



Kemerton Apple Day Celebrates Fruits of Orchard



© Kate Aubury
Volunteers waiting to serve tea and cake, Kemerton Apple Day, October 2024

Kemerton Apple Day was held on Saturday 12th October at Victoria Hall, Kemerton. Organised by residents Charlie Taylor, Andrew Millington and Tom Martin for the second year in a row, it was very successful and raised £750 for Daffurn's Orchard.

There were long queues for the apple pressing, with attendees bringing their own apples for pressing or buying juice made from Daffurn's Orchard apples. As always, the children enjoyed having a go with the apple scatter and press.

In the hall, KOW stalwarts Steve and Anna Fletcher were selling their lovely cards, all featuring photos of the local landscape, flora and fauna. There were free orchard-themed arts and crafts for the kids to enjoy, supervised by KCT's youngest volunteer Lottie Aubury, a raffle with prizes donated by local businesses, and of course, lots of delicious cakes baked by volunteers from the village, which were very popular with the attendees and the volunteers alike!

KCT had an information stand about our work, particularly focussed on our orchards, and we signed up some new members and potential volunteers on the day, whilst also

chatting to locals about the two projects that were completed in the orchard earlier in the year (see newsletter edition 34 for more details). Feedback from local residents has been very positive, with the kids nature trail and new circular path particularly well received.

This year The Crown supported the event by holding a sausage and cider BBQ to coincide with Apple Day, and generously offering a free pint of cider to all who purchased pressed apple juice. Our grateful thanks to Lee and the team at The Crown for their support.

Our grateful thanks to all who helped out to make the Apple Day a success, including our organisers Charlie, Tom and Andrew, the many volunteers who helped pick apples, set up the hall, sell refreshments, man the arts and crafts activities and press the juice, and the fantastic cake bakers and raffle prize donors. We could not have done it without you!

The money raised at the Apple Day helps to cover the annual costs of managing Daffurn's Orchard in Kemerton. Funds from Apple Day 2023 paid for contractors to carry out much needed scrub clearance along the orchard boundary and for tools for the volunteers.



Steve & Anna Fletcher selling cards, Kemerton Apple Day



Volunteer Tim pouring apple juice, Kemerton Apple Day

Wonderful Wildlife Walk at Beggar Boys Wetland



© Kate Aubury

Mating Common Blues *Polyommatus icarus*, Beggar Boys, August 2024

On Sunday 11th August members joined Chairman Matthew Darby and Support Coordinator Kate Aubury for a guided walk around Beggar Boys Wetland.

It was a scorching hot day, which meant plenty of insects to see, although overall numbers were down compared to previous years, matching the decline recorded countrywide this year. The grassland and wet meadow were alive with grasshoppers and crickets, dragonflies patrolled over the reedbeds and the open water of the lake, and butterflies fluttered to the wildflowers. Water Mint and Fleabane

filled the meadow with colour and scent, and bright yellow and black Cinnabar caterpillars were spotted on Common Ragwort around the reserve. In the wetter areas of the meadow, the delicate white flowers of Gypsywort attracted bees and a few Mint Moths were seen feeding on them too.

During the walk, Matt and Kate explained a bit about the various habitats found on the reserve, how the Trust manages it and why it is one of our richest sites. As Beggar Boys does not have any public access, it was a rare chance for members to visit this wonderful wetland and learn more about it.

In Winter 2022/23 the Trust finished work on a circular path around the lake which is at the heart of the reserve. The new path will make management of this special site easier in the future. The work included piping the lake inflow and emergency outflow to create vehicle access for annual mowing and scrub clearance. Attendees walked the

new circular route, which also took them into the woodland on the north boundary of the reserve - the cooler shade was very welcome by that point!

The reserve has recently been enlarged with the addition of part of the arable field on its eastern border, and new fencing and hedging was installed and planted in 2022 along the new boundary. The guided walk finished in this new section, which is being managed as wildflower-rich grassland, with areas of scrub around the edges. In the final few minutes of the walk we spotted a pair of Common Blue butterflies, a fitting end to a lovely wildlife walk.



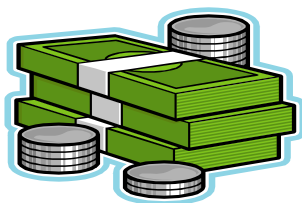
© Kate Aubury

Attendees with Chairman Matthew Darby, Beggar Boys, August 2024

Funding Update

In the second half of 2024 our KLNR aquatic project funding application to the Natural Networks programme was successful (see page 4 for more details).

