

Kemerton Clippings

Issue 13

January 2014

Appeals for Help!

The Trust is looking for volunteer help in the following:

Gardener Required for Wildflower Nursery:

Are you a keen gardener who could spare an hour a week to help us grow rare wildflowers in the Trust's small nursery in Kemerton? We need extra volunteers to help support Sue Chandler and Lis Coates in their care of the wildflower nursery.

The work in the growing season (April-August) involves hoeing between the rows of seedlings to keep them clear of invasive weeds. Only one hour per week is required but to allow for holidays etc. it would be lovely to have one or two more volunteers to spread the load and fill in any gaps. If you are not able to commit regularly but can give just a few hours in the months June - August to harvest the seeds that would be very helpful too. If you can help in this important project to conserve a seed bank of these endangered wildflowers, please contact Pamela Clarke on 01386 725547 or email her pmclarke12@btinternet.com.

The Trust is dependent upon the assistance it receives from its many volunteers to continue its important work in the local area, so please let us know if you can assist in any way. Thank you!

Fungi Foray is Fantastic Fun at Annual KLNLR Open Day!

Our Annual Open Day at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve was on Saturday 21st September, and although turnout was lower than we had hoped, those who attended seemed to have a great time learning about the work of the Trust, looking for fungi along the rides and under the trees, and enjoying some delicious refreshments after their walks.

The focus this year was on the fungal diversity of the reserve, particularly the woodland species found in and around the reserve. With the hot, sunny weather we had enjoyed in the weeks preceding the day, there was less to see than would normally be found at this time of year, but thankfully a few light showers earlier in the week had brought up enough specimens to fill a foray! In addition to the two fungi forays led by Support Coordinator Kate Aubury, there were also two guided tours of the reserve led by our Chairman Adrian Darby and we also had an information stand and refreshments available in the Circle Glade.



Lilac form of the poisonous White Fibrecap *Inocybe geophylla* var. *lilacina*, KLNLR, September 2013

The highlight of the day was definitely the Stinkhorn growing under the Giant Redwood canopy. This fungus attracts flies by exuding a black slimy substance that stinks of rotting dead flesh (hence the name) and was an instant hit with the younger members of our foray! The fungal kingdom is incredibly diverse, and at the reserve we have examples of many different types, from the usual gill and cap fungi such as the widespread inkcaps to brackets with pores, from slime moulds to jelly fungi such as Jelly Ear, and from tiny Ascomycota such as Coral Spot Fungus to puffballs.



Attendee John Darby & KCT Support Coordinator Kate Aubury, with some of the fruits of the foray

On the day we made over £850 profit from entrance fees, refreshments, new member donations and a generous donation from Bredon Forest School. The money raised all goes towards the work of the Trust.

Thanks goes to all our lovely volunteers who assisted both in the run-up to the event and on the day itself, we couldn't have done it without you all! A special thank you to Sheila Aubury for making some wonderful cupcakes, which proved very popular with everyone.

Member Walk to Beggar Boys Wetland Complex



© David Aubury

Members learning about the plants growing in the meadow at the reserve

On a cloudy day in early August, a group of enthusiastic members met for a guided tour of Beggar Boys Wetland Complex. This lovely reserve, which has a small lake, sedge beds, hay meadow and woodland, does not have any public access, so this was a rare opportunity to visit the site. Known primarily for its exceptional invertebrate interest, summer is when the reserve is at its peak, with the meadow full of humming bees and the smell of

water mint, whilst dragonflies zoom over the lake's surface.

Led by Chairman Adrian Darby, the walk focussed on showing members the work that has been carried out over the last 3 years to restore this wonderful habitat after it had been somewhat degraded as a result of a leak in the lake bund and lack of regular management. The lake has now been repaired and the reserve is managed through ongoing warden and volunteer activity, as well as work carried out by Kemerton Estate under a Higher Level Stewardship project, and the results of our hard work can be seen in the rejuvenated site.

Several of the walk attendees are among those volunteers who have worked very hard to help bring the reserve back to its full potential, so it was great for them to be able to enjoy the fruits

of all their labour.

The overcast day meant that dragonflies and butterflies were in short supply, but there was still plenty to see and talk about. The kids particularly enjoyed splashing about in the sedge beds! We were indebted to one of the walk attendees, member Roger Umpelby, a keen entomologist, who assisted us in identifying some of the more obscure insects we spotted in the meadow!



