

Kemerton Clippings

Issue 15

January 2015

Appeals for Help!

The Trust is looking for volunteer help in the following:

Maintaining Bird Boxes in Aldwick Wood SSSI & The Bushes SSSI:

Do you have a couple of hours to spare once a year to check our bird boxes in Aldwick Wood SSSI and The Bushes SSSI?

We have a number of bird boxes on both sites which need an annual check, clean out and, where required, basic repairs or replacement. Long-term volunteer Roy Cox has been carrying out these bird box checks for 20+ years but has had to step down this year. He has kindly offered to brief the new volunteer on what is required. Both sites are on challenging terrain so a reasonable level of fitness is required but all boxes are reachable from the ground and are designed to make cleaning easy. The once a year visit must be done in autumn or winter after breeding season has finished but can be done at your convenience. If you are interested and would like more details, please contact John Clarke on 01386 725653 or email him kctoffice@btinternet.com.

The Trust is dependent upon the assistance it receives from its many volunteers to continue its important work in the local area, so please let us know if you can assist in any way.

Beggar Boys Wetland Walk Allows Members to Admire Project Work

On 31st August, with the sun shining down on us, a small group of members joined Chairman Adrian Darby and Support Coordinator Kate Aubury on a guided tour of Beggar Boys Wetland, near Westmancote. This lovely reserve has no public access so it was a rare opportunity for attendees to visit and learn about our newly completed special project, funded by Higher Level Stewardship and done in partnership with the landowner Kemerton Estate, designed to improve the wetland habitat onsite.



Male Common Darter, *Sympetrum striolatum* Beggar Boys Wetland, August 2014

Beggar Boys Wetland consists of a small lake, sedge beds and seasonally flooded meadow, surrounded by hedges and, to the north, a small woodland. The reserve is leased by KCT on a long-term peppercorn lease and it is particularly important for dragonflies (19 species recorded to date) and other invertebrates. It is also a very great site for bats and has some rare plants as well including Galingale. The sedge beds are important for a number of birds.

The special project, which ran for 3 years from 2011-2014, aimed to improve the habitat through reduction of encroaching willow and the removal of an alien invasive species, *Crassula helmsii*. The work included management of the sedge beds, annual mowing of the meadow, and habitat work in the woodland. The Trust's main contribution to the project was in the form of volunteer labour to assist in some of the tasks.



Members view the lake, Beggar Boys Wetland, August 2014



Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae* on Fleabane, Beggar Boys Wetland, August 2014

We timed our walk for late summer when the dragonflies and other insects are at their peak, and with the bonus of hot, sunny weather the reserve was buzzing with bees and butterflies on the day. The meadow and marsh attracts huge numbers of pollinators when the Fleabane and Water Mint are in flower, and the sweet smell of the mint fills the air. Some of the attendees were volunteers who had assisted in the project so it was great to be able to show them the reserve looking so wonderful after all their hard work and everyone enjoyed the walk immensely.



© Kate Aubury

KCT Volunteer David Aubury manning our information stand

On Saturday 18th October it was Kemerton Orchard Workers' Annual Apple Day at Victoria Hall and the Trust was there to support our sister organisation. KOW manages Daffurn's Orchard in Kemerton for the local community and the annual Apple Day is their main fundraising event.

As in previous years, KOW had arranged for apple pressing and juicing and there were cakes and hot drinks available in the hall, alongside stands selling jams, cards, tea towels

KOW Apple Day Celebrates Beautiful Bounty of our Orchards

and calendars. KCT brought along an information stand packed with information about the nine orchards the Trust manages and their importance for a wide range of wildlife.

Although turnout was lower than in previous years, the day went well and KOW raised valuable funds which will help them with their orchard management in 2015. We got the chance to spread our conservation message to a large number of people; some old friends and others new to us who hopefully went away with a new understanding of the role orchards play in the biodiversity of our area.

In 2014, KCT has been taking part in a Worcestershire-wide orchard project (details of which were in the last newsletter) so we were able to spread the word on that

work at the Apple Day too.

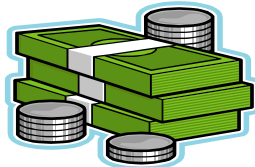
As part of the orchard project, we have arranged for Becky Lashley, Orchards Project Officer, to come and give us a talk in April about the project as a whole. She will be followed by our Conservation Advisor John Clarke who will then talk about our orchard management here at KCT. We hope to see you all there!



