



Kemerton Apple Day Offers Orchard Delights



Attendees in the village hall visiting stands & enjoying refreshments , October 2025

Kemerton Apple Day was held on Saturday 4th October at Victoria Hall, Kemerton. Organised by the recently formed Kemerton Orchard Workers (KOW) Committee, it was very successful and raised just under £750 for Daffurn's Orchard.

Despite very windy weather, 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, children enjoyed having a go with the apple scatter and press. And if anyone fancied something a little stronger than apple juice, KOW Committee member and cider brewer Tom Martin was also selling his locally made cider and cider vinegar.

In the hall, KOW stalwarts Steve and Anna Fletcher were selling their lovely cards, all featuring photos of the local landscape, flora and fauna. Kemerton resident Becky Watts was selling her delicious, homemade jams and preserves, including plum jam made using Daffurn's Orchard plums. 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, focussed on our orchards, and we signed up some new members and volunteers on the day, whilst chatting to visitors about local wildlife and our recent projects.

Congratulations to the KOW Committee on a fantastic and well-organised Apple Day. Our grateful thanks to all who helped to make the Apple Day a success, including 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 2024 paid for a new shed in the orchard to store tools for the volunteers.

KOW is always looking for more volunteers to help look after Daffurn's Orchard for the local community. If you are interested, please email kate@kemerton.com and we can pass your details on to KOW.



Delicious homemade cakes for sale at Apple Day



Andrew loading the scatter with apples to create pulp

May Wood Flora to Flourish Thanks to New Project



Funded by
UK Government



© Kate Aubury

KCT Volunteers with plants and bulbs for new exclosures, November 2025, May Wood

We're excited to announce that last year we successfully bid for funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund through the Natural Networks programme delivered on behalf of Wychavon District Council.

Our May Wood Flora Enhancement Project was awarded £4,105.34 from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which will contribute to an important programme of woodland flora habitat creation and restoration in

the woodland surrounding Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve. Work on the project began in August 2025 and will be completed by March 2026.

The programme of works includes repairing eight deer proof exclosures that protect existing flora trial plots, creating two new exclosures and planting them with a variety of native woodland wildflowers, sowing bluebell and primrose seeds and planting native shrubs through the wood, and coppicing hazel.

Although most of the works are being carried out by contractors, our volunteers have also been involved; Support Coordinator Kate Aubury is managing it, Warden John Threadingham is assisting with habitat works and our enthusiastic work party volunteers have spent the past 3 months sowing seeds, planting bulbs and assisting with hazel coppicing. Staff from Babcock

DSG also supported the project by planting bulbs.

We are very grateful to the Natural Networks programme for supporting this exciting project which will help us improve the woodland understory in May Wood. This important layer provides essential resources of food and shelter to numerous insects, as well as amphibians, birds and small mammals. The increased flora will particularly benefit pollinators and add to the woodland visually for our visitors in spring.

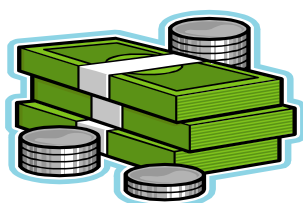


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Bluebells flowering in an existing exclosure, April 2023

Funding Update

In August 2025 our May Wood Flora Enhancement Project funding application to the Natural Networks programme was successful (see above for more details). The grant was for 75% of project costs. In addition, a local benefactor, who wishes to remain anonymous, made a generous donation of £1759.43 to the project to cover the remaining 25% of project costs. We are very grateful to both funders for their support of this important project.



In December we applied to a charitable trust for funding for an orchard project, in partnership with KOW. Their decision is pending as we go to print.

Long-term local supporter Bredon Forest School donated another £1000 to the Trust in September, which will go towards contractor costs and

materials. We are very grateful for their ongoing support.

We received another generous £200 donation in December from Miss K.M Harbinson's Charitable Trust, which will be put towards the orchard project.

We have begun contacting members not currently gift aiding to ask them to gift aid their donation. We have had an excellent response so far.

Thank you to all who have supported us this year!

KCT Governors' Annual Board Meeting 2025



© Kate Aubury

Governors looking at rare arable plants, KLNLR, July 2025

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.

New Governor Jonathan Chenevix-Trench attended his first board meeting on July 7th 2025 and was warmly welcomed by the team (see page 4 for more details).

Pamela and Kate reported on highlights from 2024/25 such as completing our Woodland Grazing & Visitor Improve-

ment Project, installation of a new water pipe at the Lagoon, sowing our final batch of rare arable seeds, and new bird surveys in Aldwick Wood & Beggar Boys.

