



## KLNR Open Day Delightful Despite the Drought



© Kate Aubury

Attendees listening to Chairman Matthew Darby, KLNR Open Day, June 2025

Our annual Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve (KLNR) Open Day is usually a chance for visitors to see the spectacular orchids which the site is well known for, but this year the ongoing drought has impacted on lots of flora and fauna, and the orchids have particularly struggled. Nonetheless there was plenty to see for those who came to our Open Day.

Our first guided walk of the day was a tour of the reserve looking at the different animals and plants and learning more about habitats and management of the site, led by Chairman Matthew Darby. It was well attended and everyone enjoyed watching a Hobby hunt dragonflies over the water as they walked around the lake.

Our second guided walk was led by Support Coordinator Kate Aubury and focussed on the insects of the reserve. It was a windy day so there were fewer butterflies and dragonflies than expected, but plenty of other insects to see, including a couple of handsome longhorn beetles, lots of colourful hoverflies and plenty of damselflies. Alongside the insects, attendees were shown the orchids - including the one solitary Bee Orchid that grew this year (compared to our usual 50+), and everyone enjoyed seeing large numbers of newly

emerged froglets and toadlets moving through the grassland from the lake and ponds to the woodland. Clearly it was a successful breeding season for both species, which is great news.

Numbers of orchids of all species were lower than usual on the reserve this year, and quite a few of those that did appear were stunted and poorly formed. News from other local sites supports our conclusion that the dry weather was the culprit, with orchid numbers down across the county, and bee orchids seemingly the worst affected. The hot, dry spring has however been very positive for insects, and numbers of butterflies, bees and ladybirds in particular have been far higher than recent years. With insects numbers in serious decline, this has been one high point in the otherwise worrying weather conditions. A visible sign of this has been hedgerows and trees wreathed in the wonderful webs of small ermine moths. At KLNR Spindle Ermine could be seen on the Spindle bushes in the wood, their webs trailing from one bush to the next.

Our huge thanks to all the volunteers who helped us run the Open Day, including those who baked brownies and flapjacks, helped erect gazebos and supervised car parking. We could not do it without you!



The solitary Bee Orchid spotted on our walk



Volunteer Lottie taking a closer look at a toadlet

## Kemerton's Traditional Fete is a Fantastic Fundraiser



KCT Stand at the fete, June 2025

On Saturday 28th June, KCT joined an array of local groups, businesses and volunteers from the village to take part in Kemerton Fete.

Organised by a fantastic team led by local resident Richard Pascoe, the fete featured traditional games and stalls, live music from local bands, burgers and beers provided by the Crown, teas and cakes provided by Kemerton WI and free, fun activities including a dog show. A raffle with lots of great prizes was also held throughout the afternoon.

KCT had an information stand and free children's activities including an art

table and a nature trail around the fete grounds, both of which were a hit with youngsters.

The sun shone for the event, and turnout was excellent, with lots of local families enjoying the fun. In the heat, the 'Soak a Bloke' game proved popular, respect to the two 'blokes' who spent the afternoon being thoroughly drenched by water guns, sponges and even buckets of water! (All for charity of course).

It was lovely to meet some new arrivals to the village and local area and tell them more about our work, as well as chat to long-standing supporters about current projects. We signed up some new volunteers on the day, and kids had fun creating wildlife art.

The event was a huge success and raised lots of money, which the organisers chose to donate to three local charities - and KCT was delighted to be one of those chosen. We received an amazing £1100 donation from the event. We are currently considering

how best to use this generous gift and will update members once a decision has been made.

Events like Kemerton Fete take a lot of time and goodwill to organise, so well done to all the team who made it happen. Our thanks to our volunteers who helped us set up for the event too.

We used our brand new pop-up gazebo and roller banner at the fete, paid for by a generous donation from Tewkesbury Rotary Club, as part of their closing funds distribution, so our thanks to them as well for the new equipment.



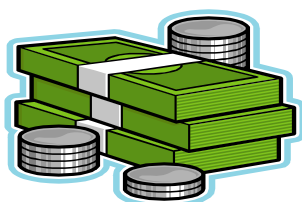
Kids enjoying the art table, Kemerton Fete, June 2025

## Funding Update

In February, we received £250 from Tewkesbury Rotary Club for a new events gazebo and roller banner, both of which were used at our Open Day and Kemerton Fete this year.