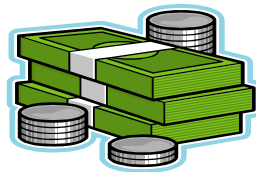
© Kate Aubury

Cinnabar Moth caterpillar, Beggar Boys Wetland Complex, August 2013

Funding Update

Two grant applications were completed in the final months of 2013, focused on raising funds towards the purchase of new land at Upton Ham SSSI (see page 5 for more details). We are currently waiting to hear if either of these grant applications have been successful. An additional application for funds towards trail cameras for use on our reserves was submitted in early January, and again, we wait to hear on that. We will update you on the results of these applications in the next edition of the newsletter.

We are now in the fifth and final year of the successful



Woodland Shrub and Wildflower Project, which has been supported by four local donors each donating £1000 over the five years. We are currently carrying out the last of the project work, with completion due end of March 2014. Once the project is finished, we will be producing a project report for the donors which will also be available on our website, and a summary of the project will appear in the next edition of Kemerton Clippings.

We received a very generous donation of £800 from Bredon Forest School in September,

raised through their forest activity days. This money was used to purchase a second hi-tech recordable bat detector for use by our survey team (led by Support Coordinator Kate Aubury). Having two detectors capable of recording bat calls will allow the team to cover more ground during surveys and gather accurate data on our flying mammals.

We recruited some additional new members for the Trust at our annual KLNLR Open Day and at KOW's Apple Day in the autumn. Overall, our membership remains stable, with some non-renewals offset by new members.

Thank you to all who have supported us this year!

Fruitful Fundraising at KOW Annual Apple Day!

Kemerton Orchard Workers' (KOW) Annual Apple Day was held on Saturday 19th October at Victoria Hall, Kemerton, and KCT was there with a stand about the nine local orchards we own and/or manage.

The day started sunny and turnout was high. Outside the hall, people queued to juice their apples, and inside people browsed the stalls selling orchard produce and other items or chatted over a cup of tea or coffee and some excellent handmade cakes.



Apple pressing in the pouring rain!

KOW workers had gathered a wonderful display of many of the heritage varieties of apples found in Trust orchards, including a large number from Daffurn's Orchard, the community orchard run by KOW in the heart of Kemerton.

A heavy thunderstorm halfway through proceeding failed to put a dampener on the event, with KCT Governor Matthew Darby showing he was made of stern stuff assisting KOW committee members Neil and Olivia Chance to finish the apple pressing in the pouring rain!

Inside in the dry, KCT Support Coordinator Kate Aubury, ably assisted by husband David, chatted to visitors about the Trust and our work locally preserving and restoring orchards. Orchards are a wonderful place for a wide variety of wildlife and are especially important in early spring, when the blossom attracts



Just some of the apple varieties displayed - all from Trust orchards!

early insects such as emerging queen bumblebees, and also in autumn, when the fruit provide a bounty for many birds i.e. Redwing and Fieldfare as well as mammals such as hedgehogs and badgers.

It was wonderful to see so many locals attending and supporting their community orchard. KOW raised over £400 on the day, funds which assist them in managing Daffurn's Orchard for the community.

News in Brief

Over the summer, a number of small boxes appeared at Beggar Boys Wetland Complex and along the Squitter Brook Corridor, fifty in totals. These are dormouse nesting tubes, used to survey sites for these rare rodents.

Trapping and handling dormice can only be done under licence due to their protected status, so we are indebted to licensed small mammal expert Elizabeth Pimley from Worcestershire Wildlife Trust for undertaking the surveying for us. So far we have not found any dormice (which was as expected) but we have had wood mice use them and the habitat has been confirmed as ideal for dormice.



A dormouse survey box, Squitter Brook Corridor, 2013

Regrettably, in autumn we had several more incidents of petty vandalism at KLNR, including damage to fencing and to access signs. We continue to work with the police and to use monitoring at the hides to try and catch the vandals. We have not had an incident for a number of weeks now, so we are hoping the situation is improving as a result of our efforts.

Some of you may have noticed that the storms and high winds in late November brought down five willow trees in John Moore Nature Reserve, blocking the entrance to the woodland. We were lucky no-one was using the reserve when the trees came down!

It took our Warden John Threadingham, with a bit of help from our volunteers, three days to clear the trees. We now have several large log piles in the woodland, which will be great habitat for invertebrates and fungi, and the loss of the willows along the stream has actually opened the site up and will let more light in to the ground flora, so although it was hard work clearing the trees, the reserve won't suffer.

Work Party Update by Brian Harris

My wife and I moved to Kemerton in 1990, but we were both working hard in those days and hence didn't have time to get involved in many aspects of village life. I have always had an interest in birds and come retirement and the gift of a good pair of binoculars that interest has flourished.