After reviewing the past year, the governors identified their priorities for 2025/26; secure funding for a flora project at May Wood, update the Trust's website, increase income from Friends of KCT by maximising gift aid among existing donors, and consider new income sources to replace the loss of BPS income.

Pamela had announced her intention to retire from her role as Conservation Advisor at the end of 2025, so the Governors thanked her for her many years of service and recruitment options were discussed. Several possible options will be researched in more detail before a final decision is made.

After the meeting the Governors visited Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve to view recently

completed project works such as the new waterpipe between the Lagoon and the main lake. The governors also took a look at the arable plant area near the lake, where rare arable wildflowers were in bloom, and the effects of the ongoing summer drought on the limestone grassland and wetland were discussed. The scrapes were bone dry, and water levels in the Lagoon were exceptionally low too.

The 2024/25 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

Governors Rosemary Winnall and Roger Umpelby, Kemerton, July 2025

News in Brief

On 24th July Support Coordinator Kate Aubury led a kids bug hunt on Tewkesbury Nature Reserve as part of Tewkesbury Goes Wild! Attendees spent a happy hour spotting various critters including lots of grasshoppers and crickets, and the eye-catching yellow and black Cinnabar Moth caterpillars.

On 10th August, members of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust's South East Group joined Kate for a guided tour of



© Kate Aubury

WWT SE Group on Westmancote Track, August 2025

the John Clarke Wildflower Walk on Bredon Hill. The group were interested in learning more about wildlife-friendly farming along the route. It was a hot day and the drought had badly impacted the wildflowers,

but we saw some Hummingbird Hawk-moths in action. These migrants were more numerous than usual in 2025, with lots of sightings in Worcestershire.

On Saturday 18th October, five ecologists from CSA Environmental joined Kate to carry out autumn bat box checks in May Wood. A total of 29 boxes were checked, and 4 Pipistrelle bats were found. Our grateful thanks to the attendees for donating their time and expertise to assist us with monitoring our bats.

A Warm Welcome to our New Governor



We are delighted to welcome new Governor Jonathan

Chenevix-Trench to our Board of Governors.

Jonathan brings a wealth of finance and charity governance expertise thanks to his years working in the financial services sector - including as Chairman and Chief Executive of Morgan Stanley - and his experience on various other charity boards. He is the current Chair of Trustees at Worcester Community Foundation and

sits on the Three Counties Agricultural Society Board among others.

Jonathan and his wife own and manage the beautiful Madresfield Estate near Malvern, with a focus on sustainable farming and habitat management, and he is excited to learn more about how KCT supports local land-owners and manages its own farmed land in a sustainable and wildlife-friendly way.

And a Fond Farewell to our Outgoing Governor

In November Governor Peter Marren announced his resignation from the board. Peter, a naturalist and prolific natural history writer, had served as a Trustee since 2014, but felt the time was right to step down.

It has been wonderful having Peter on the board, bringing his abundance of wildlife knowledge and conservation experience to our work, and board meeting lunches were



Peter bird watching at KLNLR, July 2025

always enlivened with fascinating tales from his most recent book research.

Our Chairman Matthew Darby and the Board of Governors extend grateful thanks to Peter for his service to the Trust. Peter has kindly offered to continue to support the Trust in a more informal way, so we look forward to seeing him again soon.

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

Twilight Highlights Spotted on Sunset Stroll

On 16th August, Members joined Support Coordinator Kate for a sunset stroll along the John Clarke Wildflower Walk on Bredon Hill.

The walk began at sunset, and we were treated to a beautiful view of the sun setting behind Malvern Hills as we walked up Westmancote Track. On the sunken lane section, we spotted a female Lesser Stag Beetle, as well as grasshoppers and crickets. In the field

behind, Stonechat were seen feeding from seedheads.

As the skies darkened and we continued around the circular route, we were lucky enough to spot several glow worms - with Kate's daughter's keen eyes finding the first one - and we saw and heard pipistrelle bats using bat detectors.

Before beginning the walk, Kate had set up a moth trap in a nearby field, so attendees

also got to see the moths that had been caught, including Gold Swift, Green Carpet and Common Wainscot. A lovely end to the evening!



Sun setting behind Malvern Hills from Westmancote Track, August 2025

End of an Era as Pamela Clarke Retires from the Trust



© John Clarke

Pamela Clarke testing the water table on future site of KLNLR, 1980s

On 31st December Pamela Clarke retired from her role of Conservation Advisor for KCT. Pamela took on the role following her husband John's sad death in 2019, but her involvement with Kemerton Estate, KCT and local conservation has spanned four decades.

