

Kemerton Clippings

Issue 14

July 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!

Gorgeous Orchids Steal the Show at Our Annual Open Day

Our Annual Open Day at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve was on Saturday 14th June, and with a good turnout and lovely hot weather, everyone had a wonderful time admiring the stunning native orchids, learning more about the reserve and enjoying some delicious refreshments after their walks.



© Kate Aubury

Bee Orchids, KLNLR, July 2014

The focus this year was on the nine native orchid species that grow on the reserve, particularly the six species which were in flower on the day (Common Spotted, Southern Marsh, Pyramidal, Twayblade, Bee and a hybrid Common Spotted/Southern Marsh cross). Two guided tours of the reserve led by our Chairman Adrian Darby took visitors on a lovely circular trail through the woodland and around the lake edge to admire these beautiful plants and we also had an information stand and refreshments available in the Circle Glade. In addition to the main walks, Support Coordinator Kate Aubury led a fun bug hunt for kids around the settlement ponds and nearby grassland.

Thanks to the mild winter and wet spring, the orchids were out in profusion, which coupled with the number of species onsite, meant there was quite a show for people to enjoy. The bee orchids were definitely the star for most, but the large numbers of Southern Marsh and Common Spotted Orchid flowering by the edge of the lake were also spectacular and we received some lovely compliments from visitors on the day.



© Kate Aubury

Common Spotted & Southern Marsh orchids, KLNLR, July 2014



© Kate Aubury

Bug Hunt attendee Emma Aubury admires KCT's bug hotel, KLNLR, July 2014

On the day we made almost £800 profit from entrance fees, refreshments sales, a generous donation from Bredon Forest School and new member donations. Three attendees signed up as members on the day and another two have subsequently joined, which was a great result! The money raised all goes towards the work of the Trust.

Thanks goes to all our fantastic 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!



© Kate Aubury

Speaker Roger Umpelby with one of his beautiful photographic slides

On Friday 28th February, we kicked off our annual events programme with a wonderful illustrated slideshow entitled 'All Bugs Bright & Beautiful' by local entomologist and macro photographer Roger Umpelby.

Roger, who is fondly known as 'The Ashton Bugman', is a professional entomologist and horticulturalist with many years experience of consultancy and research in the horticultural industry. He is passionate about all the little

Illustrated Invertebrates Talk About Small Critters is Big Hit!

critters of the natural world and spends a lot of his time on Bredon Hill recording and photographing insects.

Roger has been helping the Trust with ad-hoc records for some years now and we were delighted when he offered to give a talk for us this year.

Turnout for this member-only talk was excellent and attendees were not disappointed! The talk itself was an interesting and informative look at the many fabulous invertebrates that are found on Bredon Hill, with a particular focus on butterflies, moths and dragonflies, but we were all especially blown away by the fabulous macro photographs Roger used to illustrate the talk and several questions at

the end focussed on just how to get those sort of shots for ourselves!

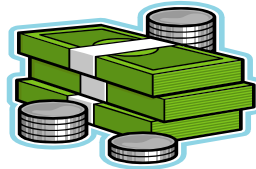
The talk was a great way to kick off the new year, and we extend our thanks to Roger for donating his time and expertise to entertaining our members. Hopefully Roger will consider doing another talk for us in the future.



© Kate Aubury

Attendees waiting for the talk to begin

Funding Update



In the last newsletter, we wrote that we were waiting to hear about two grant applications for funding towards the purchase of new land at Upton Ham SSSI. To our delight, both applications were successful and we received £2500 from the Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust and £4500 from Welcome To Our Future through the Severn Waste Environmental Fund (see page 5 for more details). The Governors had set a fund raising target of £6000 (50% of the land purchase cost) so we exceeded the target. This is a great result and means

the Trust can allocate less from surplus towards the land than forecast. The Trust is grateful to both funders for their generous support.

Our grant application for funds towards the purchase of trail cameras for use on our reserves was also successful. The funder prefers to remain anonymous but we are very grateful to them. The trail cameras have been up and running on our reserves for a couple of months and we already have some terrific footage (see page 7 for more).

We have also received two generous donations totalling £1000 from Miss K.M Harbinson's Charitable Trust. Some of this will pay for the design and printing of a replacement interpretation board outside the West Hide at Kemerton Lake.

In addition to the grants, we received a generous donation of £750 from Bredon Forest School, which will go towards general running costs and materials. We are grateful for their continued support.

Thank you to all who have supported us this year!

