



Interesting Insects Intrigue Visitors at Open Day

© Kate Aubury



Attendees enjoying the view on a guided walk at the Open Day, KLNLR, June 2026

Our annual Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve (KLNLR) Open Day was held on Saturday 13th June in glorious sunshine.

Our first guided walk of the day was a tour of the reserve looking at the flora and fauna and learning more about different habitats and management of the site, led by Chairman Matthew Darby and Governor Adrian Darby. Although our stunning orchids took centre stage, the highlight for many was a chance to see our arable wildflower area and be shown some of the rarities that grow there.

Our second guided walk was led by Support Coordinator Kate Aubury and focussed on the insects of the reserve. With the sun shining, there were plenty of insects to see, including our first Marbled Whites of the year, huge numbers of colourful hoverflies, and plenty of dragonflies and damselflies. A Bagworm Moth case was a particularly intriguing find. Alongside the insects, attendees were also shown the orchids, with Pyramidal Orchid numbers especially high this year.

After a warm, wet spring, the reserve was looking lush and green, with Ox-eye Daisies creating a sea of white on the calcareous grassland. On the lake itself, waterfowl including Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe

and Greylag Goose could all be seen with their young in tow, while Hobby was briefly spotted by some attendees with sharp eyes.

Our new Reserves Officer Giles Alder (see page 4) joined us on the day for his first event with the Trust, meeting some of our members and helping out on the insect walk.

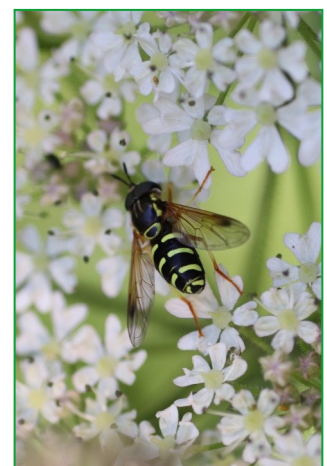
After the walks, refreshments were available in the woodland glade, and kids enjoyed doing some nature-themed artwork too (although our wax crayons melted in the sun!). KCT governors and volunteers were on hand to talk about our work and answer any questions, while the bramble flowers attracted additional interesting insects for everyone to admire.

Attendance at the Open Day was excellent, with many members joining us, as well as locals interested in learning more about the reserve. We signed up some new members on the day and made a small profit from entrance fees and refreshment sales.

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



Pyramidal Orchids with a *Syrphus* sp. Hoverfly



Chrysotoxum festivum Hoverfly

May Wood Flora Flourishing Thanks to New Project



Funded by
UK Government



KCT Volunteers with newly built hazel stool guard, May Wood, April 2026,

We're delighted to announce that our May Wood Flora Enhancement Project which received funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, through Natural Networks delivered on behalf of Wychavon District Council, has been successfully completed. Work on the project began in August 2025 and was completed in February 2026.

Funding from the Natural Networks programme, along with a generous donation from a benefactor who prefers

to remain anonymous, allowed us to undertake a programme of works including repairing eight deer proof enclosures that protect existing flora trial plots, creating two new enclosures and planting them with a variety of native woodland wildflowers, sowing bluebell and primrose seeds in naturalistic patches through the wood, planting additional native shrubs through the wood, and coppicing hazel.

The newly planted bluebells and wood anemones have already benefited pollinators and added to the woodland visually for our visitors this spring, and the coppicing and shrub planting will also improve the woodland understory in May Wood in the longer term. The new metal fencing around our enclosures will continue to protect plants from deer grazing and will last much longer than the wooden posts they replaced. Materials from the coppicing were re-used

onsite for hazel stool guards and dead hedging by our volunteers and staff from Ecology By Design who took part in a corporate volunteer day .

We are very grateful to the Natural Networks programme and our generous benefactor for supporting this exciting project, and for our hardworking volunteers and contractors who helped us deliver it on time and on budget. A detailed project report is available on our website (www.kemerton.com/news.htm).

