

Kemerton Clippings

Issue 17

January 2016

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.

A Fascinating Foray for Fungi



Peter Marren identifies a fungus for the group, KLNLR, October 2015

Despite a chilly and misty start to the day, the sun shone down on Sunday 11th October as we held our annual Open Day at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve. This beautiful wetland site is open all year around to the public but the open day is an opportunity for visitors to learn more about the reserve and the work of the Trust, with guided walks through parts of the site not normally open to visitors. This year we had a general tour of the reserve led by Chairman Adrian Darby in the morning and a Fungus Foray led by Governor Peter Marren, a well-known naturalist and the author of many books including 'Mushrooms' in the afternoon.

Turnout was excellent and the attendees of the morning tour enjoyed an informative ramble around the lake and adjoining woodland, learning about the history of the site from farmland to gravel pit and finally to nature reserve, hearing about how we manage it and spotting some of the wildfowl and waders currently to be found on the water including the flock of wintering Lapwing, with their distinctive 'peewit' call. In the afternoon mushroom enthusiasts searched the woodland floor for fungi and learnt more about this fascinating kingdom from Peter, assisted by the Trust's Support Coordinator Kate Aubury, who has been recording fungi on-site for 5 years. Although the recent dry weather meant the numbers of fungi were not great, eagle eyes spotted over 30 species in total.



Shaggy Parasol *Chlorophyllum rhacodes*, KLNLR, October 2015



Adrian addressing the morning tour crowd at the Open Day, KLNLR, October 2015

The open day was a great success. Feedback from attendees was extremely positive and the event raised over £100 for the Trust's conservation work as well as helping to raise our profile in the local area. A big thank you must go to all the volunteers who assisted on the day without whom it would not be possible to hold the event. The date for our 2016 Open Day is on the back of the newsletter and we hope to see you there!

© Kate Aubury



Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta* on reed, KLNLR, August 2015

On Saturday 29th August, under bright sunshine and blue skies, the Trust's Dragonfly Recorder Mike Averill led a Member-only walk around Kemerton Lake in search of these stunning, brightly coloured aerial predators.

Kemerton Lake is one of the best sites in Worcestershire for Dragonflies and Damselflies, with a total of 23 species recorded on site to date. Mike, who is the County Recorder, has been recording for us on-site in a volunteer capacity for many years and is a fount of knowledge on this fascinating group.

Dragonfly Walk Highlights Dazzling Darters & Hawkers

The walk took attendees past the settlement ponds, through wetland vegetation including reeds and along the north edge of the lake, covering various habitats that attract the different types of dragonflies and damselflies on the reserve. Although the hot, sunny day was ideal dragonfly-spotting weather, there was less to see than usual, with only nine of the species spotted, including large numbers of Common and Ruddy Darter, several Hawker species and the impressive Emperor Dragonfly. Most of these were to be found patrolling the water's edge or sun-bathing amongst the reeds. The more delicate Damselflies could be spotted amongst the grasses and other lower vegetation further from the water.

Although the focus of the walk was the *Odonata* group, we were delighted to be treated to a

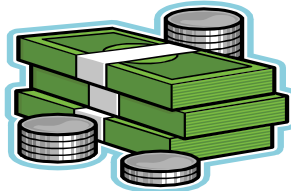
spectacular hunting display from a young Hobby who was catching dragonflies on the wing over the lake. This small falcon needs all its speed and agility to match wits with its prey, and watching the bird demonstrate this was a highlight of the walk!

Our thanks go to Mike for kindly leading the walk and sharing his passion for these beautiful and interesting insects.



Mike (centre) & attendees watch the Hobby display, KLNLR, August 2015

Funding Update



Our fundraising for the proposed new bird hide at Kemerton Lake is going well. Of the four applications submitted in July 2015, we were successful with three and have secured the following conditional grants; £8000 from Severn Waste Environmental Fund, £3000 from Garfield Weston Foundation and £2000 from Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust. We have also recently secured £4500 from the New Homes Bonus scheme administered by Bredon Parish Council, who were happy to show their support for a new amenity for

local people to enjoy. In addition to the £2500 pledged from the Trust's own reserves, we are still seeking another £3000, and a further grant application was completed in respect of this balance in late December. A decision is expected shortly and we hope to be able to confirm the hide's construction in spring ... watch this space!

As the proposed hide is our fundraising focus at present, no further grant applications for any other projects were

completed in the second half of 2015.