Woodland Shrub & Wildflower Project Completed

In 2009, Conservation Advisor John Clarke set up a 5 year project aimed at enhancing some of the younger woodland owned or managed by the Trust, which currently lack ground flora and a shrub layer.

The project was sponsored by four generous sponsors; Bredon Forest School, CAM (Cotswold Agricultural Merchants), Sharon Priest & Stanway Screens, who each pledged £1000. Bredon Forest School also generously donated an extra £500 partway through the project.



Volunteers planting trees in John Moore Reserve for the project

The main aim of the project was to increase the ground flora and shrub layer within our younger woodlands at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve and adjoining Kemerton Wood and the John Moore Nature Reserve. This would be through planting of shrubs (many grown onsite from cuttings and seeds collected from the reserves) and native bulbs, as well as creation of various wildlife habitats using thinnings from forestry work and erection of bird boxes.

In March 2014, the project ended. A full report on the work carried out during the project can be found on the 'News & Events' page of our website, but in brief, we planted several hundred native shrubs and trees (hazel, yew, privet, oak, box, guelder rose, holly etc.) in the woodlands, built log piles and beetle wigwams which have already been used by nesting birds, and planted over 500 bluebell bulbs in Kemerton Wood to create a splash of spring colour in future years.



Governor Matthew Darby planting Bluebell bulbs for the project

The project couldn't have been completed without our generous sponsors, but we also thank our volunteer work party group who helped with the planting, our wardens (former warden Alan Marsh & current warden John Threadingham) who also carried out some of the planting and John Clarke who set up the project, collected and grew many of the shrubs and supervised the project's initial phase. This work will bear dividends for many years to come and the fruits of our labour will be seen in these woodlands for decades.

News in Brief

In March, Support Coordinator Kate Aubury gave a talk to Dumbleton Gardening Club about wildlife-friendly gardening. The talk was very well received by all attendees and hopefully inspired the creation of some additional wildlife habitat in the gardens of Dumbleton! The Trust received a small donation for this talk.

In May, KCT attended Tiddesley Wood Open Day again with an information stand. It was a beautiful sunny spring day, the swathes of bluebells looked fantastic, and Worcestershire Wildlife Trust had a record turn-



KCT Stand at Tiddesley Wood Open Day, May 2014

out. It was a great chance to chat to people who may not have heard of us or the work we do and we had a lovely day.

In March, Kemerton Lake was visited by a pair of Taiga Bean Geese - only the second such

sighting in the West Midlands to date (the first record dates from 2006). These geese, which breed in the sub-arctic taiga zone in Scandinavia east to the Urals. There are two wintering flocks found in the UK; one in Norfolk and the other in Scotland.

The Bean Geese caused much excitement among local birders who flocked in the reserve to watch and photograph them. They only remained for a short period, hanging out with our resident flock of Greylag Geese, which they closely resemble, before heading off to Slimbridge WWT in Gloucestershire.

Work Party Update by Rob Burcombe

Rob Burcombe is one of our work party volunteers and here he discusses why he got involved.

Why am I a KCT volunteer? The short answer is that I wanted to give something back.

Getting involved volunteering for KCT takes me back to my childhood growing up on a small farm in South Gloucestershire where I spent most of my free time in the surrounding countryside taking in the sights and sounds.

To be able to walk to most of the volunteer work sites and enjoy helping to preserve and encourage the wildlife is very rewarding. One project I

particularly enjoyed was the Crayfish Ark Project a couple of years ago; assembling 'faggots' for crayfish habitat, and weighing them down so they would sink to the bottom of the lake.

I would like to think that future generations will be able to enjoy the sights and sounds I have experienced.

Groups led by Adrian are very informative; I especially remember visiting the Lammas Meadows near Eckington, and the Ham at Upton-upon-Severn.

During my working life I spent a lot of time in heavily industrialised areas, and I used



George Day & Rob Burcombe making faggots for the Crayfish Project

to say 'coming back to Bredon keeps me sane'.

I find working in a volunteer group is very rewarding as everyone has something to contribute.

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.



Harry Green surveying at WWT's Blackstone Farm Fields

In this edition of Kemerton Clippings, we are continuing to focus on the wildlife surveyors who help us gather and record vital biological data from our reserves. Harry Green is a local naturalist and entomologist who has been assisting the Trust for many years as a Recorder from Worcestershire Biological Records Centre. He has also led walks and given talks for us over the years too.