In June, we successfully applied for a bird ringing grant of £275 from The Gordon Gray Trust - more details will be our next newsletter.

We have applied to the Natural Networks programme for a woodland project. The decision



is pending as we go to print.

Long-term local supporter Bredon Forest School donated another £650 to the Trust in May, which will go towards contractor costs and materials etc. We are very grateful for their ongoing support.

We received another generous £200 donation in April from Miss

K.M Harbinson's Charitable Trust, which will be put into our woodland project.

The Worsley Institute donated £110 as a thank you to KCT after members had a guided walk around Kemerton Lake in June with Chairman Emeritus Adrian Darby OBE.

Finally, we received a fantastic £1100 donation from Kemerton Fete in June - see above for more details.

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



# Natural Networks Aquatic Restoration Project Completed at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve



Funded by  
UK Government



© Kate Aubury

Eastern Island after selected willow pollarding, KLNR, November 2024

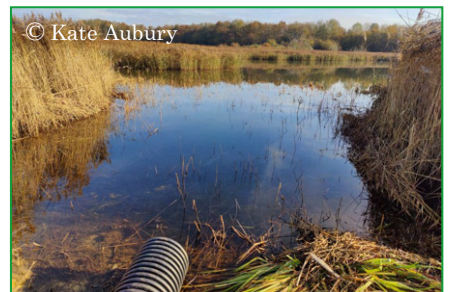
We're delighted to announce that our Aquatic Habitat Creation and Restoration Project at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve which received funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund through the Natural Networks programme delivered on behalf of Wychavon District Council, has been successfully completed. Work on the project began in August 2024 and was completed in February 2025.

Funding from the Natural Networks programme, along with KCT's own funds, allowed us to undertake a programme of works. These included installing a new waterpipe between the Lagoon and main lake to alleviate flooding of grassland areas on the reserve, pollarding of mature willows on the eastern island to safeguard them into the future, creating crayfish refuges from the felled willow material and adding them to the lake, installing coir rolls along one side of the western island to reduce erosion from wave action, and eDNA analysis of water from the lake to improve our knowledge of the vertebrates found there.

The new water pipe has already made a big difference, with no flooding over winter 2024/25 in the affected grassland areas

despite the wet weather, whilst the eDNA testing confirmed Roach are still in the lake, something the electro-fishing survey missed.

We are very grateful to the Natural Networks programme for supporting this exciting project, and to our volunteers and contractors who helped us deliver it on time and on budget. A project report is available on our website (under News & Events).



© Kate Aubury

New waterpipe inflow and cleared reed area in the Lagoon, KLNR, October 2024

## News in Brief

On 16th January, Tewkesbury U3A Birding Group had a guided walk around Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve (KLNR) with Support Coordinator Kate Aubury. The walk started in thick fog but luckily the sun soon appeared and attendees enjoyed seeing the multitude of waterfowl on the lake - including a very early Great Crested Grebe - as well as woodland birds including Long-tailed Tit. The group made a donation to the Trust for its time.



© Kate Aubury

Evesham U3A Natural History Group attendees at KLNR, June 2025

On 18th May, Kate met with a walking group taking part in Winchcombe's Walking Festival and gave them a guided tour of KLNR and the adjoining woodland as part of a longer walk they were completing in the

local area. The group made a donation to the Trust for its time.

On 2nd June, Evesham U3A Natural History Group had a guided walk around KLNR with Kate, focussing on wildflowers and insects. It was a sunny day so there were plenty of butterflies, dragonflies, bees and hoverflies to see, and some caterpillars on the move. We also spotted toadlets and froglets near the Lagoon. The group made a donation to the Trust for its time.

## Talk on Bredon Hill's Beautiful Butterflies Proves Popular



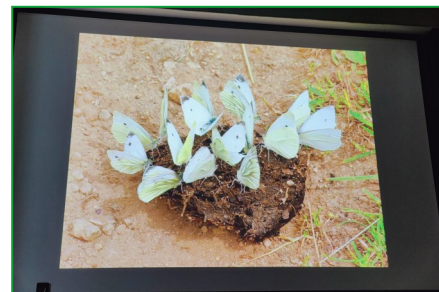
Roger about to begin, February 2025

Roger has spent many years carefully cataloguing the wonderful wildlife of Bredon Hill, focussing particularly on the invertebrates, and his incredible knowledge was distilled into an informative and beautifully illustrated talk.

as well as close-ups of the bright scales on butterfly wings. Roger also talked about day-flying moths and attendees were delighted to learn that many, such as burnets, tigers and hawk-moths, are as colourful as their better-known cousins.