Long-term local supporter Bredon Forest School donated £1600 to the Trust in 2015, unrestricted funds which are used to help with general costs including volunteer tools and materials for reserve management. We are very grateful for their generous support.

We have also had a few new people join Friends of KCT.

Thank you to all who have supported us this year!

KCT Governors' Annual Board Meeting 2015

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.

2015 has seen significant progress on the new EA & Buglife partnerships and associated projects (see page 6 for more details) and fundraising towards the proposed new bird hide at Kemerton Lake, which was agreed as a top priority at the 2014 meeting, is on target and hopefully should be completed in early 2016. KCT's involvement in the 'Saving our Magnificent Meadows' national project has seen the Trust working with the Cotswold Conservation Board (see page 4 for more details), which is a great link-up and hopefully will lead to other partnership opportunities in the future. Overall, the governors felt a lot

had been achieved, particularly in light of John Clarke's uncertain health and Kate Aubury's maternity leave starting in late July.

After reviewing the past year, the governors identified priorities for 2016, which included completing fundraising for the proposed new bird hide and, if successful, constructing the hide in spring/summer 2016, approving the appointment of a facilitator for the ongoing Carrant Catchment Restoration Project to help take it forward as it grows and recruits more partners locally (see page 6 for more details) and for funds to be released for additional contractor works on the reserves to cover a shortfall in current habitat management.

Following the meeting and lunch, the governors visited The Bushes SSSI and Aldwick Wood SSSI on Bredon Hill, which are both part-managed by the Trust under an agreement with the landowner, for the governors to see some of



KCT Governors bird watching, The Bushes SSSI, October 2015

the work carried out by the Trust in recent years and discuss possible upcoming projects within both the sites, particularly ideas for invertebrate projects in conjunction with Buglife. Our new governor Peter Marren enjoyed getting out to see the local landscape and learn more about our work.

The 2014/15 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.

News in Brief

On 25th August the Trust welcomed a special new member; Charlotte Rose Aubury, our Support Coordinator Kate Aubury's baby. Charlotte, or Lottie as she is better known, was a healthy 8lbs 8oz and Mother and Baby were both doing so well that they joined members for the Dragonfly Walk just 4 days after the big day!

Since her birth Lottie has already attended the Trust's Open Day, where she slept snugly in a sling on Kate all day, the Apple Day (ditto) and even the Annual Governors Meeting, where she



© David Aubury
Support Coordinator Kate Aubury & baby Lottie on a visit to Beggar Boys Wetland, August 2015

spent much of the time with her Dad in a nearby room so as not to disrupt the proceedings. She has also popped along to a couple of work parties to meet the volunteers and show them how its done!

Kate is currently on maternity leave but still continuing with much of her normal volunteer duties, although our warden John Threadingham is kindly covering the work party supervision in her absence.

A small project designed to answer the question of what predates our Swan Mussels at Kemerton Lake is to start shortly. Trust volunteer George Day will be using trail cameras and surveys to try and solve the mystery of just which denizen of the lake is responsible for eating large quantities of the mussels and leaving the shells scattered far and wide. Will it prove to be gulls, otters or ...?



© Kate Aubury

Kate, David & Lottie Aubury manning the KCT stand at the Apple Day

On Saturday 17th October it was Kemerton Orchard Workers' (KOW) 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 community

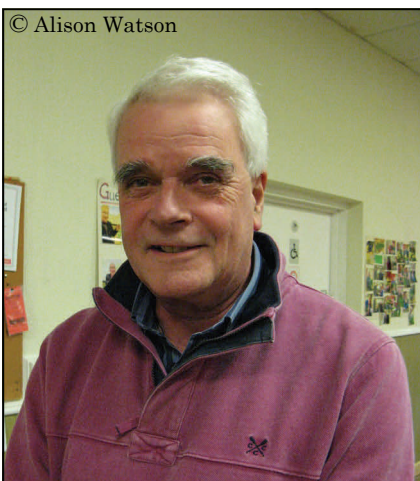
Bumper Crop Makes Apple Day a Juicing Success!

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 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. Baby Lottie was useful for drawing the punters in too!

The sun shone throughout the afternoon and the queue for the apple press was long—2015 has been a bumper year for apples so there was no shortage of locals wanting to get their crop pressed.

