

Kemerton Clippings

Issue 18

July 2016

Appeals for Help!

The Trust is looking for volunteer help in the following:

Planting wildflower bulbs in the woods:

Do you enjoy gardening and have a couple of hours to spare this autumn?

We are looking to plant several hundred native bluebell and daffodil bulbs in Kemerton Woods this year to increase the ground flora within the woodland. Planting the bulbs is easy but time-consuming so ideally a group of 3-5 people who could spend 2-3 hours one day planting en masse would be best. So if you have some gardening friends and could arrange a work party with them that would be ideal. However, we would also love to hear from individuals who could commit to several hours planting to suit their own schedule as any and all help is appreciated!

If you are interested and would like more details, please contact Matt Darby on 01386 7256254 or email him matt@kemerton.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. Thank you!

Outstanding Orchids are the Highlight of our Open Day

Our Annual Open Day at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve was on Sunday 12th June, and with a good turnout (despite the wet weather) everyone had a fantastic time admiring the orchids, learning more about the reserve and enjoying some delicious refreshments after their walks.



Support Coordinator Kate Aubury & daughter Lottie ready for the first walk

The focus this year was on the nine native orchid species that grow on the reserve, particularly the six species which were in flower on the day (Common Spotted, Southern Marsh, Pyramidal, Twayblade, Bee and a hybrid Common Spotted/Southern Marsh cross). Two guided tours of the reserve led by our Chairman Adrian Darby and Governor Matthew Darby took visitors on a lovely circular trail around the lake edge and through the woodland to admire these stunning plants - and the many other sights on the reserve - and we also had an information stand and refreshments available in the Circle Glade.

Always a spectacular sight, the orchids were out in even more profusion than previous years so visitors were spoilt for choice; the meadow was dotted with Pyramidal Orchids amongst masses of Oxeye Daisies whilst Common Spotted and Southern Marsh Orchids flowered at the edge of the reeds. The weather stayed dry for the morning walk and light showers failed to dampen spirits in the afternoon. One of the attendees is an expert on orchids and believes we may have Leopard Orchids on site (a variant of Southern Marsh Orchid) so if this proves to be the case, our orchid count will go up to 10!



Possible Leopard Orchids (Southern Marsh Orchid var. junialis), KLNLR



Adrian leading the afternoon walk at the Open Day

On the day we made a small profit from entrance fees, refreshments sales and new member donations. The money raised all goes towards the work of the Trust.

Thanks goes to all our fantastic volunteers who assisted both in the run-up to the event and on the day itself, we couldn't have done it without you all!



© Kate Aubury

Roger Umpelby giving his talk,
Victoria Hall, March 2016

Talk on Predators and Parasites Delights and Intrigues Members

The talk this time focused on some of the small but vicious predators and parasites of the invertebrate world and was not for the faint hearted!

The colourful crab spider (see Roger's fantastic photo below) can change colour from white to yellow over a number of days to match the flower it sits on (clearly this one has gotten confused!). This camouflage technique makes it a formidable ambush predator, targeting small insects visiting the flower searching for nectar.

When watching the jewel-bright dragonflies flitting along the lake edge in the summer it is easy to forget that they are impressive hunters akin to birds of prey, catching other flying insects whilst in flight, and in the case of

species such as the Hawkers, consuming them on the wing.

Equally fascinating are some of the parasitic insects which live on hosts - both other invertebrates and also larger animals such as mammals - and feed off them.

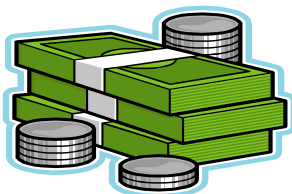
The talk was well attended and those who came were treated to a intriguing look at a usually hidden world.



© Roger Umpelby

One of Roger's photos; a colourful crab spider lies in wait on a foxglove

Funding Update



Our fundraising for our new bird hide at Kemerton Lake was completed in early 2016 when we secured an additional £500 from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous. This brought the total funds raised to £18,000. This was £2000 less than our original target but with project deadlines approaching fast, the Governors decided to proceed with the hide construction and provide additional funds from our own reserves. The hide has now been built and opened to the public (please see page 5 for more details) and the project completed.

A funding proposal for a Facilitator for CCARP was in progress through Natural England but as the fund involved is a European Fund, the recent vote for Brexit has put this in doubt (see page 6).

The Trust receives a small but significant proportion of its annual income from farm subsidy payments through the EU CAP. Brexit will impact on this, but what will replace the CAP and how that will affect our income remains a complete unknown for now.