On Monday 10th February, KCT Governor and well-known local Entomologist Roger Umpelby delivered a dazzling display of beautiful butterfly photographs to a packed hall, as he spoke about the butterflies and day-flying moths found on Bredon Hill.

Using his wonderful images, Roger gave attendees an overview of all the different species it is possible to see on the hill, details about their lifecycles, and helpful hints on how, where and when to see them. The talk included marvellous macro photos, showing pollen on the proboscis of a butterfly,



One of the slides, February 2025

## A Spring Stroll around Aldwick Wood SSSI

On 26th April, members joined Support Coordinator Kate Aubury for a spring stroll to Aldwick Wood SSSI on Bredon Hill, an ancient woodland owned by Kemerton Estate which KCT helps to manage.



Members in The Bushes SSSI in front of flowering hawthorn, April 2025

The walk was timed to coincide with bluebells and wild garlic flowering in the

wood, and hawthorn blooming in The Bushes SSSI, which adjoins the wood, and through which our route went. The weather was overcast but despite that we spotted plenty of interesting insects including Scorpion Flies in the woodland and a mass hatching of St Mark's Fly filling the air along the hedgerows.

## A Relaxing Amble around Asham Meadow

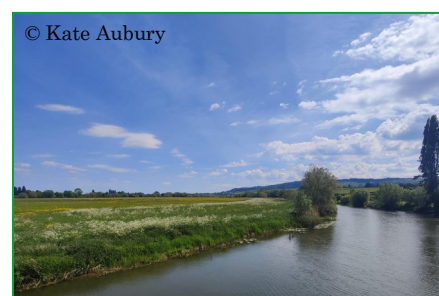
On 11th May, members joined Support Coordinator Kate Aubury for an amble around Asham Meadow, a traditional hay meadow on the River Avon where the Trust owns two strips of land.

With the sun shining overhead, there were plenty of damselflies to see along the riverbank, with Banded Demoiselle particularly prolific. Lots of Common Mayfly were also seen clinging to the long grass and willow trees on the first half of the walk, which

followed the river around the edge of the meadow. Cuckoo and Curlew were heard, as well as noisy Sedge Warblers in the reeds.

For the second half of the walk we followed the public footpath which cuts diagonally across the meadow, and Kate explained how the meadow is managed, for the benefit of wildlife, and some of the growing challenges to both farmers and wildlife such as increasing winter flooding and dogs being walked off

leads. Skylark, one of the ground nesting species most at risk from dog disturbance, were singing overhead as we completed our circuit.



View of Asham Meadow & River Avon from Eckington Bridge, May 2025



## Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve - an Overview of our Flagship Reserve by Conservation Advisor Pamela Clarke



© Kate Aubury

Kemerton Lake at dawn

As we have recently gained lots of new members, I wanted to welcome you all with a few words about the Trust's flagship site Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve (KLNLR).

A brief recap of the reserve's creation: in 1985 preparatory investigations began by looking at the extent of the sands and gravels at the proposed site and important in the planning of the lake, the flow of water through the site. In 1987, digging was started under Huntsmans Quarries (now owned by Breedon Group) and by 1997, gravel extraction and landscaping was complete. The 46 acre wetland complex with its 16 acre lake is wrapped around on three sides by 111 acres of woodland – predominantly native species but amongst them tree species from around the world which form the arboretum collection.

The diverse range of habitats includes the lake itself, pools, seasonal wet scrapes, reed beds and both calcareous and more neutral grassland. The area is continually evolving and a management plan is in place to address any changes which could adversely affect wildlife species, such as

encroaching scrub (some scrub is important but getting the balance right is a never-ending task!). The original sandy shorelines and bare islands become heavily vegetated and to provide suitable nesting habitat for birds such as Oystercatcher they require regular cutting back.

So, this dynamic site attracts a rich variety of wildlife – but species are sensitive to any changes over time. It can be exciting to host new species (we had our first record of a Bittern last autumn and a Cattle Egret in January) only to see that others have dropped in numbers, such as Lapwing, and efforts are made to ensure suitable habitat to attract them back. The Common Pochard has bucked the downward trend in Worcestershire and has bred here most years since 1999. So, monitoring of all species is invaluable and we collect data from visitors, volunteers and specialists.

