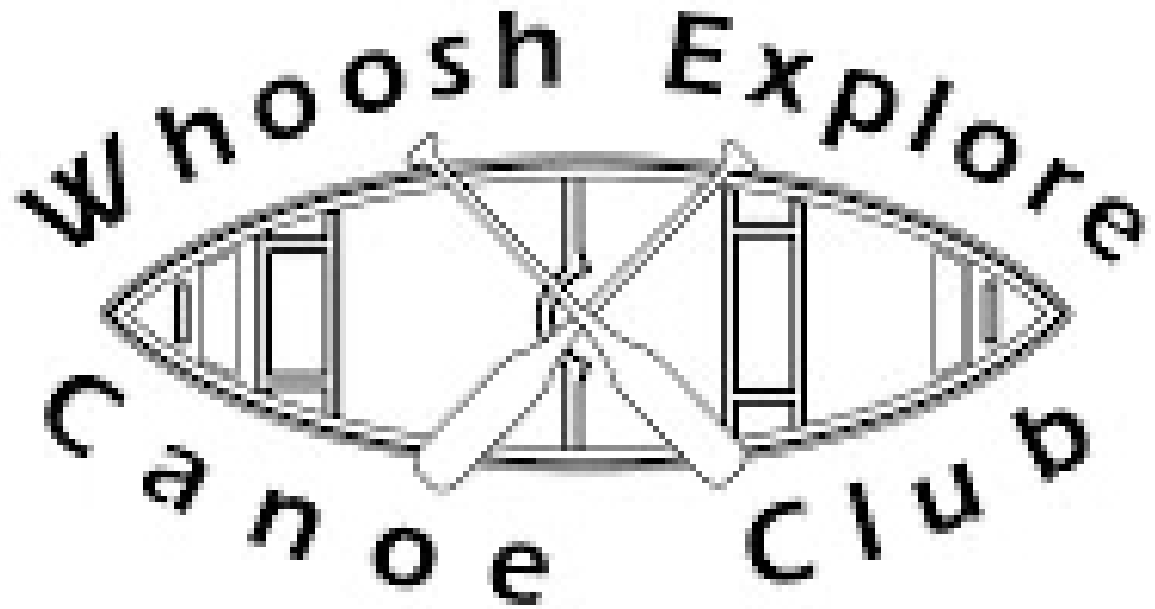


Case Study -
Project Floating
Pennywort (FPW)
Riddance from
the River Stort

by Andy Gee



20 Jul 19 - British
Canoeing's - Chantelle
Grundy presents me with
BC's Community Champion
Award

[This was mainly due to
our haul of generator
covers, a bike & fridge
internals. And a bag full
of plastic waste & tin
can's in the previous
year's National River
Clean Up's Week held on
27 Oct 18]



23 Jul 19 - British
Canoeing Challenge
"What are you going to
do during 'Clean Up's
Week" -
19 Oct - 27 Oct 2019?

Whoosh Explore had
already nailed the
'litter & plastic
pollution' pick. And that
was how our quest
'Project Floating
Pennywort (FPW)
Riddance from the
River Stort' was born.



Day one we started partnering with the Canal and River Trust.

Who helped us with the location of FPW disposal sites, which were few are far between.



Check, Clean, Dry

GB non-native species secretariat (NNSSS)

Stop the Spread Campaign is supported by:-

- British Canoeing
- Canal & River Trust
- Environmental Agency



August & September 2019

We were 'Rookies' learning FPW extraction, trying out different techniques in our own 'Pounds'.

Spellbrook Lock 3 to
Sawbridgeworth Lock 5.

We starting mapping FPW
locations on the rest of the
Stort Navigation.

This FPW mat had been
'floated/pushed' over half a
mile/800m) to the disposal
site.

Total 9 Days = 270 Hours



Generally, our paddlers got out of the boats & uplifted the FPW, we found this more productive.

Lift a bit, drain, lift a bit drain, this technique reduced the weight considerably, also the bridge provided an excellent brick ledge to get sure footing.



October 2019

Our Mapping had shown FPW starting from below Twyford Lock 2 down to Burnt Mill Lock 10 circa 7.5 miles (12k).

Seven FPW mats about the size of this picture down to Spellbrook Lock 3.

Lesson Learnt:

Always start at the top of the River & work downstream.



Some of the Six FPW mats cut by others and floated down stream.

Lesson learnt should have made time to extract at Spellbrook Lock 3.

A lot of this FPW got past the lock & got lodged in the trees & brambles in the lower river. Making it a lot harder to extract in the long run.



'The Stort System' was evolving. After revisiting Twyford to Spellbrook we extracted the remaining FPW strands and did a forensic bank check. The FPW wouldn't be allowed back'.

Next year any new FPW growth will be extracted before it grows into mats.

Our mind set had changed. "We don't want to do this every year". Our motto 'Riddance NOT Control'.



Spellbrook Weir Stream
(just below Spellbrook
Lock 3) - Start Navigation
in the distance.

The 'Winding Hole' is semi
blocked & large Narrow
Boat's can't turn without
going into the FPW.

Worth mentioning this
weir stream was 1.3/4
miles (2.8k) from our base
at Reedings Meadow.
About an hour's paddle,
this impacted heavily on
our FPW extraction time.



November & December 2019

Spellbrook Weir Stream from
Spellbrook Lane

Game Changer; Our August
mapping had missed this part
of the weir stream. Ouch.

Lesson Learnt:
Mapping/Survey's must include
ALL mill & weir streams, drains
& ditches.



November & December 2019

About ten days to clear this Humongous FPW mat, mainly by canoe. A kayaker did some impressive work, where the FPW was rooted into the bank.

The disposal site was 1/4 mile (400m) float/push downstream

Lesson Learnt:
Humongous FPW mats need to be extracted mechanically, when possible.



The importance of Partnering - Huge thanks to Tednambury Farm for allowing us to use the edge of their field for our FPW disposal site.

As the year was coming to an end and it had taken nearly two months to clear the two humongous mats in Spellbrook weir stream.



Clear Access Clear Waters

Whoosh Explore Canoe Club
- Christmas Hat Paddle on
21 December 2019

November & December
2019

Total 13 Days = 274 Hours

August to December 2019
Total 31 Days = 769 Hours



2020 & still lots of FPW to clear but at least it's stopped growing. And the February Storms trashed most of FPW in the weir & mill streams both left sided pictures



05 December 2019

In August when Latton Pool was mapped, removal of the FPW was assessed as a couple of hours work using a canoe, plus a kayak to collect the fragments. The FPW mats doubled & redoubled while we were 'up river'.

The picture shows frost damage to the raised leaves going black, the temperature of the water being warmer than the air, has protected the leaves on the water.



Storm Elsa hits
on 22 December 2019

Our FPW Riddance quest,
in Latton Pool is helped
enormously, as the storm
trashed most of the three
large mats growing in the
pool. (*previous picture*)



Pennywort Patrol by Kayak

Preventing Floating Pennywort mats forming, the River, Mill and Weir Streams, Drains and Ditches were checked for strands at least every two weeks until it was GONE.

January 2020 to December 2020
Total 34 Days = 538 Hours

August 2019 to December 2020
Total 65 Days = 1,307 Hours



The Stort System

- Start at the top of the river
- Mechanically remove the large FPW mats
- Using Canoes remove the smaller mats, use the odd Kayak in the margins
- 'Pennywort Patrol' At least every two weeks, using kayaks, forensically check the river, mill & weir streams, drains & ditches in their entirety for FPW strands, stems & leaves.
- GONE

'Riddance NOT Control'.