Long-term local supporter Bredon Forest School donated £850 to the Trust in the first half of 2016, 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 received two generous donations totalling £450 from Miss K.M Harbinson's Charitable Trust in the last 6 months.

Thank you to all who have supported us this year!

Woodland Walk Captures the Joy of Spring

On Sunday 15th May Chairman Adrian Darby and Governor Matthew Darby led a small (but select!) group of Members on a guided walk through The Bushes SSSI and Aldwick Wood SSSI on Bredon Hill.

These two sites are both part of the larger Bredon Hill Special Area of Conservation and the Trust assists in their ongoing management. The Bushes SSSI is a limestone grassland with scrub and contains some interesting flora as well as lots of mature hawthorn and elder, whilst Aldwick Wood SSSI is an ancient woodland with Oak, Ash and Sycamore the prime species.

So with the focus on the ecology of the woodland and limestone scrub, the circular walk began in Upper Westmancote with the sun shining and, after initially following the public footpath,

headed off up the slope to The Bushes SSSI where the hawthorn blossom had turned the shrubs white. After learning a little about the unique flora of limestone grassland, including flowers such as the Woolly Thistle, the attendees headed into the woodland proper, under the shady canopy.

Although Aldwick Wood SSSI is an ancient woodland, it does not have a great suite of woodland flora compared to some local woods, for example it has very few bluebells. However, there are still some plants of interest including Monkshood and Dog's Mercury. It is also part of Bredon Hill SAC, one of only three sites nationally to have the rare Violet Click Beetle *Limoniscus violaceus*, although as it is only found in the heart of decaying trees, there was no chance of spotting it on the walk!

A large rookery is located within the woodland, so at evening time the air fills with their raucous



Adrian and some of the attendees at the start of the walk

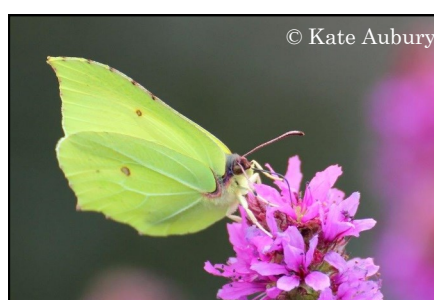
calls as they return en masse to their nests. Previous surveys have also highlighted that the wood has a number of bat species, including Brown Long Eared and Noctule.

After spending some time learning all about the woodland, attendees headed back to Upper Westmancote through the fields below the two sites, which have in recent years been planted with trees such as oak to create wood pasture, a BAP habitat, which will enhance this special area even more in the future.

News in Brief

In March our Support Coordinator Kate Aubury gave a talk on Fungi to the Tewkesbury U3A Natural History Group which was very well received. The Trust received a donation of £36 from the group as thanks.

On 10th June Kemerton Estate hosted a visit for a group of land managers from the National Trust who were interested in learning more about conservation farming. As part of the visit they had a guided tour of Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve and various other conservation areas on the



A colourful Brimstone, KLNR

farm which the Trust assists in managing.

The group were very impressed by the work of the Estate and also the Trust, especially given our limited resources. Their visit is part of our wider remit

to share our conservation knowledge so we were delighted that Kemerton Estate was able to include some of what we do as part of the event.

Also in June our Support Coordinator Kate, along with daughter Lottie, led a guided walk at KLNR for the Pershore U3A Natural History Group, with a focus on our orchids. The walk had to be rescheduled following the deluge we had in early June but thankfully on the revised date the weather was kind and the group enjoyed a lovely ramble around the lake. The Trust received a donation of £30 from the group as thanks.

Work Party Update by Paul Bloomer

Work Party volunteer Paul Bloomer shares how and why he got involved with our reserves work party group.

Getting into the volunteer way: My life has been sometimes strongly and sometimes subtly influenced by the countryside from an early age. My parents took me and my sister for country walks quite often and pointed out this plant and that bird, maybe a striking looking beetle, or a particular fungus. Then if there was something unidentified we would search through the well-worn 'pocket guides' in the car or back at home and try to work out which natural wonders we had seen on that trip.

We were encouraged to respect the wildlife and learn about it, and follow the countryside

code. However, being shy and not wanting to go out of my comfort zone, I didn't really think about doing conservation volunteering till I was much older. But the idea obviously was in me.