We have recently applied to a local grant funder for a small grant to replace one of our events gazebo, which was damaged during stormy weather at an event in 2024. Their decision is pending as we go to print.



Long-term local supporter Bredon Forest School donated another £1000 to the Trust in August 2024, funds which go towards contractor costs and materials etc. We are very grateful for their generous support.

Kemerton resident Richard Pascoe arranged a sold out

Astronomy event at Kemerton Village Hall in October, with the profit of £125 kindly donated to KCT. Thank you Richard!

Finally, we received our annual dividend from local oil buying club SeSaME, which for the 2023/24 year was £20. If you buy oil and want to know more, visit their website www.sesame.me.uk.

Thank you to all who have supported us this year!

KCT Governors' Annual Board Meeting 2024



© Kate Aubury
Governors with Conservation Advisor
Pamela Clarke in Lake Meadow,
KLNR, July 2024

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 Pamela Clarke and Kate Aubury, who both report on their activities for the year.

Pamela and Kate reported on highlights from 2023/24 such as securing a new FIPL grant for KLNR, competing two projects at Daffurn's Orchard, and bird ringing at KLNR.

Founder Adrian Darby announced he was standing

down from the post of Chairman after 35 years in the role, although he will remain as a Governor. The Governors elected Matthew Darby as the Trust's new Chairman and, for his many years of dedication to the Trust, Adrian was awarded the honorary title of Chairman Emeritus.

After reviewing the past year, the governors identified their priorities for 2024/25; secure funding for a new water pipe at KLNR, carry out eDNA testing at KLNR and use the data to make a decision on fish stocks and whether to replenish them, try to secure SFI funding for Trust land not in Countryside Stewardship and consider new income sources to replace the loss of BPS income.

After the meeting the Governors visited Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve to view and discuss proposed project works on the site including the flooding issue between the Lagoon and the main lake. The governors also

took a look at the arable plant area near the lake, which has some rare arable wildflowers, and spent some time identifying grasshoppers and crickets in Far Park on the walk back - the grassland was alive with their rhythmic stridulation. The sight of a Long-winged Roesel's Bush-cricket led to a lively discussion on cricket populations, geographical spread and forms.

The 2023/24 Chairman's Report, Annual Accounts, Conservation Advisors Report and Support Coordinators Report are all available to read on our website now in the 'News & Events' section.



© Kate Aubury
Roesel's Bush-cricket *Metrioptera roeselii* (long-winged form), Far Park,
July 2024

News in Brief

In November we welcomed a group of enthusiastic corporate volunteers from Babcock DSG, who joined our Warden John Threadingham for a day of hands on habitat management at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve (KLNR).

The team of 8 staff from nearby Ashchurch Camp helped John plant native daffodil and bluebell bulbs along Lake Walk as part of our FIPL project (see page 5 for more details). We are very grateful for



© John Threadingham
Volunteers from Babcock DSG planting
bulbs, Lake Walk, November 2024

their time and help, and hope to host a return visit in 2025.

On a less positive note, KLNR was again targeted by vandals in summer 2024, with damage to items in Water's Edge Hide

and a homophobic message spray painted on our life buoy stand by Water's Edge. Someone also fly tipped in one of the gateways at the reserve in November. All incidents have been reported to the police, and Wychavon dealt with the fly tipping. If any visitors spot similar issues when onsite, please let us know.

Our Autumn Walk to Aldwick Wood SSSI was unfortunately cancelled due to stormy weather. We now plan to do a Spring Walk there instead (see page 8 for details).

Natural Networks Funding Secured for Aquatic Restoration Project at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve



Funded by
UK Government



© Kate Aubury

eDNA sampling volunteers ready for action, KLNLR, August 2024

Kemerton Conservation Trust (KCT) is delighted to announce it has successfully bid for £6026.40 funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund through the Natural Networks programme delivered on behalf of Wychavon District Council. The funding will contribute to an important programme of aquatic habitat restoration and creation at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve. Work on the project commenced in August 2024 and is almost completed as we go to print.