© Kate Aubury

Apple Blossom in Lillans Orchard, May 2014

Funding Update



After a very successful start to 2014, securing three grants totalling £7500 (as detailed in our last newsletter), pressures of time meant that no further grant applications were completed in the second half of 2014.

Work restoring an Oxbow on the Carrant Brook, funded by the Environment Agency, was completed in September, and more work is planned in 2015; all fully funded by the EA (see page 7 for details).

At the annual Governors' Meeting in November it was

agreed that the Trust would begin research into funding for a new hide at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve in 2015 so that will be a funding focus this year. Initial scoping and feasibility will be completed in the next six months.

A couple of donations were received in return for talks given by Support Coordinator Kate Aubury on behalf of the Trust, and we also received a £150 fee for hosting a visit from the Worcestershire Warden Partnership (see page 3 for details).

We are delighted to have attracted a number of new members through the updated website, with people taking advantage of the downloadable forms to join our Friends of KCT scheme.

We also received another generous donation of £800 from Bredon Forest School, which will go towards general running costs and materials. We are grateful for their continued support.

Thank you to all who have supported us this year!

KCT Hosts Worcestershire Wardens Partnership Visit

On 3rd October, KCT played host to a visit from 90 members of the Worcestershire Wardens Partnership (WWP). The WWP is a collection of organisations within Worcestershire that use volunteer wardens; including the County and District councils, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Malvern Hills Conservators, the Canal and River Trust, Sustrans and many more. The partnership aims to help support their volunteers, provide training and events and disseminate best practice. Once a year,



Worcestershire Wardens Partnership
Uniting Countryside Volunteers

they arrange a day long thank you event which includes a morning of talks and an afternoon of guided walks. This year, they asked us if we would host the guided walks and also give one of the morning talks and we were happy to agree.

The morning began at Bredon Village Hall with a packed schedule of talks focussed mainly on orchards including a talk about KCT's orchards work by our Conservation Advisor John Clarke. There was also a very interesting talk from volunteers of Avon Meadows about their work to get the new reserve at Pershore up and running. If you haven't had a chance to visit their site yet why not plan to do so in 2015; it's a lovely site and is a testament to some terrific community work.

In the afternoon, the group was split into three smaller ones; one group headed up Bredon Hill on a

general walk, one group headed over to Lillans Orchard to see our orchard management for themselves and the largest group were taken on a guided tour around Kemerton Lake. The tour focussed on our habitat management as of course all the attendees are volunteers who take part in similar work parties across the county.

There were many familiar faces amongst the attendees, so it was a chance to catch up with some old friends (and meet some new ones), and the weather held for the afternoon walks so everyone had a very enjoyable time. It was really inspiring to meet so many great volunteers from such a wide range of organisations who are all working to make the county a lovely place to live, enjoy the outdoors and watch wildlife.



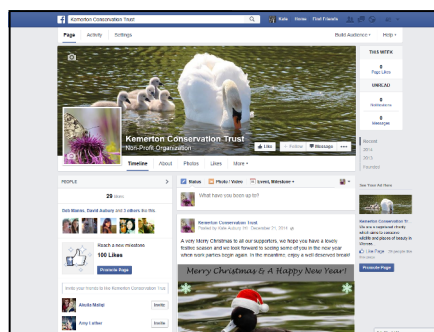
© Kate Aubury

Members of WWP on a guided walk around Kemerton Lake

News in Brief

In August, following the update of our website, KCT launched a Facebook page. Our Facebook page is intended to be a more informal space where we will post photos and updates from the work parties and our events, as well as information on any interesting news on wildlife or things to see. If you are on Facebook why not check us out and like our page—just enter 'Kemerton Conservation Trust' in the search box to find us.

In September, Support Coordinator Kate Aubury gave an illustrated talk on behalf of KCT



Our Facebook page

to Kemerton WI. The talk included information on the Trust and also looked at a year in the life of KLNR. The talk was well received and the WI kindly made a donation to the Trust as a thank you for the talk.

In October, Kate gave a talk on behalf of the Trust focusing on fungi as part of the Kemerton Lectures series. The subject had been chosen to match the time of year and the talk looked at all aspects of fungi from their biology to how to forage for them and lots more! Again, the Trust received a donation from the group as a thank you.

In December, KCT appeared at a planning appeal over a proposed development at Benshams in Bredon, opposite Upstones Orchard and KLNR. The Trust opposed the plan on ecological grounds and we are delighted that the Inspector agreed and the appeal failed.

Work Party Update by Louise Howard

Louise Howard is one of our more recent additions to the work party volunteers and here she discusses why she got involved.