Then, 10 or so years ago, I decided to give volunteering a try. Since then, I've volunteered with (amongst others) Gloucestershire Orchard Trust (preserving old orchards and local varieties); Tewkesbury Friends of the Earth; the recently formed Tewkesbury Nature Reserve and of course Kemerton Conservation Trust.

Although I'm not always able to go to the KCT work parties, I look forward to getting stuck in to the ones I can attend! The reserves are beautiful and it's nice to see more of them than I would otherwise. It's great to



© David Aubury

Paul (left) on a fungi foray at KLNLR, November 2014

see what a difference it makes when the work is done, and to know it will help the habitats and wildlife thrive and help people enjoy the countryside. Hopefully this, in turn, will inspire the next generation to love the flora, fauna and fungi as I have always done.

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.



© Alan Marsh

George (front) assisting with the Crayfish project in 2010

In this edition of Kemerton Clippings, we are focussing on a man who has been helping the Trust in a wide variety of roles for many years.

George Day initially began volunteering with our monthly reserves work party, something he has continued to this day, but soon began to assist in other ways including helping our warden when an extra pair of hands were needed (as with our newly completed hide project), carrying out butterfly

Focus on a Friend: George Day

surveys, helping out on various projects such as CCARP and most recently running a small project of his own setting up trail cameras at KLNLR to try and solve the mystery of which animal is eating the swan mussels in the lake.

During her time at university, George's daughter Emily got involved in conservation volunteering and listening to her talk about it motivated George to try it out too when he retired, joining both KCT and the Malvern Hills Conservators.

The beautiful surroundings and the satisfaction gained from a job well done are just two of the reasons he has continued with both organisations.

One of George's roles is carrying out 4 transect butterfly surveys,

which involves walking the same route 3 times a year counting the butterflies using certain preset criteria. This valuable data allows us to monitor populations over the long-term. Although George does not have a favourite animal, his work on these surveys has led him to focus on butterflies and improve his skills in identifying less common species such as Green Hairstreak and Clouded Yellow.

In 2014 George was part of the team which surveyed all our orchards and discovered the rare Mistletoe Marble Moth in two of them.

At KCT we are very grateful to George for his indefatigable help with so many different projects, it has been invaluable having such a hard working and reliable volunteer to call upon!

Our Water's Edge Hide is Open for Business!

© Kate Aubury



The boys from Gilleard Bros outside the newly built hide, June 2016

In July last year fundraising work began for the proposed new bird hide at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve. This hide would be situated at the west end of the lake and would sit on open water at the end of a 40m boardwalk through the reed bed.

The purpose of the hide was to enable future visitors to access views of the lake and get close to the birds when the reed bed along the western shore fills in completely, preventing walkers along the public footpath from being able to see the water. As many of our visitors enjoy bird watching from the path, the new hide would be a wonderful addition to the lake.

Our target for fundraising was £20,000, with the balance of the project costs to come out of our own reserves. By end of January 2016 we had raised a total of £18,500, and as some of the grants had to be spent this year and the works were best carried out in late spring, the governors made the decision to proceed with the project and cover the shortfall.

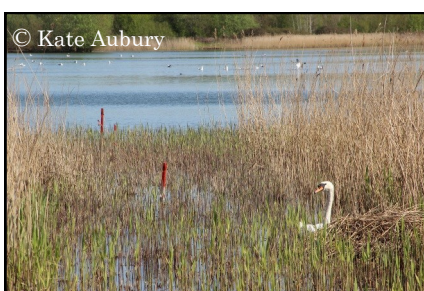
Work on the project began in earnest in March, with the build scheduled for late April. One of the first jobs was to prepare the site for the build, which involved cutting and clearing bramble from the lake bank, and cutting a 3m channel through the reeds where the boardwalk was planned. Some

of this work was carried out by our work party volunteers, led by our warden John Threadingham. Some of the reed cutting had to be done from a boat, and this hard task was done by John and volunteer George Day, who both risked a splash in the lake to get the job done!

Our volunteers did such a great job cutting the boardwalk channel that a pair of nesting swans decided it was the perfect site for their nest this year and before the build could begin they had moved in! This unfortunately delayed the construction by almost 2 months as we waited for the birds to incubate and hatch their eggs and leave the nest for the open water. The swans successfully hatched two cygnets in late May so by mid-June the workmen from Gilleard Bros arrived to erect the hide and boardwalk. After four days of hard graft the structures were complete and looked even better than we had imagined.

Our official opening was held on Saturday 16th July, after the final elements of the project had been completed. John erected the fencing connecting the footpath to the boardwalk and also installed the new interpretation board and we were ready to open.