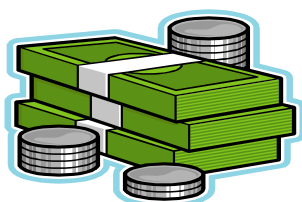


Bluebells flowering in one of the new enclosures, May Wood, April 2026

Funding Update

In February we secured grant funding for a new orchard project from the Highfields Trust CIO (see page 3 for more details). The project has already started and we are very grateful for Highfields' continued support.

Long-standing corporate sponsor and local business Cotswold Agricultural Merchants donated £200 towards our wildflower work. We are very grateful for their ongoing support.



Earlier this year we were saddened by news of the unexpected death of long-time member and bird watcher, Geoff Bryant. Geoff was a regular in the hides at Kemerton Lake and loved seeing the otters there. His family very kindly nominated KCT to receive donations from family and friends in lieu of flowers, and thanks to their generosity we

received just over £1000 in his memory. After consulting his family, we have used the funds to purchase bird boxes, including owl boxes, as well as bird rings for the ringing team at KLNK. We hope Geoff would have approved.

We have continued to send out letters to members not yet signed up for gift aid and have had an excellent response. The additional income helps us hugely.

Thank you to all who have supported us this year!

Traditional Orchards Receive Funding Windfall



Lillans Orchard, Kemerton

We are delighted to announce a new orchard project is underway, thanks to generous funding from Highfields Trust and Miss K.M Harbinson's Charitable Trust. The project began in February 2026 and will complete in December 2026. It is being delivered in partnership with Kemerton Orchard Workers (KOW), who manage Daffurn's Orchard for the community, and with support from Kemerton Estate, who own Lillans and Grange Orchards.

Focussed on three traditional orchards in Kemerton - Lillans, Grange and Daffurn's Orchards - the project will include planting and guarding

new apple trees, purchasing equipment for managing the orchards, carrying out an audit of the trees within Lillans Orchard, updating the planting schematic and labelling in Lillans Orchard and producing a new leaflet and educational materials about the orchards that will be used at events such as Kemerton Apple Day.

The project will involve KCT work party volunteers and our voluntary Warden, a volunteer orchard surveyor, and KOW's volunteers, while KCT's Support Coordinator is project managing it. Local renowned potter Toff Milway is kindly donating clay and kiln time for new tree labels in Lillans Orchard.

Work has already started on the project, with 10 organic Martin Nonpareil apple trees planted out in the three orchards in spring, the audit of trees, guards & labels in Lillans completed, and our new leaflet printed ready for Apple Day. Our volunteers have also been busy pruning apple trees and

removing some mistletoe using the new tripod ladder purchased as part of the project, and in Daffurn's Orchard a contractor has chipped a large pile of brash, with the chippings being used to mulch the new apple trees.

More works are planned through the autumn and we will have information about the project and the orchards available at Apple Day on 10th October, so we hope to see you there!

Our grateful thanks to Highfields Trust CIO and Miss K.M Harbinson's Charitable Trust for their generous support.



Wood chippings in Daffurn's Orchard, February 2026

News in Brief

In early February Support Coordinator Kate Aubury gave a talk about Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve to WWT's South East Group in Evesham. The talk was well attended and several people joined as members following it. The group gave the Trust a thank you donation.

Also in February Kate led a guided bird watching walk at KLNLR for RSPB Worcester & Malvern Group. Highlights included Common Snipe in the



RSPB Worcester & Malvern Group at KLNLR, February 2026

Scrapes, the newly returned Great Crested Grebes on the lake, and Redpolls and Siskin in the woodland.

In March, staff from Ecology by Design joined Warden John

Threadingham for a corporate volunteer day in May Wood. The enthusiastic team built deer-proof coppice stool guards for recently coppiced Hazel, using materials from the coppicing. Our thanks to Ecology by Design for giving their time to help us.

In May, Kate gave a short guided tour of Kemerton Lake to walkers taking part in an organised group walk as part of Winchcombe's Walking Festival. The festival made a donation to the Trust to say thank you.

Exciting Times as Two New Faces Join our Team



© Kate Aubury

Mateo Lewis, our new Conservation Officer, May 2026

The Trust is delighted to announce the arrival of two new members of our team; Conservation Officer Mateo Lewis and Reserves Officer Giles Alder.