I moved to Kinsham in early 2014. One of the attractions of the area is visiting Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve throughout the year so given the option of volunteering or making a donation, I decided to help out. I liked the idea of being able to see 'behind the scenes' and understand a bit more about the work done to keep it running.

We meet one Saturday morning a month and work for about

three hours. The tasks vary from month to month depending on the season and although the work is physical it is not hugely arduous, and we always make time for a mid-morning coffee break and a chat.

This year I have enjoyed helping build a bug hotel (see photo), pruning the apple trees in the orchard, raking up and collecting hay and cutting back overgrown pathways. It is rewarding to see what can be achieved working as a group together and whilst there are a number of regular volunteers there is always a new face so I



Louise (3rd from left) with other volunteers and the newly completed Bug Hotel, KLNLR, May 2014

meet someone new and learn something new every time.

If you are interested in learning more about volunteering with the Trust please contact our Support Coordinator Kate Aubury at kate@aubury.co.uk or by phone on 07765 334 776.



**Worcestershire
Biological
Records
Centre**

Focus on a Friend: Simon Wood

official data on our wildlife and plant life. The man who helps us make the transfer and assists us with any issues with the database is WBRC Manager Simon Wood.

Simon grew up on the Norfolk Broads surrounded by wildlife. As a child he loved butterflies, particularly the Broads' famous stunning Swallowtail, which remains his firm favourite to this day! After uni, he started his conservation career with Norfolk Wildlife Trust. After stints with Devon Wildlife Trust, English Nature and the Cheshire Local Records Centre he was recruited in 2003 to set up Worcestershire's own records centre and has managed WBRC ever since.

Simon is passionate about the importance of recording our wildlife as it is an essential tool in guiding better conservation decisions at both local and national levels. And it is also a great way to get involved with the natural world, learn and

share knowledge and spend time outdoors!

The records that are collected around the county are used by statutory agencies and local authorities to inform planning policy, by conservation NGOs and land managers to shape habitat management and by researchers for scientific study, to name just a few uses.

Simon would like to encourage our members to submit biological records (perhaps wildlife in your garden?) Some of our common species are under-represented on the database as people often focus on the rarer species and forget to log their sightings of rabbits or rats! For information on submitting records visit www.wbrc.org.uk.

At KCT we are very grateful to Simon for his expert help in managing our Recorder data over the years, and we see our partnership with WBRC as very important to the work we do in the area. Long may it continue!

In this edition of Kemerton Clippings, we are focussing on where all our many records end up; Worcestershire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) and the man who helps us ensure the records are accurate, cleaned and ready for others to use—Simon Wood.

For those of you who are not aware of where our records go, all biological records that the Trust collects every year, including those submitted to us by local naturalists, are entered onto a database called Recorder (designed specifically for the purpose) and then once a year the data is bulk transferred to WBRC, which collates all the county's flora and fauna records. These records are ultimately uploaded to the National Biodiversity Network and form part of the UK's

KCT Governors' Annual Board Meeting 2014

At least once a year KCT Governors meet for a Board Meeting to review the past year's work and set goals for the new year. In addition to the governors the meeting is also attended by John Clarke and Kate Aubury, who both report on their activities for the year. Unfortunately this year Kate Aubury was unable to attend due to a diary conflict.

2014 has been a good year for the Trust, with the successful purchase of additional land at Upton Ham, two Higher Level Stewardship projects at KLNK and Beggar Boys completed, the deployment of our new trail cameras bringing us some fabulous wildlife footage and

the launch of our new, updated website in July. However, problems with health issues of key personnel has affected our ability to deliver on all planned works and this remains a concern for the governors.

After reviewing the past year, the governors identified some priorities for 2015 including moving forward on the Buglife and EA partnerships (see page 6 for more details) and raising funds for a new hide at KLNK.

At the meeting, it was announced that long-standing governor Carl Nicholson was resigning due to personal circumstances. The Trust is very grateful to Carl for all his

many years service and wish him all the best for the future. Chairman Adrian Darby put forward two nominees for consideration as governor and it was unanimously agreed to approach both parties (as the Trust was looking to fill two posts). As we go to press, both nominees have accepted our invitation so we are delighted to welcome Brett Westwood and Peter Marren as our new Governors (more details below).

The 2013/14 Chairman's Report, Annual Accounts, Conservation Officer's Report and Support Coordinator's Report are all available to read on our website now in the 'News & Events' section.

