



## Dazzling Orchids Delight at Open Day



© Kate Aubury

Southern Marsh Orchids, Common Spotted Orchids and their hybrids in flower, KLNLR, June 2019

On Saturday 15th the Trust held it's annual Open Day at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve. The focus this year was again on the stunning native orchids found in the limestone grassland around the lake, many of which flower in June, including Bee, Common Spotted, Twayblade, Southern Marsh and Pyramidal Orchid.

After a wet week, the weather was unsettled - with several heavy showers during the day - and turnout was unfortunately lower than usual as a result. However, a few hardy souls donned their waterproofs and risked a soaking to join us for two guided tours of the reserve, taking in hundreds of orchids as well as plenty of other flora and fauna, followed by some refreshments in our woodland glade.

**Are you looking for a new hobby? Do you have a few hours spare a month? Do you have a passion for spotting snakes or counting crickets? If yes, why not volunteer with the Trust? We are always looking for enthusiastic people to assist us to protect local landscapes and the flora and fauna that rely on them. If you would like more details, please contact Support Coordinator Kate Aubury by email [kate@kemerton.com](mailto:kate@kemerton.com).**

In recent years our many Southern Marsh and Common Spotted Orchids have hybridised to produce large numbers of the tall *Dactylorhiza x grandis* and the magnificent mix of pink and purple spikes is a stunning sight in the meadow above the lake (see photo on left).

As well as the orchids, attendees were treated to the spectacle of hundreds of toadlets making their way into the woodland from the lake, Common Blue butterflies on the Bird's Foot Trefoil, noisy juvenile Oystercatchers practicing their flying and newly emerged Black Tailed Skimmers patrolling the water's edge.

We made a small profit from entrance fees, refreshments sales and member donations on the day. The money raised all goes towards the work of the Trust, helping us safeguard the site for the future. We also introduced more members of the public to the wonderful wildlife right on their doorstep, which is one of our key aims.

Thanks goes to all our fantastic, hard-working 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!



Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera* (left) & Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* (right), KLNLR, June 2019

## A Wander through Aldwick Wood SSSI



A bank of Wild Garlic flowering in Aldwick Wood SSSI, April 2019

In late April our Governor Matt Darby led a guided walk through The Bushes and Aldwick Wood SSSIs, two sites on Bredon Hill which are owned by Kemerton Estate but jointly managed by the farm and KCT for the benefit of the important flora and fauna they support.

The day was overcast and a little chilly but turnout was high and everyone was in good spirits ready for an informative ramble on the hill.

Spring is an excellent time to visit these two sites as in The Bushes the Hawthorn is flowering and lots of birds are nesting, whilst in Aldwick Wood the trees are in leaf and flowers such as Wild Garlic and Bluebell are flowering. Sadly there are only a few patches of these in the woodland due to past over-management and grazing by deer at present but they still make a lovely display in places.

Aldwick Wood SSSI is an ancient woodland which is part of the larger Bredon Hill Special Area of Conservation, designated to protect the unique and rare deadwood invertebrates found on the hill, some of which are found nowhere else in Britain. One major concern for the Trust is that Aldwick Wood is primarily Ash woodland and therefore the impact of Chalara (Ash Dieback) could be catastrophic. Only time

will tell, but the Trust is currently in the process of applying for a grant to carry out a major invertebrate survey in both Aldwick Wood and The Bushes in order to better understand the micro-habitats within these sites to help us protect them into the future. More on that soon.

On this particular day in April though the woods were full of birdsong and everyone had a wonderful time walking through the greenery.

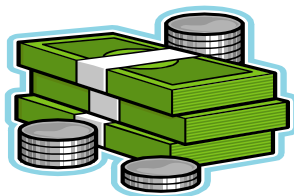


Governor Matt Darby with attendees in The Bushes SSSI, April 2019

## Funding Update

In February, the Trust successfully applied for a £500 grant to purchase replacement bird boxes for several of our sites. We opted for woodcrete boxes this time as they last longer and are harder for woodpeckers to drill into. Our generous funder wishes to remain anonymous, but we are very grateful for their support.