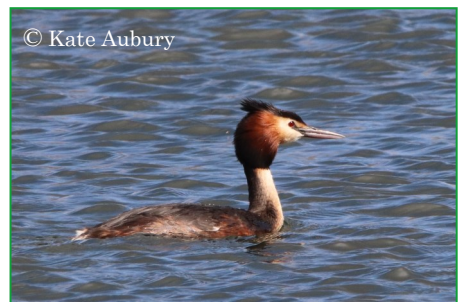
It is because of its rich mosaic of habitats that this reserve is such an important nature conservation area, with each habitat managed to attract and support its associated wildlife. At the lake, we keep weekly counts of breeding and wintering waterfowl. This winter we recorded up to 675 Wigeon, together with other waterfowl such as Shoveler, Pintail, Teal, Gadwall, Mallard and Pochard. Birdwatching from the Water's Edge Hide through the autumn and winter can be very rewarding!

The wet scrapes provide ideal conditions for wintering Common and Jack Snipe whilst the reed beds host Reed Bunting, Sedge and Reed Warbler (here the preferred host of the Cuckoo).

The woodlands attract Siskin and occasionally Redpoll as well as common breeding woodland species including Blackcap, Long-tailed Tit, Great-Spotted Woodpecker and many more. Each type of grassland supports a rich variety of flowering plants and at least five of the nine species of orchid in the calcareous grassland can normally be seen at our annual Open Day. A large suite of species use this valuable site including dragonflies and damselflies, mining bees, bats, fungi, and Otters, and we are an 'Ark site' for the native White-clawed Crayfish.

With land use changing at pace locally and nationally, we are all very fortunate to have this wildlife sanctuary on our doorstep.

*(If you are interested in getting more involved we are always glad of volunteers to help on the work parties. Thank you.)*



© Kate Aubury

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*, KLNLR, March 2025

## Wassailing in the New Year with a New Committee



© Kate Aubury

Wassailing at Daffurn's Orchard,  
January 2025

We are delighted to announce a new Kemerton Orchard Workers (KOW) Committee has been set up by residents in the village to take over the day to day running of Daffurn's Orchard with our continuing support.

The new committee members are Tim Ashley, Peter James, Tom Martin and Ken Potter. All have been actively involved with the orchard as volunteers and we look forward to working with them

to care for the orchard into the future. KCT will still be involved in looking after the orchard; providing biodiversity monitoring and advice, carrying out larger habitat management tasks when needed, and overseeing H&S and finances.

The new committee officially took over from 1st January 2025 and they organised a traditional wassail in the orchard on 12th January to celebrate. The wassail was attended by lots of locals, and after waking up the trees and scaring away bad spirits, those who wished to enjoyed a cup of homemade cider from Tom Martin.

Since then the new committee have been very busy; installing a new shed, holding a tree pruning work party in

February, extending the new circular path, and attending Kemerton Fete in July. Their next big event is Kemerton Apple Day, which will be on Saturday 4th October (see page 8 for more details).

In other news, the plaque to commemorate Betty Daffurn (the previous owner of the orchard who made our purchase of Daffurn's Orchard possible) has been erected in front of the new Barland Pear in the lawn area.



© Kate Aubury

Brass memorial plaque for Barland Pear,  
Daffurn's Orchard, March 2025

## Work Party Update by Clare Stephenson

I started volunteering with KCT in January. This was to achieve a combined New Year's resolution to do an outdoor activity and give something back to the local community. Volunteering with KCT seemed the most logical solution, as it was on my door step and I was also keen to explore beyond the members only and no entry signs!

Over the past six months we have visited many locations and carried out a variety of tasks, mostly cutting back branches, removing unwanted plants and tidying up. All these activities have been within our capabilities and we

have been able to sit back, with our coffees in hand and see the benefit of our collective efforts. One of our memorable trips was pulling up Marsh Ragwort on Upham Meadow SSSI, a traditional flood meadow by the River Avon where Curlew nest. We arrived to a sea of yellow and left to a sea of green.