The focus of the project has been a programme of works including the installation of a new water-pipe between the Lagoon and main lake to alleviate flooding of key grassland areas on the reserve, pollarding of mature willows on the wooded island to safeguard them into the future, creating additional crayfish refuges from the felled material and adding them to the lake, installation of coir rolls planted with native wetland plants along one side of the western island to reduce erosion from wave action, and eDNA analysis of water samples from the lake to confirm exact species of vertebrates within the water especially fish, crayfish and amphibians. Although most of the works have been carried out by contractors, our volunteers have also been involved throughout the project; our Support Coordinator Kate Aubury is managing it and our

Warden John Threadingham has assisted with habitat works onsite, supported by our work party volunteers, who carried out the eDNA water sampling in August 2024 and created brush bundles for crayfish in early January 2025. Final project works are now underway and our completed project report will be available on our website by March.

We are very grateful to the Natural Networks programme for supporting this exciting project which will help us better understand the aquatic vertebrates present at Kemerton Lake and will feed into our future site habitat management decisions. The habitat works will help us tackle key site issues such as erosion of the islands, flooding caused by wetter winters, and controlling water levels in the Lagoon and main lake.

Changing Climate Brings New Odonata Colonists



© Paul & Claire Lloyd Wildlife Photography

Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope*
KLNLR, August 2024

Increasing temperatures as a result of climate change are already affecting our flora and fauna. One visible change is the arrival of new dragonflies and

damselflies to Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve (KLNLR) as they expand their range northwards. Lesser Emperor was recorded for the first time at KLNLR in Summer 2023 (first record for Worcestershire was 2017), and wildlife photographer and Friend of KCT Paul Lloyd captured a male on camera in August 2024. Paul then photographed a Willow Emerald two weeks later, our first record for the site (first record for Worcestershire was 2022). Well spotted Paul!

One to look out for in 2025? The Southern Migrant Hawker, which was recorded in Worcestershire for the first time in 2024 at Ryall Gravel Pits.



© Paul & Claire Lloyd Wildlife Photography

Willow Emerald *Chalcolestes viridis*,
KLNLR, August 2024

FiPL Funded Project Successfully Completed at KLNR



FiPL Event Attendees, KLNR,
October 2024

We're delighted to announce that our Woodland Grazing and Visitor Improvement Project at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve (KLNR), which received funding from the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme delivered by Cotswolds National Landscape, has been successfully completed. The project was a partnership between landowner Kemerton Estate and leaseholder KCT. Work began in June 2024 and completed in January 2025.

Funding from the FiPL programme, in conjunction with additional grant funding from Highfields Trust CIO and KCT's own funds, allowed us to undertake a programme of works including installation of a new perimeter fence and

gates in Lake Walk to allow woodland grazing as part of the management, replacement fencing along a section of the public footpath, new benches for visitors, planting of native bluebell and daffodil bulbs in the woodland, removal of unsightly redundant fencing and tree guards, new information leaflets, and the installation of an interpretation board and signage for visitors to the nature reserve. Our volunteers were involved throughout the project; our Support Coordinator Kate Aubury managed it and our warden John Threadingham assisted with habitat works onsite, supported by volunteers, who planted 1000 wildflower bulbs in the woodland.

During the project Kemerton Estate and KCT hosted a visit organised by the Cotswolds National Landscape FiPL team to highlight the project works being carried out (including a separate estate project focussed on soil health and carbon capture in cattle pasture). Visitors enjoyed a brief tour of reserve, including a visit to Water's Edge Hide. Kate highlighted the new project-

funded improvements, explained their benefits, and answered attendee's questions about both the project and the reserve.

Visitors to the nature reserve will benefit from the fantastic new signage around the reserve, as well as three newly installed new oak benches along Lake Walk and the public footpath, which will aid visitors with reduced mobility. Our new map leaflet and a new information leaflet are now available online and for use at events, and four seasonal activity sheets are available to download by QR code to encourage and educate younger visitors to the reserve.

Kemerton Estate and KCT are extremely grateful to FiPL, Cotswolds National Landscape and Highfields Trust CIO for their support of this exciting project. A detailed project report will be available on our website by the end of February.