We also applied for a small grant to plant more bluebells and daffodils in Kemerton Wood from a local funder, which was unsuccessful but to our delight one of our Friends



heard about the project and thought it was a great idea so stepped in to fund the project themselves. A project report will be in the next newsletter.

Sadly our grant for core costs was turned down, which was a blow as we really need more staff resource to manage our existing commitments, fund-raise more and carry out new projects. We are considering other options but there are very few funders who give grants for core costs.

Long-term local supporter Bredon Forest School donated another £500 to the Trust in the first half of 2019. These are unrestricted funds which are used to help with general costs including volunteer tools, materials for repairs etc. We are very grateful for their generous support.

We also received a donation of £132.75 in the name of Friend of KCT Terry Mann who sadly passed away in May this year. Terry, a keen birder, and his family loved visiting the lake and we plan to put the money towards a project at the lake.

**Thank you to all who have supported us so far this year!**



## Vandals Cause Trouble at Kemerton Lake

Since the beginning of the year Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve has had multiple petty vandalism incidents. These have ranged from the more serious – our boats damaged, used on the water and theft of one attempted, to the merely irritating – hides left full of litter and signs of drugs and alcohol. West Mercia Police have been assisting us in trying to deal with it but the open nature of the site, the reality that we have only limited resources and are only on site a few times a week and the fact that the identity of some of the young people involved is unknown has made it difficult to tackle.

One of the boat incidents, which occurred during the Easter Holidays, was witnessed by a Trust member, who photographed the three male teenagers responsible. In addition, as they arrived by car and parked in a farm gateway, a vehicle registration was also recorded, which allowed the

police to identify them and follow up, although no charges were possible as the criminal damage could not be proven. The young men involved were not locals and we hope will not return given the police visit. Their thoughtless actions over the bank holiday weekend resulted in hours of clean up, repair and liaising with the police for our volunteer Warden, our Support Coordinator, and some of our Governors.

In the recent hotter weather, the lake has become a target for local teenagers who use the hides for drinking and taking drugs, often causing damage and leaving them in a state. They have also been seen trespassing around the lake and swimming in the water on hot days, which is very dangerous as it is full of water weed and thick mud. Small groups of boys have been witnessed on many occasions by visitors, although sadly so far no photographs have been obtained so identification has not yet been possible. We would be grateful for any photographs that may help us to identify the them.



Vandals with one of our 'liberated' boats, KLNLR, April 2019

The Trust is saddened that a handful of thoughtless visitors are creating issues for our volunteers and other visitors. The vandalism wastes our limited money and time, as we are forced to repair or replace damaged items or clean up litter thrown into the lake, and it is demoralising to see our wonderful wildlife site trashed again and again.

We would ask our members to report any issues in the hides via email [kate@kemerton.com](mailto:kate@kemerton.com) or by phone on 07765 334 776. You can also call West Mercia Police if you witness a crime.

## News in Brief

In March Kate Aubury gave a talk for the Trust to Beckford Gardening Club about 'Wildlife in a Special Corner of Bredon Hill'. The talk highlighted the plethora of fantastic flora and fauna found on our reserves throughout the seasons and was very well received. Part of the Trust's remit is to spread the conservation message to the general public so it was great to be invited to a neighbouring village to tell them about what we do and encourage them to visit our lovely reserves.

In the same spirit of education Kate also led a walk around



Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*, KLNLR, July 2019

Kemerton Lake on 1st July for Bredon Brownies to show them conservation in action on their local patch.

A group of 15 very excited ten year olds and their supervisors spent a happy hour looking at

colourful bugs, beetles, bees and butterflies, getting to grips with binoculars in the Water's Edge Hide and learning a little bit about why the environment is so important, how it helps us, how we can all help protect it and what the Trust does locally.

In the Hide we spotted four Common Sandpiper resting on a logs in the water, on passage from their breeding grounds in the North. The birds were unperturbed by the higher than usual noise levels in the hide, affording us some lovely views.

It was a pleasure meeting such enthusiastic young girls and showing them around the site.

# A Keen Eye: news from the hides

## - by David Keen, Friend of KCT



© David Keen

Barn Owl, KLNR, July 2019

The first Oystercatcher of the new season arrived on January 29th. After a very sharp frost that night, the following morning two thirds of the lake was frozen over. Despite this, there was plenty of activity with a large number of Teal, Tufted Duck, Pochard, Gadwall and some Widgeon. All were trying to claim the last bit of open water.