All in all, the day was a great success and raised valuable funds for the ongoing support of Daffurn's Orchard. KOW are currently looking to recruit more volunteers to assist with the orchard's management so check out the details on page 7.



© Alison Watson

In this edition of Kemerton Clippings, we are focussing on another of our volunteer Recorders, who help the Trust by donating their time and expertise to help monitor our reserves for wildlife.

Roger Umpelby, who is known locally as the Ashton Bugman, has been submitting invertebrate records to the Trust for some years. Roger credits his childhood in the countryside of Devon with stimulating his love of wildlife, and after completing a joint botany and zoology degree he joined the Entomology Department of the Ministry of Agriculture's Plant Pathology

Focus on a Friend: Roger Umpelby

Laboratory at Harpenden. This laboratory conducted research in agricultural and horticultural pests and one of Roger's first jobs was to forage in the grounds for slugs!

Roger's main area of work until his retirement in 2002 was researching and advising on biological control of pests, something which is becoming more of a focus in the field as we look at reducing pesticide use.

Since retirement, Roger has used his spare time to spend a lot more time observing and recording our local invertebrates. His involvement with KCT started when in 2007 he saw an article in the Worcestershire Record about the rare dotted bee-fly *bombylius discolor* and contacted John Clarke to find out more about a record from Kemerton Lake. John introduced Roger to the work of the Trust and he has helped us by sending in records ever since. Roger has developed a passion for recording local wildlife with

a camera and has built up a large library of shots which he shares with others through interesting illustrated talks such as the one he gave our members in 2014.

Although he does not have a favourite 'bug' (there are too many to choose from!), if he believed in reincarnation Roger would like to return as a dragonfly. He feels he could tolerate the up to 2 years in cold muddy water for the reward of emerging as one of the insect masters of the air. His only doubt about this occurred when he was watching a dragonfly at Kemerton Lake and saw a it snatched by a hobby!

At KCT we are very grateful to Roger for submitting invertebrate records for our reserves and for sharing his knowledge through his wonderful talks. If you want to hear from Roger, why not join us for his talk about invertebrate predators and parasites on March 4th (see 'Dates for the Diary' on the back page for more details).

Save Our Magnificent Meadows Project



© Kate Aubury

Meadow Cranesbill, one of the many wildflowers that will benefit from the SoMM project

Over the summer, KCT has been involved in a national partnership project called Save our Magnificent Meadows (SoMM). Locally, this 3 year project, led by Plantlife and primarily funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, aims to restore up to 1125ha of wildflower-rich limestone grasslands in the Cotswolds AONB.

Wildlife-rich grasslands were once widespread through the UK but have seriously declined, largely due to modern land management practices. The SoMM project is building on Prince Charles' 2013 Coronation Meadows project which—to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Queen's coronation—aimed to identify a wildlife-rich meadow in every county in the UK. The project involves 11 lead organisations working in partnership, including the Cotswold Conservation Board.

One of the focuses of the project in the AONB is targeting low-quality and former wildlife-rich grasslands and restoring them using seed harvested locally from donor sites using a seed harvester.

As part of the local project, our Governor Matthew Darby opted to become a Landowner Champion of the project. Two

sites on the estate were chosen as donor sites for seed harvesting, and two other sites were identified for restoration using the seed. KCT is involved because the donor sites are included in land we help manage for local landowners for their wildlife importance and the Trust will also be involved in monitoring the success of the restoration in future years—recording plant species etc.

The project work on the Estate involved the following; seed collected from Long Meadow was sown in the New Park and seed collected in Round Hill West was sown in Round Hill East.

Kemerton Estate's Long Meadow is a good example of an MG5 crested dog's tail *Cynosurus cristatus*—common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* grassland. Long Meadow has all the wildflower species that are desirable for brush harvested seed such as red clover, oxeye daisy and yellow rattle, so it was considered a suitable donor site. New Park is an example of an MG6 perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*—crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* grassland. However, it lacks the species richness of nearby Long Meadow so in July 2015 a 1.29ha section was scarified to create 50% open ground and seed harvested from Long Meadow that same day was sown onto the prepared ground by Matthew Darby and a team of SoMM project volunteers from Cotswold Conservation Board. The area was rolled a few days later.