Two New Faces Join the KCT Board of Governors



Our new Governor Brett Westwood

Following the Governors' Annual Board Meeting we are delighted to announce that Brett Westwood and Peter Marren have joined the Trust.

Brett Westwood is a Worcestershire naturalist and co-author of the *Nature of Worcestershire*. He is a writer and broadcaster and has worked for over 20 years as producer and presenter of

BBC radio programmes such as *Saving Species* on Radio 4. He also works as an advisor with BBC's *Springwatch* and *Autumnwatch*. Outside work, Brett is a keen recorder of our county's wonderful wildlife.

Peter Marren is a writer and journalist on conservation matters, as well as a book reviewer, obituarist, bibliophile and amateur military historian. His twenty-odd books include a biography of our senior series of nature books (*The New Naturalists*), a long walk through the rarer plants of the British Isles (*Britain's Rare Flowers*), and a lengthy explanation of why fungi are interesting (*Mushrooms*). His long-running column in *British Wildlife* 'Twitcher in the Swamp' attempts to be funny about conservationists! While

a naturalist in the broad sense he specialises in the larger fungi, butterflies and moths and landscape history.

Both Brett and Peter's wide-ranging wildlife expertise will be extremely valuable to the Trust and we look forward to working with them both in 2015 and beyond. Welcome aboard, Brett and Peter and we hope to see you at an event soon!



Our new Governor Peter Marren

KCT/Buglife Partnership and more! - by John Clarke

Readers may know that KCT has been trying to form a partnership with Buglife, the national invertebrate conservation charity. We took an earlier opportunity for co-operation in establishing an Ark Site for our native White-clawed Crayfish at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve in 2010 (*details on the project were initially included in Kemerton Clippings edition 7, January 2011—Editor*) and in recent years Dr Margaret Palmer, a Trustee of Buglife, has become a KCT Governor.

I am delighted to say that we now have an informal arrangement whereby Buglife will have access to our reserves and to Kemerton Estate's land to carry out research and practical trials.

Encouraged by this progress, Adrian and I have resurrected another long-held desire - to form a larger partnership in the area, called 'The Carrant Catchment Area Project' (CCAP). (*details on the project were initially included in Kemerton Clippings edition 11, January 2013—Editor*). The idea behind the CCAP is that potentially, by working together we can affect the



EA contractors completing the restoration of the Oxbow, Carrant Brook, September 2014

environment over a large area - from Tewkesbury almost as far as Evesham and from Bredon Hill to Oxenton Hill.

Buglife is drawing up a 'wish list' of work and projects based on their own proposals and others which I have put forward. The Environment Agency (EA) appears keen to get involved as well. This Autumn the EA completed the restoration of a former Oxbow on the Carrant Brook. Since then EA staff have visited Kemerton and Overbury estates to consider other ideas. The EA is also drawing up a wish list of projects. Adrian and I continue to discuss with other landowners how they might be involved - nobody will be obliged to participate in everything.

We have already been offered support from a number of local and national wildlife experts.

Our first project will develop my idea for 'Pollinator Habitat Mapping'. After initial trials proved successful I sought scientific advice on how to proceed. Now we can take things forward while waiting

to see our partners' wish lists. The mapping identifies and values the various 'patches' of wildlife habitat providing pollen and nectar to a range of pollinators and at what time of year they are available. We hope to find a way of encouraging other partners, such as farmers, County Councils and local gardeners to get involved. We need to have a lot of sites, all linked in some way, to ensure we provide pollen and nectar over as wide an area and period as possible. 'Pollinators' are not just honeybees and bumblebees - it's more complicated than that - although the needs of honeybees and bumblebees also vary a lot. Honey bees have shorter tongues than bumblebees and so need different flowers. But there are masses of other species of bees, wasps (and their parasites), beetles, butterflies and moths which all need pollen.

I am hugely excited by this project, by far the biggest that KCT has ever got involved in. It will take a great deal of work and we will need funding, sponsors and a lot of help. If I don't explode with excitement I will keep you informed of progress!



White-clawed Crayfish ready to go in the lake, November 2010



Marbled Whites on Knapweed, Westmancote Wildflower Banks, July 2014

Major Thinning Operation in Kemerton Woods Begins

Those of you who regularly visit Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve and the surrounding woodland will have spotted the large-scale forestry works in Kemerton Woods which have been ongoing since mid-October and have affected access to some degree.