My next visits to the lake were February 12th and 13th; three more Oystercatcher had arrived and over the next few days four Great Crested Grebe turned up. Two of them did not stay very long. The two that did stay had a very frustrating time. They started to build a nest close to Water's Edge hide. After a day or two they lost interest and moved to the other side of the lake. After about ten days they returned to the original nest and laid two eggs. Unfortunately the next time I looked the eggs had gone. I thought they maybe dropped through the nest as it did not look the strongest of structures or had something take them? Then they moved to the top end of the lake and built a nest. This lasted for about two weeks and on July 4th that nest had gone and the birds were back on the water which was very puzzling. For them to lose three nests did

not seem right and on July 7th a visitor to the hide was showing me some film he had taken that morning of an Otter at the lake. Could this be part of the puzzle? We do tend to think of them as fish eaters but Otters have been known to take birds. I have not seen Otter or Mink on the site but they are the most elusive creatures. It would not surprise me if they were involved.

A bird we do not see very often at KLNR is the bird that the trust has adopted as their logo; the Curlew. So it was a pleasant surprise to see five of them on one of the islands in March, although they did not stay long.

Over the next few visits to the hide I saw Red Kite. All seemed to be coming from Beckford direction so one day I made my way home that way and spotted three kites on road kill. I stopped to photograph them and saw eight to ten kites circling above the trees. Kemerton is not that far. They seem to be congregating on Bredon Hill and with the breeding season upon us we could be seeing more of these wonderful birds.

I did not see the Cuckoo at the lake until May 21st. Then I saw two in the trees behind Water's Edge hide. I'm sure some of you will have seen them before then.

The next eagerly awaited visitor is one of my favourites, the Hobby. They arrived on May 18th last year, but did not arrive until June 6th this year when one was spotted but then not seen again until July 4th. It is great to see them back, and as the dragonflies emerge I am hoping to see more of them.

Another favourite bird which is fascinating to watch is one I had

only seen once before at Kemerton; the Barn Owl. Then on June 3rd I saw one sitting on a fence post. I took a long shot of it to make sure it was one. On June 4th and 5th I made two early starts and took over 300 shots. Some of them extremely close as he flew over me, at times less than 3m above me. There must be a good supply of mice and voles around the lake as the Kestrel can be seen hunting in the same area.

It looks as though the swans are going to make a late start this year and have nested to the side of the boardwalk. As I write this she is still sitting. The Oystercatcher seem to have an endless supply of Mussel to feed their two chicks. They can be seen trying to prize them open. The chicks are spending a lot of time on the hide roof at the moment.

This year has been disappointing for some of the birds. The Little Grebe, Moorhen and various duckling chicks have only survived a few days but there is still time for a second brood fingers crossed. July 7th I took some shots of a Tufted Duck with nine ducklings but when I made a brief visit to the lake on July 10th sadly she had lost 6 of them. The Mallard seem to be the only ones having any success so far this year.



© David Keen

Red Kite, KLNR, November 2018



## Dingy Skipper Spotted at Settlement Ponds



Dingy Skipper *Erynnis tages*, KLNLR, May 2019

On May 14th our butterfly surveyor George Day was searching for Green Hairstreak around the Settlement Ponds at Kemerton Lake when he spotted and photographed a small, dull brown butterfly - or was it a moth? Uncertain of the ID, he headed home to consult his books and to his delight confirmed it as a Dingy Skipper.

Dingy Skipper is a Section 41 species of principal importance under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act due

to its rarity and decreasing numbers across the UK (it has declined almost 50% since 1970). KCT has two previous records for the species, but these are 17 and 19 years ago respectively, so we are very pleased to have this new record. Even better; George saw more than one specimen on the day so hopefully there is a thriving colony.

Dingy Skipper caterpillars require Bird's Foot Trefoil plants to feed on, and this lovely little yellow member of the pea family flowers in profusion on the limestone grassland around Kemerton Lake. The same plant is also a key caterpillar food for the gorgeous Green Hairstreak - and George also spotted several of those on that same day in May, as well as Common Blue butterflies which are found in quite high numbers in the same area.