Round Hill consists of three

areas of calcareous grassland covering 8ha. Round Hill West is part of the Bredon Hill SSSI. It is an example of CG4c tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* grassland. It is species rich, containing wildflowers such as salad burnet, pyramidal orchid and lady's bedstraw, so it was considered a suitable donor site. Round Hill East has a more limited diversity so was chosen as a donor site to enhance and restore the grassland. It is also CG4c but lacks the species richness of nearby Round Hill West so in July 2015 a 0.25ha section was scarified to create 50% open ground and seed harvested from Round Hill West was sown by the team of SoMM project volunteers from Cotswold Conservation Board.

This important national project is looking at the long-term enhancement of grasslands throughout the UK and KCT is delighted to be involved in a small way with such a worthwhile endeavour. It will be some time before it will be possible to measure the success or failure of the restoration work but the hope is that future wildflower recording by the Trust will show that the donor sites' floral biodiversity has been improved by this work.



© Kate Aubury

Buttercups flowering in Long Meadow, one of the donor sites on Kemerton Estate

Update on Buglife & KCT Partnership Project & More - Much More! - by John Clarke, December 2015

Readers may recall from previous articles that KCT has been forming a partnership with Buglife, the national charity for invertebrates. In 2010, we worked with them in establishing an Ark Site for our native Crayfish at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve. I am delighted to say that we also now have an informal arrangement whereby Buglife will have access to land on Kemerton Estate to carry out research and practical trials. Buglife is drawing up a 'wish list' of work and projects based on their own proposals and others which I have put forward.

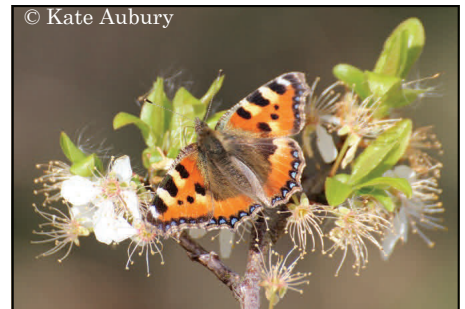
Encouraged by this, a few years ago Adrian and I resurrected a long-held desire - to form a larger partnership in the area, called 'The Carrant Catchment Restoration Project', which has been outlined in previous articles. The idea behind the CCRP is that potentially, by working together, we can affect the environment over a large area - from Tewkesbury almost as far as Evesham and from Bredon Hill to Stanway Hill.

The Environment Agency has already got involved. Last autumn it completed the restoration of three former Oxbows (meanders) and started the restoration of an important

river meadow on the Carrant. Since then staff have visited Kemerton and Overbury estates to consider other ideas. The EA is also drawing up a wish list of projects. A PhD student from Gloucester University will begin research into water and soil run-off and water quality on Overbury land while another student from Pershore College will begin a study on veteran trees. A charity has offered to supply free water testing kits and we will be seeking volunteers to help with a baseline survey of water quality on Bredon Hill. Another charity has asked us to help with field trials of endangered species of arable wildflowers.

To date, I have obtained the support of five farmers and land managers for the CCRP. All participation is voluntary. I have realised that I cannot cope with a project of this potential size and so sought advice from Natural England. As a result we now have the services of Jenny Phelps, who works for the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). Jenny has 30 years of experience in her field (please excuse pun!) and is already acting as 'Facilitator' for a much larger scheme. I am delighted that we have found her and I hope we can raise funding to support her work as 'Facilitator' for the CCRP.

We have already been offered support from a number of sources (see last newsletter, edition 16, page 6). We hope to encourage other partners, including more farmers, local gardeners, local beekeepers and the WI to get involved in the CCRP. We will promote local



© Kate Aubury
Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae* on Cherry Blossom, March 2013

businesses and food wherever possible. We would love to establish a third community orchard up the valley - in the Beckford/Ashton area.

One of our first projects 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. The mapping identifies and values the 'patches' of wildlife habitat providing pollen and nectar to pollinators and at what time of year they are available. 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; there are masses of other species of bees, wasps (and their parasites), beetles, butterflies and moths - all of which need pollen. Another project, funded by the County Council, will involve practical trials into getting wildflowers back into some road verges.

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!