As Pamela begins her well-earned retirement, we wanted to take a moment to look at the highlights of a long career in conservation.

Pamela and John arrived in Kemerton in 1982 - before KCT was founded - to act as unpaid wildlife wardens on Kemerton Estate. Neither had formal training in nature conservation but they both threw themselves into the task of identifying all the plants and animals to be found at Kemerton, set up various conservation projects on the farm, and identified a suitable site for a new lake on arable fields. They worked hard, studied hard, and laid the groundwork for much of the conservation that followed.

After 4 years at Kemerton, the Clarkes moved up to Colonsay in the Inner Hebrides, where they continued to work in conservation and farming,

including as conservation advisors to Lord Strathcona, the owner of Colonsay. But they remained connected to Kemerton, visiting annually to watch the creation of Kemerton Lake, and taking a keen interest as successive conservation officers continued their work on the estate.

After 8 years on Colonsay, the Clarkes returned to Kemerton in 1994, and John took up the role of part-time Conservation Advisor for KCT, which had been founded in 1989 while they were away. Pamela worked alongside John as his volunteer assistant, and between them they carried out and oversaw many successful projects, often on a small budget, with minimal resources. In addition to their role with KCT, they also carried out conservation work for Overbury Estate, and other local landowners, as well as occasional contracts with other organisations such as FWAG.

Sadly John became ill in 1996 and for the rest of his life struggled with ill-health. With Pamela's indispensable help, he battled on, full of ideas and determined to achieve as much as possible. In the late 90s and 2000s, they worked on arable wildflower margins, monitored changes to farmland bird populations on Bredon Hill, set up leaf litter trials in May Wood, and led projects to restore traditional orchards in the local area. There were a number of projects at Kemerton Lake, which opened to the public in 1997, and on new reserves as KCT purchased its own land.

In the wider local area, they led a 10 year study into the breeding biology of the Spotted Flycatcher, involving more than 120 households around Bredon Hill, and helped set up two community orchards.

As John's condition worsened, Pamela stepped up to do more of the role, so when John sadly passed away in 2019, the Trust offered the position to Pamela and she accepted. Since then she has continued to work on a variety of projects, including a successful reintroduction of Red Hemp-nettle on Bredon Hill, carried out bird, plant and glow-worm surveys, liaised with our volunteer surveyors, and ensured all the hundreds of biological records gathered every year are entered into onto our records database.

The Trust is hugely grateful to Pamela for all of her years of dedication. She will be missed but we hope she has a long and relaxing retirement, and we look forward to bumping into her out and about on the reserves!

We hope to recruit a new conservation officer soon, so keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details.



© Kate Aubury

Pamela with KCT Governors, KLNLR, July 2024

Bird Ringing at KLNR - 2025 Update



© Kate Aubury

Attendees watching our bird ringers in action, September 2025

On 14th September, a small group of members joined our volunteer bird ringers at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve for a fantastic demo.

During the event, attendees got to watch the ringers in action, get up close looks at many different bird species, and even - for a lucky few - got the chance to release some of the ringed birds after they had been processed.

The ringers, led by Fergus

Henderson & Jess Stuart-Smith, spent time explaining the purpose of ringing, demonstrating how the birds are processed, showing tips on how they sex and age different birds (this varies from species to species but can include variations in feather or eye colour, shape of tail or wing feathers, patterns on feathers, moult stage etc.) and teaching attendees the ringers grip.

The morning's session totalled 83 new birds ringed, with 7 retraps (already ringed birds), including a large number of Blackcap (41) and Chiffchaff (16), as well as Blue Tit, Sedge Warbler, Goldcrest, Cetti's Warbler and more.

We were joined at the event by Trustees from the Gordon Gray Trust, who generously

supported our ringing work in 2025 with a £275 grant towards the cost of bird rings. A project report will soon be available online on our news and events page, and we are very grateful for their support of this important work.

Our huge thanks to the ringing team for allowing our members to join them and watch them work. Everyone who attended had a brilliant time and loved getting to see the birds in the hand.



© Kate Aubury

Goldfinch in the hand, October 2025

Wetlands Specialist is Highlight of Fungus Foray

On 8th November a small group of members joined Support Coordinator Kate Aubury for a fungus foray at Beggar Boys Wetland on Bredon Hill.

Drought conditions through summer and autumn had resulted in the poorest fungi season for Kate since she first started surveying for the Trust in 2010, so despite some recent rainfall, there were few large cap and gill fungi to be seen. The exception to that was the inkcaps, which had responded to rainfall earlier in the week - Glistening Inkcap, Common Inkcap and Haresfoot Inkcap were all recorded on the walk, with

hundreds of Glistening Inkcap seen in several spots.