The grand opening included Governors, representatives



A nesting swan in the middle of the boardwalk channel, April 2016

© David Aubury



Support Coordinator Kate Aubury (& Lottie!) officially open the hide

from our funders, including councillors from Bredon Parish Council, the Leader of Wychavon Council, Councillor Robinson, some of our members and of course volunteers who had been involved in the project. Support Coordinator Kate Aubury who supervised the project cut the ribbon after a speech from our Chairman Adrian Darby and attendees got to enjoy being the first to experience the new amenity. The feedback was extremely positive, everyone loved the great views and the walk through the reed beds.

We would like to thank our generous funders; Welcome to Our Future through the Severn Waste Environment Fund, Bredon Parish Council through the New Homes Bonus, Garfield Weston Foundation, Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust and an anonymous funder, who made this project possible.

We would also like to thank all those who assisted in the delivery of the project; project supervisor Kate Aubury, warden John Threadingham, volunteer George Day, volunteer David Aubury, our work party volunteers, Chairman Adrian Darby and Governor Matthew Darby. All of these contributed their time in a voluntary capacity and helped make the project a success. If you haven't been yet, make sure you visit soon!

Carrant Catchment Area Restoration Project (CCARP) Update & More - by John Clarke, July 2016

CCARP: The Environment Agency (EA), the County Council, Natural England, five farmers plus Overbury Stud and KCT are supporting the project. Realising that it was growing too big for me to manage I met with Natural England who advised me to apply for a 'Facilitator' via a special fund and recommended Jenny Phelps from the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). Jenny has a lot of experience in running such a project and has a farming and wildlife background. The plan is for me to work with her. So, everything was progressing well - until BREXIT!! Yes, it is European money that will fund Jenny's work. It is hoped however that there is still a good chance of eventually getting funding.

The EA has completed the restoration of two more oxbows on the River Carrant plus the introduction of seed to improve the flora of a mile-long meadow. It is now looking to create 'wet woodland' habitat at two sites and maybe make some on-stream pools and reed beds to catch silt washing off the hill.

Research: We now have two students in place. One is doing

his PhD looking into water and silt run-off and water quality, the other is doing his MSc in particular aspects of plants, birds and invertebrates. A third is considering doing research around veteran trees and we may well have enquiries from other students.

RELIC: KCT's part in this project to save the elm had of late taken rather a back seat. However, I was propelled back into the driver's seat while one of the CCARP members was showing me around his farm. He pointed out a very large, mature tree apparently untouched by Dutch Elm Disease!

Plans were set in motion to take cuttings from the new tree. It has to be done with military precision as the leaves on cut branches wilt very quickly. We had to have a volunteer team in place waiting for us at Pershore College (Avonbank Nurseries). We needed the farmer to get us to the tree, armed with pruning gear, black plastic bags and a hand sprayer full of cold water.

In the event two unplanned things happened on the day. First of all we were joined by a relative of the farmer and her young nephew who is a very enthusiast plantsman and particularly experienced in taking cuttings and was keen to try the more challenging elm. Being much younger and more agile his help was a gift as he was able to reach with ease the target branches in order to cut off material for processing! Just as well that we had more help as the farmer calmly pointed out that he had, in fact, two



A Skylark's nest

apparently resistant elms!! Now we had to get twice the material in the same time.

That done we hurried across to the nursery where the team was standing by. Our young helper then found himself getting some job experience as he was enlisted to help the team cut and pot the cuttings and put them in a mist propagator - I think he must have thought he'd died and gone to heaven when they invited him to go back to learn and help whenever he could!

Skylark Trials: Our trials into Breeding Skylarks in Rough Grassland have produced fantastic results. We have now written it up and hope to find a way of getting other farmers with suitable land to do the same in helping to conserve the Skylark - one of our threatened farmland birds.

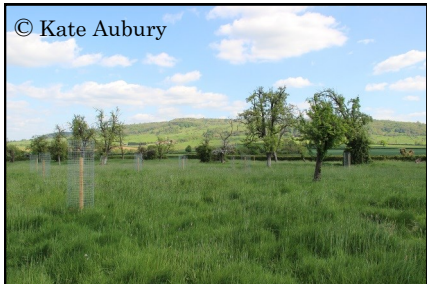
Water quality testing: CCARP members agreed to a baseline survey of water quality on their land. 'People, Ponds and Water' donated simple testing kits and then local volunteers and farmers tested a variety of sites on their land. Since then I have received an offer from two farmers to continue testing to support the PhD student's research.