**Cotswolds
National
Landscape**

Barland Pear Returns to Daffurn's Orchard

In 2021, the beloved Barland Pear in Daffurn's Orchard was felled by a storm. This ancient tree, the oldest in the orchard, is one of only a handful of pear trees in the predominantly apple orchard. It held a special place for Kemerton Orchard Workers, the local group who have managed the orchard since its purchase in 2000, so it was agreed the Trust should buy a new Barland Pear to ensure the variety's continued



Newly planted Barland Pear,
Daffurn's Orchard, January 2025

presence in the orchard. In March 2023 an order was placed with Keepers Nursery, and in December 2024 the young tree was delivered. KOW members Olivia Chance and Tim Ashley planted the tree and now it just needs time to grow. A plaque to commemorate Betty Daffurn (the previous owner of the orchard who made KCT's purchase possible) will be erected in front of the tree later this year.

A Trust Stalwart Steps Down from the Board



Roger Workman (second on left) and his wife Gill on a walk, Beggar Boys, 2013

In October, long-serving Governor Roger Workman announced his resignation from the board. Roger, a well-known figure in the local community, had served as a Trustee since 1998.

When Roger first joined the Board, he was Chairman of Cotteswold Dairy, the well-known family firm founded by

his father, but despite his busy role there, he always found time to support KCT, and take an active role in our work.

With many of our Governors living further afield, it was helpful to have a local voice on the Board, who knew the neighbours and could ensure their views were heard on Trust plans. In addition, Roger has always been an enthusiastic advocate of our work and has helped the Trust grow our membership over the years, both through spreading the word in person and by organising appeal mailshots to residents in surrounding villages to reach potential supporters.

However, after 26 years serving on our Board, Roger felt the time had come to step down and take a well earned rest, although we are pleased that he will continue to support us as a Friend of KCT.

Our Chairman Matthew Darby and the Board of Governors extend grateful thanks to Roger for his long service to the Trust. An indefatigable champion of our work, we are sad to see him go.

The Trust currently has two Governor posts to fill and will be searching for the right candidates over the coming months.

Fantastic Fungi Fill the Woods for Member Walk



Common Puffball *Lycoperdon perlatum*, May Wood, September 2024

In late September, Support Coordinator Kate Aubury - KCT's in-house fungus expert - led a Member-only Fungus Foray through May Wood (previously referred to as Kemerton Wood). With plenty of rainfall in the weeks before the walk, fungi were fruiting in large numbers so there was plenty to see.

During the walk Kate found, identified and discussed the

many different species of fungi that were growing in the woods. Attendees learnt about key features of different groups, including unusual smells, shapes and textures. Fungi were handled, cut open to reveal interesting colours, and sniffed. When the rather slimy Beech Milkcap was spotted, Kate offered the more adventurous of the group a taste of the white 'milk' that is released from the gills, which is hot and bitter!

Fungi come in all sorts of shapes, sizes and texture, but most people are more familiar with cap and gill mushrooms, which are generally larger and more visible in autumn. Members were fascinated by the very diverse fungi found on the walk, including soft

jelly fungi, delicate coral fungi, puffballs and earthballs, the contorted shapes of saddles, and the rubbery cup fungi. Kate also pointed out some of the more toxic fungi including various Fibrecaps.

The Kingdom of Fungi is full of fascinating fruitbodies, and many can be found in a woodland or grassland near you, so next time it rains, why not get out there and see what you can unearth!



Attendees admiring logs covered in fungi, May Wood, September 2024

Spotlight On: Spring Migrants

In March, April and May large numbers of birds return to our shores; the summer migrants who breed in the UK but overwinter further south. Their arrival fills the woodlands and wetlands with song and as they set up territories and start nest building, it's the perfect time to try and spot them.

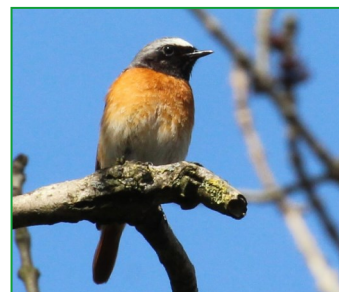
At KLNR Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat return to the reedbeds, whilst male Cuckoo call around the wetlands as they woo the females waiting to complete their hostile takeover of an unsuspecting pair of warblers.

In John Moore NR and the woods surrounding KLNR Chiff Chaff, Willow Warbler and Blackcap compete in song. Some Chiff Chaff and Blackcap now overwinter in southern Britain, a recent change, but their numbers swell every spring as more birds arrive from the south.