Our Support Coordinator Kate Aubury coincidentally happened to be on site the same day and was lucky enough to see the iridescent Green Hairstreak and the more camouflaged but equally exciting Dingy Skipper (thanks to George for pointing it out to her!).

George carries out butterfly transects for the Trust every year and has added hugely to our butterfly data in that time - and he's recorded several new species for our reserves along the way.



Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*, KLNLR, May 2019

## We Say our Goodbyes to a Wonderful Naturalist

The Trust was saddened to hear recently of the death of naturalist John Meiklejohn, a wonderful wildlife expert who spent many years surveying and recording for the Trust.

A Science Teacher who moved to Worcestershire to teach at Bredon Secondary School in 1963, John honed his knowledge of plants roaming Bredon Hill and was a key contributor to the Worcestershire Flora Project which started in 1987.

However his enthusiasm was not limited to botany. He was said to have spent a year familiarising himself with each animal group and by the



John Meiklejohn leading a walk at KLNLR Open Day, 2011

end of his life his knowledge of our area's biodiversity was encyclopaedic. This made him an invaluable contributor to the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre.

It was in the early 80s that John began assisting John and Pamela Clarke in their wildlife work on Kemerton

Estate, offering his expertise on many occasions. He continued to help the Trust when it was set up in 1989 and was a stalwart recorder for many years until ill health forced him to give up his beloved hobby. It was a source of frustration to him that his incredible memory began to fail him towards the end, although he still had most of the rest of us beat!

John was very popular both in Defford where he lived for five decades and with all Worcestershire naturalists, many of whom, including Adrian Darby, gathered for his memorial service in Defford Church last week.

## News from the Carrant Catchment Area Restoration Project - by Joanne Leigh, FWAGSW

Over the last year the group has increased to 29 members made up of 8500 Hectares of farming land. Most of our members are already in a Countryside Stewardship Scheme, including some in Higher Level Stewardship, which covers extensive restoration of habitat across the Carrant and Isborne. All of our farmers are aware of the need to address, and are contributing to; water quality improvement, soil health, carbon capture, riparian management, woodland management and habitat restoration.

Farmers and landowners are all very keen to welcome a new Environmental Land Management Scheme that will come out in the next year; they look forward to a less prescriptive scheme that looks at long term restoration with payments to deliver public good. In addition, farmers are also in a good position to do so much more towards climate change mitigation by contributing to carbon capture and a reduction in methane gas nationally. We all await the new scheme with interest.

Our recent events have had

good attendance and covered a range of activities including visiting a successful natural flood management scheme to learn more about the landscape features that can mitigate flooding such as leaky barriers or the reintroduction of river meanders, help with regenerative pastures, veteran tree management and preservation and habitat connectivity through hedgerow management. We also held a farmland ID session ahead of the national Big Farmland Bird Count, which several of our members took part in.

External funding from Cotswold Conservation Board has secured the planting of a further 107 trees as well as collaboration with external partners from the DHL group, who planted over 1200 hedge plants. Our project partners continue to support us and in doing so open us up to further funding and support, such as linking into their initiatives for carbon mitigation. The support from partners also provides the opportunity to monitor species and habitat and share this information to benefit future Environmental Land Management Schemes.



DHL Volunteer Event, Overbury Estate, January 2019

The CCARP group is underpinned by innovation and research and linked to other initiatives in the catchment that increase biodiversity through strategic management and collaborative partnership working. We welcome interest from corporate groups that would like to volunteer for conservation. We can arrange days where groups can support conservation management on a large scale to deliver landscape scale recovery of habitats. Last year we had the Gloucestershire Vale Conservation Group help with hedge laying and orchard tree planting, there is plenty more to do this winter that can help restore habitat so please get in touch if interested.

For further information of how to get involved please contact [Joanne.Leigh@fwagsw.org.uk](mailto:Joanne.Leigh@fwagsw.org.uk).

## KCT's Bird Farmland Bird Count 2019 Results

The Big Farmland Bird Count is a standardised bird survey carried out by farmers once a year. Run by the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, the count offers a simple means of recording the effect of any specific conservation work being instigated by farmers for

farmland birds on their land, such as scatter feeding birds through winter or growing crops specifically to provide seed for birds.