Collecting material for cuttings from an Elm Tree

Restoring an old fruit orchard in Eckington to safeguard the Mistletoe Marble Moth

© Kate Aubury



Breddy Croft with newly planted trees in the foreground, May 2016

In April 2015 the Trust received a £500 grant from a generous donor who wishes to remain anonymous towards a small orchard restoration project planned for Breddy Croft Orchard.

Breddy Croft is a remnant orchard in Eckington owned by Kemerton Estate but managed for wildlife with the help of KCT. It has a number of old trees, mostly apple, but a small number of pear and plum as well, and during the orchard surveys in 2014 the rare Mistletoe Marble Moth *Celypha woodiana* was discovered on the site. As this moth is only found in 7 sites in Worcestershire, and is nationally scarce, ensuring the long term survival of this orchard became an urgent priority.

After securing funding last year, we carried out the 'Restoring an Old Fruit Orchard In Eckington to safeguard the Mistletoe Marble Moth Project' earlier this year, completing it in March.

There were two main aims; increase the longevity of the existing apple trees to ensure the moths and other wildlife have continued habitat and, as many of the veteran trees are in their final years of life, plant new apple trees to ensure the orchard continues as a wildlife haven into the future.

The first aim was achieved through careful pruning of the old trees by local contractor Jim Aplin, who has carried out pruning in our orchards for many years and knows how to encourage healthy growth. Judicious pruning can help extend the life of apple trees so hopefully these old specimens will be with us for many more years.

In order to fulfil aim two, we planted 15 new apple trees. The variety planted was Dabinett which is a local

variety of cider apple. These were supplied by Walcot Organic Nursery, who supply all our orchard trees. As the orchard is grazed in the autumn by sheep, the newly planted trees were all guarded to protect them against gnawing teeth!

Although this was only a small project, it should help secure the future biodiversity of this important orchard. We hope to plant more apple trees in the next few years as and when more funding becomes available so that there will be a range of ages to the trees which is important for the flora and fauna that relies on the orchard as their habitat. This includes birds such as Fieldfare and Mistle Thrush, mammals such as Badger and Bat and of course a wide variety of invertebrates.



© Kate Aubury

Apple blossom on one of the veteran trees, Breddy Croft, May 2016

Wildflower Nursery Update - by John Clarke

Pamela and her team of volunteers continue to produce seed from a number of rare arable wildflower species.

I was recently approached by The Species Recovery Trust, inviting us to take part in the

Archaeophytes Project. KCT was chosen as one of four sites to try to grow Upright Goosefoot (*Chenopodium urbicum*), a rare and endangered species. We now have quite a few plants in flower but face a challenge in collecting the tiny seed.



© John Clarke

Upright Goosefoot seedlings

Kemerton Clippings July 2016

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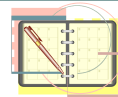
For more information on the work of KCT please visit our website: www.kemerton.org

© Kate Aubury



Clustered Bellflower, KLN, July 2016

Save the Date!



- **Saturday 27th August** - Working party (10am start, Upstones Orchard)
- **Sunday 18th September** - 'Fascinating Fungi' - an illustrated talk, **Victoria Hall, Kemerton** (8pm start) - see 'News & Events' on website www.kemerton.org for full event details
- **Saturday 24th September** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 15th October** - **Kemerton Apple Day, Victoria Hall, Kemerton** (1-5pm) - see 'News & Events' on website www.kemerton.org for full event details
- **Sunday 16th October** - **Fungi Foray, KLN** (2.30pm start) - see 'News & Events' on website www.kemerton.org for full event details
- **Saturday 29th October** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 26th November** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Wednesday 7th December** - Member-only Bird Watching Walk, KLN (2.30pm start) - see 'News & Events' on website www.kemerton.org for full event details

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

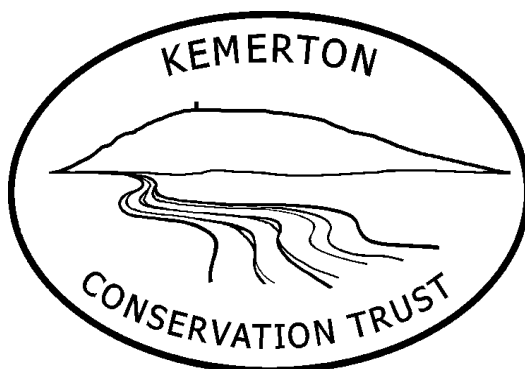
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