Volunteering has not only been hugely enjoyable but also very informative. Kate is always on hand to name the wildlife and give you some interesting facts. I have also learnt a lot from other volunteers, many of whom have been volunteering for years. They are a friendly

bunch of all ages. If you are thinking of volunteering with KCT, I would say just do it.

*If you are interested in joining our volunteer work party group and would like to attend a trial session, please contact our Support Coordinator Kate Aubury on [kate@kemerton.com](mailto:kate@kemerton.com).*



© Kate Aubury

Clare (4th from right) and other KCT  
volunteers at Upham Meadow SSSI,  
June 2025



## Spotlight On: Wintering Waterfowl

From late September through to January, large numbers of waterfowl and waders arrive at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve to overwinter on the lake and scrapes. Most come from Scandinavia, Iceland, Scotland and even faraway Russia, attracted by our milder winter climate. It's a great time to head to the hides, and with shorter days, it's easier to do a dawn or dusk visit to really capture the spectacle.

The largest group of visitors are the Wigeon (top photo), whose wonderful whistle evokes misty mornings on the water. With their chestnut head and yellow forehead, the males are very handsome. As dabbling ducks, their diet is mostly grass and waterweeds. Groups can sometimes be seen grazing on the grassland around the lake. The site can attract more than 500 Wigeon by January.

Harder to spot, but also numerous, are the smaller Teal (middle photo). Another dabbling duck, it often feeds along the lake margins and island edges, and tends to hide in quieter areas of the lake and is often overlooked. The males have beautiful brown heads with broad green eye stripes, which look iridescent in bright sunlight.

Lapwing also congregates in large numbers in the winter on the lake (bottom photo). These birds are easily disturbed and take to the sky to wheel about in tight flocks at the slightest sign of danger, their broad wings and shape forming a distinctive silhouette.

So get ready for all these and more to arrive at the lake this autumn.



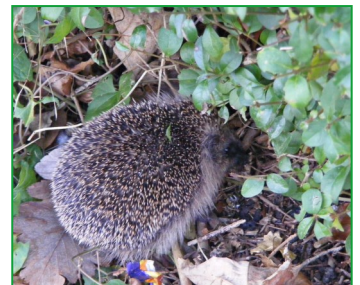
## Gardening for Wildlife

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 may be a close encounter on your doorstep!

As we head into autumn, here are some tips on helping hedgehogs;

1. Put out water and food for hedgehogs in shallow bowls. Dry kitten kibble is ideal for hedgehogs—just choose one with meat as the main ingredient. Vale Wildlife sell special hedgehog food, but avoid other 'hedgehog food' as many incorrectly include mealworms or calciworms, which are very bad for hedgehogs.
2. If local cats or foxes try to eat the hedgehog food, make a simple feeder using a plastic storage crate and bricks or pipes. Visit [www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/feeding/](http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/feeding/) for a simple design.
3. If you don't have hedges or other natural nest sites, buy a hedgehog house for hedgehogs to nest or hibernate in. Some of those available for sale are flimsy and too small, choose a good quality house with plenty of space (Vale Wildlife sell locally made ones) and fill with dust-extracted barley straw. Site the house in a shaded, quiet area away from any feeding area.

*All photos on this page copyright Kate Aubury*



## Kemerton Clippings July 2025

Edited by Kate Aubury

Contact email: [kate@kemerton.com](mailto:kate@kemerton.com)

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

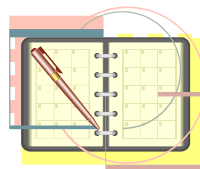


Common Red Soldier Beetle on Mayweed  
KLNr, July 2025

## Save the Date!

- **Saturday 9th August** - Working party (10am start, Upstones Orchard)
- **Saturday 16th August - Member-only Sunset Stroll, JCWW (8pm start)** - see 'News & Events' on website [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org) for full details
- **Saturday 6th September** - Working party (10am start, Beggarboys)
- **Sunday 14th September - Bird Ringing Demo, KLNr (8.30am start)** - see 'News & Events' on website [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org) for full details
- **Saturday 27th September** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 4th October - Kemerton Apple (2-5pm)** - see 'News & Events' on website [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org) for full details
- **Saturday 1st November** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 8th November - Member-only Fungus Foray, Beggarboys Wetland Complex (10.30am start)** - see 'News & Events' on website [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org) for full details
- **Saturday 6th December** - 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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Registered Charity No. 702488



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