This year KCT partnered with Kemerton Estate to count the birds at five different locations

where supplemental feeding was taking place. The results are available in a short report on our website (under 'News and Events').

Thank you to all the volunteers who carried out the surveys for us.



## Work Party Update by Mike Seber

I've lived locally for 6 years and occasionally taken a walk round Kemerton Lake, stood in the hide and watched birds and insects live their brief and not so brief lives.

But only when I saw how friends and family reacted to the environment, especially when they are city dwellers, did I think, "This place is important". So I wanted to help the Trust. One way is by joining in one or more of the monthly work parties. It's a great way to make a difference for only a few hours on a Saturday. Since last October we've protected trees from bark damage by deer, planted and pruned

trees, cleared non native daffodils, painted a bird hide with wood preservative, put in natural protections against vandals (the devil makes work for idle hands etc.) and helped at the annual open day.

I've learnt about and seen more wildlife in the last 9 months than the previous 6 years. Deer and Hare, Great Crested Grebe and Smew (the last is quite rare I'm told) being a few highlights. I've also become aware that bees have been having a hard time recently and KCT are doing things to encourage them. I've been inspired to turn part of my garden into a wildflower meadow, which should provide



Mike (second from right) & KCT volunteers treating the East Hide with wood preservative, May 2019

helpful bee habitat. I'll report back once that's up and running.

*If you are interested in volunteering with the Trust please contact Kate Aubury, Support Coordinator by email [kate@kemerton.com](mailto:kate@kemerton.com) or by phone on 07765 334 776.*



In this addition of Kemerton Clippings we are focussing on our bee expert Geoff Trevis.

Geoff is the county recorder and local expert for aculeate hymenoptera (bees, wasps and ants), a role he took on many years ago when Worcestershire Biological Records Centre was taken under the wing of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust (WWT), and Geoff was asked to become Chairman, a role he still holds. On inspecting the

(paper at that time) records for the county he spotted that hymenoptera records were virtually non-existent and took up the baton. After attending identification workshops run by the national charity BWARS Geoff was ready to start surveying and recording.

Geoff has been involved with WWT since moving to the county after university, holding various roles including Honorary Secretary for many years. His involvement with KCT began in the early 2000s after our Conservation Advisor John Clarke found a large colony of mining bees at the newly formed Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve. National experts had visited and confirmed the bee bank to be of regional importance so John asked Geoff if he would help survey it in detail, an offer

## Focus on a Friend: Geoff Trevis

Geoff happily accepted. He recalls early visits to the bee bank, when it was estimated there were 40,000 Yellow-legged Mining Bee *Andrena flavipes* nests, as a highlight.

A dedicated naturalist, who's love of insects began as a child raising caterpillars into butterflies and hunting for beetles, he feels it a privilege to be able to visit wonderful sites such as Kemerton Lake to survey for bees and enjoy all the other wildlife found there too.

The Trust is very grateful for all Geoff's expert help over the years monitoring our bee banks. Sadly, as a result of natural succession, numbers have fallen sharply but there are plans for restoration afoot and Geoff has been assisting us with this of course.

## Kemerton Clippings January 2019

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For more information on the work of KCT please visit our website: [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org)

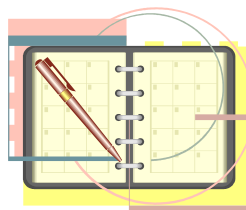


Male Thick Legged Flower Beetle *Oedemera nobilis*, KLNK, May 2019

## Save the Date!

- **Sunday 18th August - Beggar Boys Wetland Walk** (2.30pm start) - see 'News & Events' on website [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org) for full event details
- **Saturday 31st August - Working party** (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Tuesday 24th September - 'Orchids of South Midlands' Slideshow & Talk, Victoria Hall** (8pm start) - see 'News & Events' on website [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org) for full event details
- **Saturday 28th September - Working party** (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 26th October - Working party** (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 12th October - KOW Apple Day, Victoria Hall** (1-5pm - see 'News & Events' on website [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org) for full event details
- **Saturday 30th November - 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@kemerton.com](mailto:kate@kemerton.com) or by phone on 07765 334 776.



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