I like to walk and it is a good walk from home to the hides



© Brian Harris

Mute Swan, KLNLR

that the trust has provided on Kemerton Lake, so bird-watching there was my intro to the trust. Becoming a friend gave us more access to the activities and the opportunity to volunteer as well.

Volunteering is not too onerous, once a month and its infinitely flexible, time off for holidays is always allowed. The Saturday morning activities have included cutting brush and smaller trees, dismantling unsafe structures, clearing a shed, rooting out an old barbed wire fence-line and raking up mown hay. It's always done in conjunction with a small group of other volunteers, each with an interest in different parts of



© Brian Harris

Inkcap fungi, KLNLR

the natural environment.

One of my hobbies is photography and the mute swan is pictured on Kemerton Lake, but I'm being diverted from birds onto other things including fungi...

If you are interested in learning more about volunteering with the Trust please contact Kate Aubury at kate@aubury.co.uk or by phone on 07765 334 776.



© Kate Aubury

John Meiklejohn leading an Open Day walk for KCT in 2011

Focus on a Friend: John Meiklejohn

to Waveney in Suffolk in World War Two that he really came to appreciate nature, spending hours watching birds in the marshes and learning to ID them. He carried that love of wildlife into his adult life when he became a science teacher.

John arrived in this area in 1963 to take up a position at the old secondary school in Bredon, before moving to the newly built Bredon Hill Secondary Modern School. Later, he joined the staff of Evesham High School as head of Rural Science.

John's botanical interests did not really develop until he came to Worcestershire and started roaming over Bredon Hill. Then the Worcestershire Flora Project got underway in 1987 and he spent many days recording species for the project. One of John's most vivid memories is of the day when, sitting eating his lunch in the quarry above

Westmancote, he turned round and saw a single beautiful spike of Autumn Lady's Tresses next to a Carline Thistle. The thistle appeared year after year but the Lady's Tresses was never seen again.

It was in the early 80s that John began assisting John & Pamela Clarke in their wildlife work on Kemerton Estate, offering his expertise on many occasions. He continued to assist the Trust when it was set up in 1989 and has been a stalwart recorder ever since, one of a small group of experts that volunteer time to assist in our wildlife monitoring. The Trust could not gather all the records we do without this band of key volunteers.

At KCT we are very grateful to John for his years of help and generous sharing of knowledge. Thanks John, and we hope you'll still find time to pop by and visit us occasionally!

John's interest in the natural world began in early childhood, when his parents would take him and his siblings for days out hiking in the Weald of Kent, near his home in Gravesend, but it was during his evacuation

KCT Governors' Annual Board Meeting 2013

Every year KCT Governors meet for the Annual Board Meeting to review the past year's work and to set goals for the new year. In addition to the governors, the meeting is also attended by John Clarke & Kate Aubury, who both report on their activities for the year. Unfortunately, John was unable to attend this year as he was laid up with a broken leg.

2013 has been a good year for the Trust, with Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) projects continuing on two of our reserves (KLNR & Beggar Boys Wetland Complex), the Ash Bed Restoration Project getting funding, our new warden John Threadingham settling in and some enjoyable and educational member events. However, lack of time meant only one grant application was completed in

2013 and we had problems with vandalism at KLNR.

One item for discussion at this year's meeting was that KCT has been offered another strip of land at Upton Ham SSSI. After looking at the costs and benefits, the governors voted unanimously to purchase this land. The purchase should be completed soon and details will follow in the next edition.

After reviewing the past year the Governors finished the meeting by identifying two priorities for 2014: raising more funds and finishing a long-overdue update of the Trust website, which began in 2013.

After the meeting, the Governors visited Beggar Boys Wetland Complex to view the ongoing HLS work on site.



© Kate Aubury

KCT Governors visit Beggar Boys Wetland Complex to inspect work carried out under HLS, November 2013

Governor Catherine Connor has stepped down from the Board due to work and other commitments. We thank her for her help over many years. We hope to recruit a new governor soon.

The 2012/13 Chairman's Report, Annual Accounts, Conservation Officer's Report and Support Coordinator's Report are all available to read on our website.



© Pamela Clarke
Crayfish waiting to be released at KLNR, November 2010

In 2010, Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve was chosen by Buglife, the national invertebrate charity, as an Ark Site for native British White-clawed Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*.

The White-clawed Crayfish is threatened by the invasive alien North American Signal Crayfish, a species which carries a deadly plague, and also out-competes our native crayfish for

food and space. As a result, our native species is at risk of extinction.

Ark sites, like our lake, are isolated waterways which offer a sanctuary for native crayfish, acting as important reservoirs for remaining populations.