On Bredon Hill Redstart breed in ancient woodland, the male easily spotted with his bright flashes of red on breast and tail.

In the skies over grassland and water, Swallows and House Martins perform their aerial displays and signal that summer is on its way, while screaming Swifts fill the air on sunny evenings.

And if you are really lucky or know where to look, you might see one of the Spotted Flycatchers that breed in villages around Bredon Hill; only a handful return each year now, as numbers sadly decline.



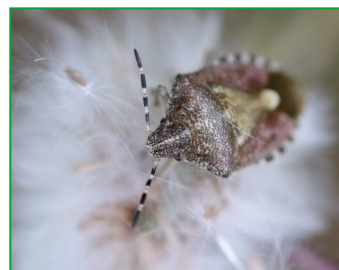
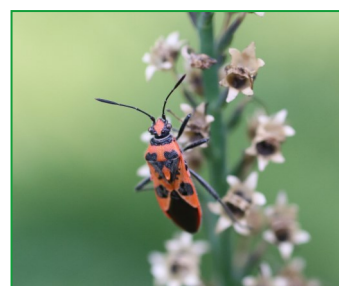
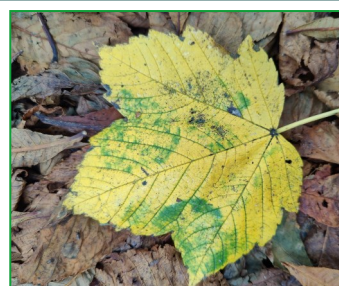
Gardening for Wildlife

This is a feature designed to give you ideas to make your garden more wildlife-friendly. Gardens in England cover an area bigger than all of the country's nature reserves combined, so your actions can have a bigger impact than you may think. And whether you have a small garden or a large one, there is plenty you can do to help tackle the biodiversity crisis. The bonus is close encounters on your doorstep!

As we reach the end of winter, here's a reminder that untidy gardens support more wildlife;

1. Leave the leaves. Fallen leaves are full of nutrients that improve your soil. They do not harm lawns either. Rake them up from paths for safety, but use them on nearby garden beds to avoid wasting their nutrients and to give invertebrates a place to hide from the colder weather. Fungi and earthworms will thank you for the food source, and hedgehogs will use dried leaves for their nests.
2. Don't deadhead your plants! Leaving seedheads standing provides food for a number of insects, such as shieldbug nymphs, as well as birds such as goldfinches. Increasing the number of insects provides food for birds and bats too. Some caterpillar species also overwinter in seedheads. If you must tidy up, bundle up the cut seedheads and pop them under a shrub or hedge so that any critters using them can still survive.

All photos on this page copyright Kate Aubury



Kemerton Clippings July 2024

Edited by Kate Aubury

Contact email: kate@kemerton.com

Print services provided by Printed Easy.

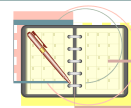
This newsletter is published bi-annually. The next edition will be issued in July 2025.

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



Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae*,
KLNR, July 2024

Save the Date!



- **Saturday 4th January** - Working party (10am start, KLNR)
- **Saturday 8th February** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Monday 10th February** - 'Rainbow Dust on Bredon Hill' Slideshow & Talk, Kemerton Village Hall (7.30pm start) - see 'News & Events' on website www.kemerton.org for full details
- **Saturday 8th March** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 5th April** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 26th April** - Member-only Spring Stroll to Aldwick Wood SSSI (10.30am start) - see 'News & Events' on website www.kemerton.org for full details
- **Saturday 3rd May** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Sunday 11th May** - Member-only Amble Around Asham Meadow (10.30am start) - see 'News & Events' on website www.kemerton.org for full details
- **Saturday 7th June** - Working party (10am start, KLNR)
- **Saturday 14th June** - KLNR Open Day (Gates open at 1pm, walks at 1.30pm & 2pm) - see 'News & Events' on website www.kemerton.org for full details
- **Saturday 5th July** - Working party (10am start, Upham Meadow)

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

Kemerton Conservation Trust

Kemerton Court
Kemerton
Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire
GL20 7HY

Tel: 01386 725 254

www.kemerton.org

Registered Charity No. 702488



GOVERNORS

ADRIAN DARBY, OBE
MATTHEW DARBY (Chairman)
PETER DOBLE
PETER MARREN
ROGER UMPOLBY
ROSEMARY WINNALL, MBE