Mateo began working for the Trust in May, while Giles started in June. Whilst they have been hired on an initial 6 month contract, the aim is for the roles to continue into the future, and we are excited to welcome Mateo and Giles.

As Conservation Officer, Mateo will be focussing on surveys, habitat mapping and improving our monitoring systems. He will be working closely with our wonderful team of volunteer surveyors, as well as handling biological records data sent in by visitors and collected by the team in-house. Mateo brings extensive survey knowledge, having worked as an ecologist in the private sector and volunteered on conservation projects including Cotswolds National Landscapes' 'Glorious Cotswolds Grasslands' programme, and has a Postgrad Certificate in Ecological Survey Techniques, so we are looking forward to working with him to set up new monitoring schemes.

As Reserves Officer, Giles will be focussing on habitat management on our nature reserves and helping us create or update habitat management plans for several key sites. He will also help supervise contractors and work party volunteers on the reserves. Giles brings a wealth of habitat management experience, having spent many years working for the Wildlife Trusts and other conservation organisations and some



© Kate Aubury

Giles Alder, our new Reserves Officer, June 2026

members have already met him in his other part-time roles at Tewkesbury Nature Reserve and Cleeve Common. We are looking forward to working with Giles to look after our nature reserves.

Both of our new team members will also be working closely with Support Coordinator Kate Aubury to plan and deliver new projects on our reserves and in partnership with other local landowners. Watch this space!

iRecord Users Wanted to Test our New Activities

KCT collects hundreds of flora, fauna and fungi records every year from our reserves and the local area, and all these records are currently entered onto Recorder, a database used by Biological Records Centres across England. Most of our records come from in-house surveys, but a number are sent in by visitors to our reserves, often

with accompanying photos to confirm the sighting. With recording apps becoming more popular, the Trust is looking at ways to make it easier for visitors to submit records of wildlife seen on our nature reserves.

After research and discussions with other wildlife surveyors, we have decided to trial using

iRecord, as this is a popular and easy to use recording app.

As a first step, we have set up activities for John Moore NR and Daffurn's Orchard and are looking for experienced iRecord users to help us test these activities. If you are interested, please email kate@kemerton.com and we can send you an invite to join.

Members Hone Bird Watching Skills on Winter Walk



© Kate Aubury

Members bird watching at KLNLR,
February 2026

On 21st February members joined expert birders Dave Kelly & Nicola Marples for a lovely morning watching the

birds at Kemerton Lake and May Wood. Dave and Nicola carry out our regular BTO Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS) at KLNLR so were the perfect pair to lead the walk.

Although it was a grey day with poor visibility, there were plenty of birds around and we recorded more than 40 species on the 2 hour walk, including Lapwing, Teal, Pochard and Gadwall on the lake, Common Snipe and Cetti's Warbler in

the Scrapes and reedbeds, Red Kite overhead, and Great Spotted Woodpecker and Long-tailed Tit in the woodland.

Dave's keen ear for bird song helped us pinpoint many of the birds in the wood, but for those of us with less skill, the Merlin bird app can be very useful on a walk.

Many thanks to Dave and Nicola for giving us their time and expertise.

'Flower Power' Talk Focuses on Fascinating Flora

On 12th March KCT Members and the public joined Governor Rosemary Winnall at Bredon Village Hall to learn more about our native flora, their historic uses in medicines, dyes, cloth, household goods and building materials, and their place in our culture.

Rosemary's illustrated 'Flower Power' talk was informative and engaging, and it was particularly interesting to learn more about local plant-



© Kate Aubury

Rosemary delivering her talk, March
2026

based industries such as fruit growing in the traditional orchards of the Vale of

Evesham, and the art of oak basketry which was a key cottage industry in the Wyre Forest in the 1800s.

The talk was well attended and, judging by all the questions at the end and the feedback, everyone who came thoroughly enjoyed it. Our thanks to Rosemary for giving us her time and expertise - and for dealing with the noise from the tap dancing in the adjoining hall with aplomb!