In late 2010 and early 2011, in partnership with KCT, Buglife ecologists translocated almost 200 crayfish from a local, compromised river to the lake, where work had been carried out by the warden and Trust volunteers to create suitable habitat for crayfish (see Kemerton Clippings editions 7 and 8 for full details).

Part of this important project includes monitoring the Ark

Crayfish Ark Site Update

Site to ensure the crayfish are breeding successfully, so in November 2013 (year 3 of the project), members of Buglife returned to the site to check on progress. The team set traps in the hope of catching crayfish and finding breeding females or juveniles, which would be a good sign that the scheme is working.

Regrettably, the traps came up empty, so we do not know if the crayfish are doing well or not. Empty traps do not necessarily mean there are no crayfish (they may simply have avoided them) but it is a disappointment to us all! More monitoring is due in year 5 of the project so we will keep our fingers crossed for a better result then.

Buzzing About Bees

Bees have been making headlines recently, or rather, the disappearance of bees has been. In particular, the plight of the European Honey Bee has become a hot topic for farmers, conservationists, beekeepers and governments alike, as worries about the pollination of our food crops force us to take action.

The reason for the decline in honey bees is not entirely known but is likely to stem from a number of factors such as foraging habitat loss, the Varroa Mite infecting hives and the use of insecticides on farms, especially neonicotinoids (although more research is needed on this last factor).

In fact, the problems afflicting honey bees are just the tip of the iceberg, as almost all bees in Britain are now in decline, along with a huge number of other insects. As only honey bees are affected by Varroa Mite, the main factors behind the decline of bumblebees and solitary bees (and other insects) is likely to be loss of habitat, both nesting and foraging sites, and insecticide use.

So, as numbers decline, what is being done to solve this serious

problem? The EU has recently banned several neonicotinoids for 2 years whilst additional research is carried out on their effect on bees. Our government did not support the ban, despite widespread public support, but the ban was passed and came into effect on 30th September 2013. Nationally, conservation charities are focusing on increased nesting and foraging habitat such as wildflower meadows, arable margins along field edges and encouraging the public to plant bee-friendly flowers in their gardens.

Here at KCT, we have always managed our reserves to support as many invertebrates as possible, as they are an essential part of a functioning ecosystem.

The Trust owns strips of land on three traditionally managed flood meadows (Upton Ham, Twynning Ham and Asham Meadow). These types of hay meadow are very rare now. They are important because the later hay cut (usually late July) allows annual wildflowers to set seed and reappear every year. Many of these wildflowers are vital nectar sources for a range of pollinators including bees but are fast disappearing from our countryside because of changes in meadow management.

At KLNR, we have a nationally important colony of mining bees. Management of the reserve includes ensuring there are a range of nectar sources available to the mining bees (and all other pollinators) throughout the year, with planting of Gorse and Goat Willow to provide early nectar, cultivation of Ground Ivy as a plentiful nectar source through



© David Aubury
A Honey Bee, *Apis mellifera*, Beggar Boys Wetland Complex, August 2013

spring and grazing of the Lake Meadow to encourage a variety of wildflowers in late summer. We also leave stands of Bramble wherever possible.

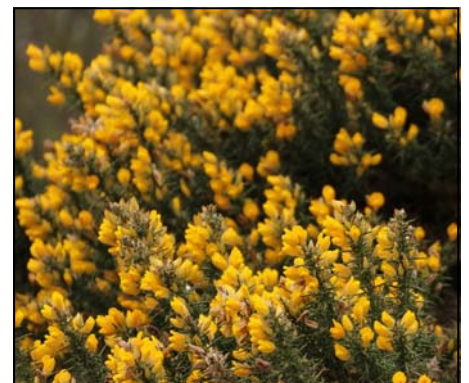
In addition to our reserves, many of our managed sites are focused on wildflowers and the insects they support. Kemerton Estate pioneered the use of arable margins to protect rare arable wildflowers in the early eighties and the Trust has assisted in management of these since its creation. Arable margins are now widespread thanks to agri-environmental schemes such as Higher Level Stewardship and can provide valuable bee habitat in an increasingly barren monoculture farming landscape.

The future of our bees is by no means secured, but the recent spotlight on their plight has spurred action from all parties so there is hope for them still.



© Kate Aubury

A Buff-tailed Bumblebee, *Bombus terrestris*, KLNR, July 2012



Gorse in flower, KLNR, February 2013



Beautiful Butterflies on Bredon Hill



For many of us butterflies are a welcome sign of summer, their brilliant colours glinting in the garden on sunny days. Recent years have seen their numbers drop, however, as wet summers and habitat loss have made once common species such as Small Tortoiseshell an increasingly rare sight. In 2013 though, the long, hot summer saw many species bounce back in spectacular style so it was a great year for butterfly fans!

