zero' for the plant in this part of the canal. A repeat EA inspection around 4 weeks later removed a similar number of fragments, which was somewhat disappointing. However a more recent but admittedly short walking inspection between the Reading road overspill and the Fox & Hounds produced only one fragment in the overspill. The Basingstoke Canal Authority are continuing to monitor the pennywort in this area, during their regular patrols. We are all hoping that this incidence can be brought under control, but it is proving more of a challenge than was originally thought.

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