Tree ID Walk - How to Tell Hornbeam from Hazel

On 13th May, Chairman Matthew Darby led a Tree ID Walk for Members in May Wood, looking at a wide variety of native trees, as well as some naturalised ones, and showing attendees how to tell a Sessile Oak from a Common Oak, or a Bird Cherry from a Wild Cherry.

There are approx. 40 native trees in England (there are some arguments over a few species and whether they are

true natives), and about 35 of them grow in May Wood and the local area, so there were plenty to see on the walk.

In spring, the trees all have their leaves, and many have flowers, which makes it easier to ID them. Matt showed attendees hints and tips for identifying trees in the field, including key features such as leaf shape, leaf arrangement, bark texture, and flowers.

It was a lovely morning wandering the woodland rides, and attendees thoroughly enjoyed it.



© Kate Aubury

Matt with attendees on the Tree ID
Walk, May Wood, May 2026

Bats Steal the Show after Dark at Beggarboys Wetland

© Kate Aubury



Sunset over field of rape, Westmancote, April 2026

On 25th April Members joined Support Coordinator Kate Aubury for an evening of bats, moths and other night-time

creatures at Beggarboys Wetland near Westmancote.

Attendees were treated to a stunning sunset as we walked to the nature reserve. On arrival, Kate set up a moth trap. As twilight descended we listened to bats while walking around the lake, with lots of Common and Soprano Pipistrelle activity heard and seen feeding on midges over the lake, and a brief flyover from a Noctule.

Then we checked the moth trap, but unfortunately it was still too early so all we had was a couple of Caddisflies.

A brief search of vegetation nearby uncovered several caterpillars feeding, including an Oak Eggar.

The dearth of moths was disappointing but attendees enjoyed learning more about the bats at Beggarboys.

Focus on Upton Ham's Unique Flood Meadow Flora

On 28th June Support Coordinator Kate Aubury led a Member-only guided walk on Upton Ham SSSI, to learn more about this lovely Lammas Meadow habitat and the unique plants that thrive there. (Governor Adrian Darby, who had planned to lead the walk, was regrettably delayed in Scotland by the train cancellations caused by the heatwave).

The walk focussed on the wild

© Kate Aubury



Members in the hay meadow, Upton Ham SSSI, June 2026

flowers and grasses that are found on traditionally managed floodplains, which included Meadow Foxtail,

Great Burnet, and Meadow Cranes'-bill. Kate also told members more about how we look after this special site and some challenges Climate Change is causing.

The heatwave had affected the meadow, and many plants had finished flowering early, but there was still plenty to see. We were also serenaded throughout by Skylark, which nest on the meadow, and there were plenty of insects too.

Bird Ringing Update - Spring & Summer 2026

Worcestershire Bird Ringing Group has been very busy at KLNR through the spring and summer, holding regular ringing sessions during spring migration (licensed by BTO), and checking nestboxes on our reserves and land we help manage in the local area.

Highlights included finding, catching and ringing two gorgeous Oystercatcher chicks in the wader meadow by the lake - proof that the pair who

nested there had successfully bred.

Checking owl and kestrel nestboxes at KLNR and wider afield was disappointing, as box after box was empty, but the final box of the day contained 5 Little Owl chicks, almost ready to fledge. Little Owls usually lay 3-4 eggs, so to have 5 healthy chicks was great and shows the orchard is an excellent habitat for them.

Huge thanks as always to Fergus Henderson, Jessica Stuart-Smith and their team of enthusiastic ringers for all their time and expertise.



Kate with a newly ringed Oystercatcher Chick, KLNR, May 2026

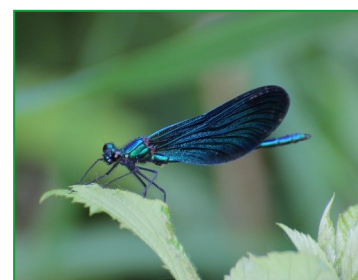
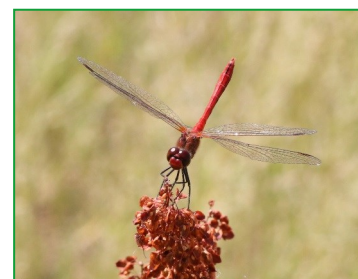
Spotlight On: Dragonflies

Dragonflies and damselflies start emerging in spring, and some are on the wing into late autumn, but a hot summer's day is the best time to head to a wetland or river to watch these stunning acrobatic insects. All dragonflies and damselflies are voracious predators, catching and eating smaller insects such as midges and mosquitoes.