The woods are being thinned as part of ongoing habitat management, which will open up the canopy, let more light in and thus encourage more biodiversity. We are carrying out the works over the winter in order to minimise the disruption to flora and fauna on the reserve. The thinning will improve the woodland for wildlife, and is a natural part of the cycle of management in young woodlands but for a season or so it can look a



Forestry works vehicle loaded with felled trees, KLNLR, December 2014

little drastic, although the remaining trees and shrubs soon fill the gaps.

Because the forestry works involve large and dangerous machinery, we have taken the decision to close the Friends-only circular walk through the western side of the woods for the duration of the works. This may be disappointing to some members but your safety has

to come first. We will re-open the path as soon as possible.

The permissive path to the East Hide remains open but we would ask visitors to be vigilant of the forestry works and to follow any safety signs onsite. The thinning operations should be completed by the end of February and we then intend to repair some of the ruts in the rides caused by the heavy machinery.

The bulk of the felled trees have been sold as part of the contract and to defray some of the thinning costs, but the brash and smaller branches left by the works will all be used onsite to create habitat for a range of species; e.g. beetle lodges and wood faggots for the crayfish in the lake.

Member-Only Bat Walk & Fungi Foray at KLNLR



Member Paul, Adrian and Kate with the fruits of the foray

On Thursday 14th August we held our annual Bat Walk and Talk at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve. Originally scheduled for Sunday 10th, wet weather forced us to move the date last minute so as a result, attendance was low. However, we were joined

by some Friends of KCT who brought their grandson and he thoroughly enjoyed listening to the bats on our bat detectors as we walked around the lake edge, the scrapes and the adjacent woodland. KCT's Support Coordinator Kate Aubury led the walk, which included a general talk on British bats as well as a hands-on demonstration of how we record bats.

On Sunday 2nd November we held our final Member-only event of the year; a fungi foray around Kemerton Woods and Arboretum. The weather was rather wet and windy, which may account for the dismal turnout of just one member!

Despite this we pressed on and spent a fun couple of hours hunting for fungi amongst the leaf litter and dead wood of the woodland, as well as searching for grassland fungi out by the lake's edge. The walk was led by KCT's fungi recorder Kate Aubury, assisted by our Chairman Adrian Darby and her husband David. With lots of keen eyes on the lookout a large number of species were found including a first record of *Suillus bovinus* which was found under Scots Pine. The rain cleared up before the foray finished and everyone agreed it had been worth it despite the low turnout—and our one attendee got the full attention of three walk guides!

Kemerton Clippings January 2015

Edited by Kate Aubury

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Print services provided by Fleet Graphics (Tewkesbury) Ltd

This newsletter is published bi-annually. The next edition will be issued in July 2015.

For more information on the work of KCT please visit our website: www.kemerton.org

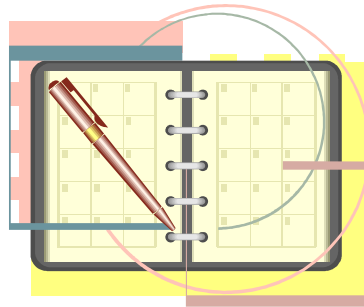


Blackening Waxcap *Hygrocybe conica*,
Bredon Hill, October 2014

Save the Date!

- **Saturday 31st January** - Working Party (10am start, Lillans Orchard)
- **Saturday 28th February**- Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 28th March** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 25th April** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Monday 20th April** - **Member-only Slideshow Talk, Victoria Hall, Kemerton** (8pm start)
- **Saturday 30th May** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Sunday 7th June** - **Guided Wildflower Walk at Upton Ham**, (2.30pm start)
- **Saturday 27th June** Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)

For details on any of the above events, please contact KCT Support Coordinator Kate Aubury by email kate@aubury.co.uk or by phone on 07765 334 776.



KEMERTON COURT

TEWKESBURY

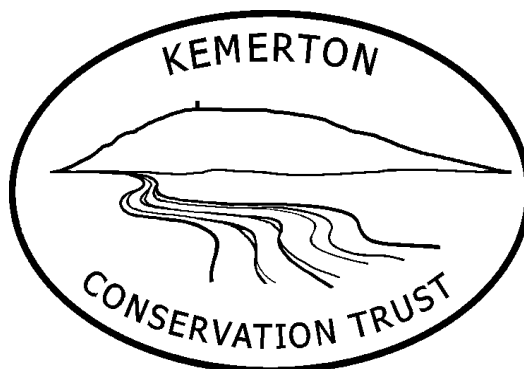
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P. S. DOBLE

LORD HOWICK OF GLENDALE

P. MARREN

DR. M. PALMER M.B.E

B. WESTWOOD

R. H. WORKMAN