Wrinkled Crust *Phlebia radiata* was recorded for the first time, growing on a Willow stump, and a clump of Oyster mushrooms was just beginning to grow on a rotting log. In the short grass, a handful of Snowy Waxcap were spotted too. Attendees enjoyed finding out how Burgundydrop Bonnet got its name (it produces a blood red milk when damaged).

The highlight of the foray was *Pholiota pityroides*, a rare wetland specialist that grows at the base of Phragmites, which Kate had discovered

earlier in the year at both Beggar Boys and KLNR. The ID is waiting DNA analysis, as the species is so rare that there are only a handful of records for the UK. It is likely the fungus has been present on the sites for a while, but the drought allowed Kate to access areas normally underwater!



© Kate Aubury

Members taking a closer look at a rare fungus during the foray, Beggarboys Wetland, November 2025

Spotlight On: Blossom & Pollinators

Spring sees blossom appearing across the countryside as fruit trees, hedgerow shrubs and woodland and wetland trees begin to bloom. The flowers are not only stunning to see, but are essential for a wide range of pollinators, as they provide vital early nectar for them as they emerge after winter.

In wetlands, Willows starts flowering in March and April. Willow trees are either male or female, with each gender having different catkins. Male catkins are yellow when ripe, while female are green. Goat Willow flowers first (see top image). Willow flowers are essential to early pollinators and on a sunny spring day, the blossoms at Kemerton Lake attract Queen bumblebees newly out of hibernation.

In local hedgerows, Blackthorn is the first to flower in March and April, its white flowers appearing before its leaves (see middle image). Blackthorn is a hermaphrodite, meaning both male and female reproductive parts are found in one flower. The pretty white flowers appeal to a wide range of bees, hoverflies and butterflies, including the elusive Brown Hairstreak which lays its eggs on Blackthorn.

Apple blossom transforms orchards in April and May with its delicate pink and white blooms. Apples are hermaphrodites but cannot self-pollinate, they require cross-pollination with another cultivar. The blossom attracts lots of different bee, fly, beetle and wasp species, but particularly *Andrena* species of mining bees such as Tawny Mining Bee. Why not try and spot one in Daffurn's Orchard this spring!



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 spring, here are some tips on helping solitary bees;

1. Erect a bee hotel for leafcutter, resin and mason bees. You can buy one or drill holes in a block of wood or a brick—the holes should be 3-8mm in diameter and 10-15cm deep.
2. If you have a lawn, make sure some sections are kept very short to attract mining bees such as Tawny Mining Bee (see middle image). Mining bees are solitary but if you have the right conditions, they can nest in large numbers in an area. They are harmless and a lovely addition to a garden.
3. Leave plenty of weeds (aka native wildflowers), as they are perfect for a wide range of pollinators including solitary bees. Plant flowers with different shapes including open daisy-like flowers and closed pea-like flowers, to provide nectar for a wide range of solitary bee. Herbs such as lavender, mint and thyme are all excellent plants to attract solitary bees.

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Edited by Kate Aubury

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

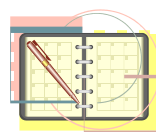


Badhamia utricularis slime mold on felled oak, May Wood, November 2025

Save the Date!

- **Saturday 7th February** - Work party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 21st February** - **Member-only Bird Watching Walk, KLN**R (9am start)
- **Saturday 7th March** - Work party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Thursday 12th March** - **'Flower Power' Illustrated Talk by Rosemary Winnall MBE, Bredon Village Hall** (7.30pm start)
- **Saturday 4th April** - Work party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 25th April** - **Member-only Bat & Moth Walk, Beggarboys Wetland Complex** (8.30pm start)
- **Saturday 2nd May** - Work party (10am start, KLNR)
- **Wednesday 13th May** - **Member-only Tree ID Walk,, May Wood** (10.30am start)
- **Saturday 6th June** - Work party (10am start, Upham Meadow SSSI, Twynning)
- **Saturday 13th June** - **KLN**R **Open Day** (Gates open at 1pm, walks at 1.30pm & 2pm)
- **Sunday 28th June** - **Member Only Wildflower Walk, Upton Ham SSSI** (2.30pm start)
- **Saturday 4th July** - Work party (10am start, location to be confirmed)

For more details on any of the above events, please visit 'News & Events' at www.kemerton.org or contact KCT Support Coordinator Kate Aubury by email kate@kemerton.com or by phone on 07765 334 776.



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