© Kate Aubury

A source of pollen; Buttercups in flower, Long Meadow, May 2014

What we need is ... more KOWs! - by John Clarke



© Kate Aubury

Apple Blossom in Daffurn's Orchard

I think it was back in 2001 that Kemerton Conservation Trust launched an appeal in the local community to raise money to buy Daffurn's Orchard. If it didn't become a community orchard there was a possibility that houses might be built on it. Betty Daffurn, who had owned the orchard made provision for the Trust to buy her orchard to save it from development. Such was the enthusiasm back then that we raised enough money to buy the orchard, replace the old fence, buy some equipment – and still have a bit to spare! The support continued as Kemerton Orchard Workers (KOW) was formed to manage Daffurn's as an orchard nature reserve. Volunteers offered to be trained in fruit tree management, in Health and Safety matters and even in fruit grafting – the skill of grafting wood from a chosen variety on to rootstock to form a new tree. One volunteer made traditional wooden rakes to use when we needed to rake off the cut grass. During the first two or three years a great deal of work was invested in revital-

ising old trees and planting new ones. KOW's Apple Day and their Calendar have now become part of village life. KOW members became so skilled at managing fruit trees that several local people asked them to restore their private orchards – raising more money to support their work.

So why the silly question in the title to this piece?

Well, as I said earlier, all this began what, fifteen years ago? Back then the majority of people involved were approaching or beyond retirement age. Nowadays, like some of our veteran trees they are, well, not so productive! In fact, some are unable to support Daffurn's Orchard physically anymore. So we need some new stock, some younger supporters, to step forward and help KOW manage this lovely orchard.

What's involved? Well, during the Winter they need three to four hours of your time to prune the young trees, check the old ones and manage the Mistletoe so that it doesn't weaken the trees or cause the wind to blow some over. Then, in late July-ish they need another three or four hours to help rake up the cut grass and load it into a trailer. That's it! Of course you could volunteer to help with Apple Day and fund raising but that's up to you.

Have you visited Daffurn's Orchard? In late Winter/early Spring there are areas of Bluebells, Snowdrops, Violets and

Daffodils. In May the apple trees are awash with pink and white blossom, the plum trees with sparkling, pure white flowers and the very old perry pear tree (variety Barland) sometimes looks as though it is coated in snow! In Autumn in a year like 2015 and after the sheep have grazed off the regrowth of grass, the trees are weighed down with fruit. Some of the varieties in Daffurn's Orchard form part of the Trust's collection of more than 200 traditional British varieties which are spread across nine Kemerton orchards.

What's in it for you? Materially, nothing whatsoever! If you are still studying you might want to get some experience of working in a team and gaining new skills. If you spend much of your days away from Kemerton you may just need a way to unwind on the occasional weekend and connect with the local community. If you are now approaching retirement or have retired you may be looking for a new interest and ways of contributing to the local community. You don't have to do it for life - although that would be good! Other members of KOW will teach you the basic skills and about Health and Safety matters. If you can spare, what was it (?) about 8 hours PER YEAR (!) to help maintain our lovely community orchard please contact KOW committee members Olivia and Neil Chance (01386 725203) or Anna and Steve Fletcher (01386 725271).

Kemerton Clippings January 2016

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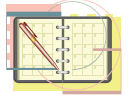
This newsletter is published bi-annually. The next edition will be issued in July 2016.

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



Frosted teasel, KLNR, January 2015

Save the Date!



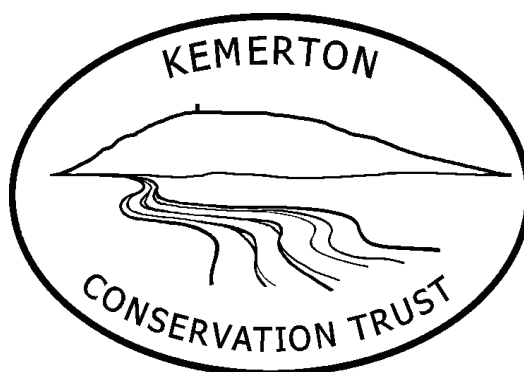
- **Saturday 27th February** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Friday 4th March - 'Watch Your Back!'** - a talk about invertebrate predators and parasites', **Victoria Hall, Kemerton** (8pm start) - see 'News & Events' on website www.kemerton.org for full event details
- **Saturday 26th March** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 30th April** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Sunday 15th May - Member Walk to Aldwick Wood** (2.30pm start) - see 'News & Events' on website www.kemerton.org for full event details
- **Saturday 28th May** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Sunday 12th June - Annual Open Day, KLNR** (gates open at 11am) - see 'News & Events' on website www.kemerton.org for full event details
- **Saturday 2nd July** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 30th July** - 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.

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