Our largest dragonfly is the Emperor *Anax imperator*, an impressive Hawker that can be seen at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve patrolling the lake edges (see top image). The blue male rarely lands, and is extremely territorial, with aerial battles common. The green female can often be seen laying eggs on floating vegetation.

The Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum* likes to perch on a fence post, shrub or tall flower, scanning for prey. After catching a meal, it often return to the same perch to eat it. The male is a bright red colour with all black legs and a nipped in waist (see middle image). The very similar Common Darter male is more muted, has black and yellow legs, and the waist is less obvious. Both species can be found some distance from the water so can often be seen in May Wood.

The Beautiful Demoiselle *Calopteryx virgo* certainly lives up to its name; the male is a metallic blue with dark wings (see bottom image), while the female is a metallic green-bronze with bronze wings. They prefer fast flowing streams and rivers, where males sit on bankside vegetation waiting for the females and chasing each other off. Look for them by the River Avon at Asham Meadow or local streams.

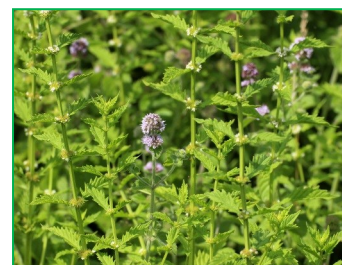


Gardening for Wildlife

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 - and the wildlife - cope with another summer drought, here are some tips on creating a pond;

1. Consider location - ponds need some direct sunlight, avoid siting it directly under trees as the leaf drop will affect water quality, and ensure wildlife can easily access it.
2. Create different levels - ideally the pond will be at least 45cm deep at the centre, but include shallower margins and a beach so small animals can safely enter and exit the pond (see top image).
3. Use native pond plants - many non-native pond plants are invasive in our waterways, so choose native plants. Include oxygenators such as Hornwort, tall flowers such as Yellow Flag Iris or reeds for the margins for damselflies to emerge on (see middle image), floating plants for insects to perch on, and pollinator-friendly flowers such as Lesser Spearwort or Water Mint (see bottom image).



All photos on this page copyright Kate Aubury

Kemerton Clippings July 2026

Edited by Kate Aubury

Contact email: kate@kemerton.com

Print services provided by Printed Easy.

This newsletter is published twice yearly. The next edition will be issued in January 2027.

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

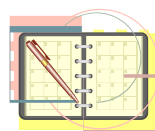


Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus* on Common Fleabane, KLNLR, July 2026

Save the Date!

- **Saturday 1st August** - Work party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Sunday 16th August** - **Member-only Moth Morning, KLNLR** (7am start)
- **Saturday 5th September** - Work party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 26th September—Member-only Autumn Amble, BB** (10.30am start)
- **Saturday 3rd October** - Work party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 10th October** - **Kemerton Apple Day, Victoria Hall**
- **Saturday 7th November** - Work party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Thursday 12th November** - **Member-only Fungus Foray, May Wood** (10am start)
- **Saturday 5th December** - Work party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Monday 7th December** - **Illustrated Talk 'Wildlife Friendly Gardening' by Kate Aubury, Kemerton Village Hall** (7.30pm start)

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.



Kemerton Conservation Trust

Kemerton Court
Kemerton
Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire
GL20 7HY

www.kemerton.org

Registered Charity No. 702488



GOVERNORS

JONATHAN CHENEVIX-TRENCH
ADRIAN DARBY, OBE
MATTHEW DARBY (Chairman)
PETER DOBLE
ROGER UMPOLBY
ROSEMARY WINNALL, MBE

EMERITUS GOVERNORS

PETER MARREN