The Trust's sites host a variety of butterfly species, with the specific types found on each site dependent on the habitat and the flora growing there.

One of our best sites is the Wildflower Banks above Westmancote. These small strips of land are owned by Overbury Estate but the Trust assist in their management, raking off the hay every year to ensure the wildflowers can flourish. Along the banks themselves large numbers of Peacock, Meadow Brown, Large Skipper, Small Tortoiseshell and Gatekeeper can be seen, whilst in the unmown grasses along the top of the banks is found the increasingly rare Marbled White, who lays its eggs on grasses and feeds as an adult on thistles and



A Peacock, *Inachis io*, on Scabious, Wildflower Banks, July 2013



A male Common Blue, *Polyommatus icarus*, KLNR, September 2013

knapweed. On a hot summer's day, the banks are covered in butterflies and bees sipping nectar from flowers.

Down at KLNR, the grassland habitat attracts the Common Blue, which can be seen from April right through to October. This small butterfly lays eggs on Common Bird's Foot Trefoil, found on the reserve, and feeds as an adult from a variety of plants on the site, including Water Mint in the scrapes. The male is simply stunning with his iridescent blue wings, whilst the female is brown with a dusting of blue.

The varied habitat at Beggar Boys Wetland Complex draws in a range of butterflies. Along the woodland rides and edges Ringlet and Speckled Wood can be found, whilst in the small hay meadows, large numbers of Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper lay their eggs on grasses and feed from the meadow flowers. The bramble at the edge of the woodland is a great spot to find a Comma sunning itself and feeding from the flowers and

fruit. This lovely butterfly is almost impossible to spot when its wings are closed, due to its accurate mimicry of a dead leaf!

Harder to identify are the various different species of white butterflies, including the very common Large White and Small White, the Green-veined White and the Wood White. Only a clear sighting and a good field guide can allow a definite ID of these similar species!

Of course, the best place to spot butterflies is actually in your own garden, particularly if you have a Buddleia - it's not called the Butterfly Bush for nothing! The nectar-filled flowers of this colourful shrub attract a range of species such as Red Admiral, Large White, Small White, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell and the stunning migrant Painted Lady.

Despite a bumper year in 2013, many butterflies are in decline in the UK, so why not consider planting some butterfly-friendly flowers to give them a helping hand? A list of the 100 best plants can be found on Butterfly Conservation's website www.butterfly-conservation.org so check it out and help ensure the future for butterflies remains bright.



A Painted Lady, *Cynthia cardui*, on Buddleia, Bredon Hill, September 2013

Kemerton Clippings January 2014

Edited by Kate Aubury

Contact email: kate@aubury.co.uk

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



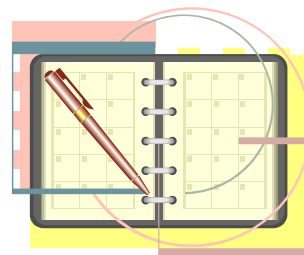
© Kate Aubury

Plums & Custard, *Tricholomopsis rutilans*, Kemerton Woods, September 2013

Save the Date!

- **Saturday 25th January** - Working Party (10am start, KLNR)
- **Saturday 22nd February**- Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Friday 28th February** - **Slideshow & Talk, Victoria Hall, Kemerton** (8 - 10pm)
- **Saturday 29th March** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 26th April** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 31st May** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 14th June** - **Annual Open Day, KLNR** (gates open 11am) - see 'News & Events' on website www.kemerton.org for full event details
- **Saturday 28th June** - Working Party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 26th July** - 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@aubury.co.uk or by phone on 07765 334 776.



KEMERTON COURT

TEWKESBURY

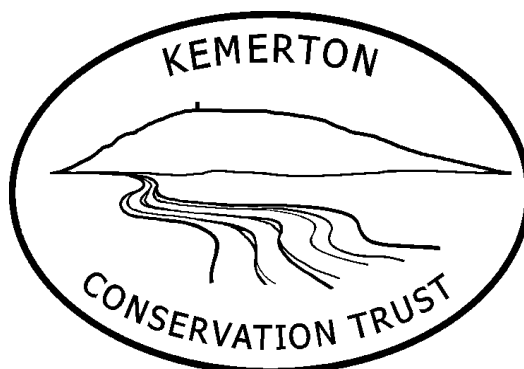
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

GL20 7HY

Tel: 01386 725 254

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www.kemerton.org



GOVERNORS:

A. M. G. DARBY, O.B.E.

(Chairman)

M. G. DARBY

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