Harry has had an interest in natural history since boyhood

Focus on a Friend: Harry Green

encouraged by a brilliant biology teacher. After school his interest (alongside real work!) was concentrated on birds and in particular bird ringing. He became very involved in studies of wading birds which took him all over the country and on two expeditions to N.E Greenland searching for breeding waders. As he became older and less keen to whizz about the country Harry returned to a boyhood interest in insects after realising that small things ruled the world!

A member of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust from its creation, Harry joined their Council in 1970 and has been on the Board ever since, now holding the post of Honorary Vice-President. He is also a key Recorder for the county, specialising in insects.

Harry's first contact with the Trust is lost in the mists of time but he does recall that his first

visit to Kemerton Lake was to help identify a rare dragonfly. Since then, he has visited our reserves many times with the Recorders and also to help with identifications. He has also assisted the Trust in searching for the rare Noble Chafer beetle in our orchards, as he is somewhat of a local expert on these. So far we've had no luck but we live in hope!

Harry's highlights from his years recording on KCT reserves include finding the first Long-winged Coneheads at Kemerton Lake, watching our large mining bee colony develop and being there when Recorder John Day discovered the Autumn Lady's Tresses in 2011.

At KCT we are very grateful to Harry for his help with surveys and identification over the years, and we will no doubt continue to call on his expert assistance for many years to come.

Trust Agrees Purchase of Land at Upton Ham

In the last newsletter, we mentioned that the Governors had agreed in principle to the purchase of another two strips of flood meadow at Upton Ham SSSI totalling just under two hectares. The land was offered to the Trust at £12000, and the Governors set a fundraising target of £6000 with the balance from surplus funds.

Support Coordinator Kate Aubury completed two grant applications and we were delighted when we received grants from both bodies; £2500 from the Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust and £4500 from Welcome To Our Future through the Severn Waste Environmental Fund. This exceeded our target by £1000, which was great and allows us to minimise the amount required from surplus.

The Trust already owns 7.3 hectares of Upton Ham SSSI, which is a large flood meadow split into strips with a number of different owners but managed 'in common' using the traditional Lammas Meadow method of cutting hay late in July and grazing the aftermath from Lammas Day (1st August).

The traditional management of flood meadows is much better for the flora and fauna which are found there than modern management; the late cut allowing birds such as Curlew and Redshank to nest successfully and the many wildflowers to set seed.

Lammas Meadows were once common along the Avon and Severn but these meadows



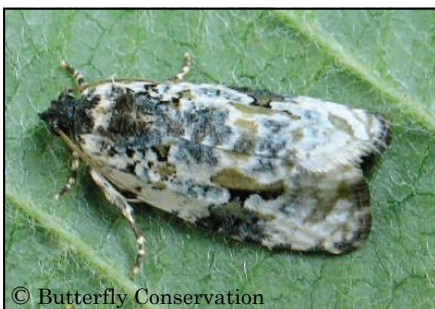
© Kate Aubury

Upton Ham, Upton Upon Severn

are incredibly rare now and we see it as essential to buy land when it is offered to protect the unique habitat into the future.

The land purchase is with our solicitors as we go to press and completion is expected imminently. To celebrate the purchase, we intend to hold a Member walk on site next year during late Spring.

Orchard Surveys Success - Project Report from Becky Lashley, Orchards Project Officer, Worcestershire Biological Records Centre



© Butterfly Conservation

Mistletoe Marble Moth
Celypha woodiana

All Trust owned or managed orchards have been surveyed this year as part of Worcestershire Biological Records Centre's 'Wildlife of Orchards' survey project, which is attempting to map all existing orchards within the county and carry out baseline surveys as many as possible.

An unexpected but nationally significant discovery during the surveys was the presence of the rare Mistletoe Marble Moth *Celypha woodiana* in two orchards managed by KCT; Lillans Orchard in Kemerton & Breddy Croft in Eckington. The larvae of this moth mine mistletoe leaves and so orchards are a good place to look for it, apple being a favourite host plant of mistletoe. Worcestershire is right at the northern edge of the moth's distribution and prior to this project taking place we had only two confirmed records from the county – now this has increased to seven!

Special thanks go to John Clarke, KCT Conservation Advisor, and volunteer George Day for their assistance in organising and carrying out the surveys.

The 'Wildlife of Orchards' project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and continues until July 2015.



Lillans Orchard, Kemerton

Arable Wildflower Project Bears Fruit - update by John Clarke

For many years now Pamela and I have been growing rare arable wildflowers in the Trust nursery. The seed, collected from local sources, was planted and the new crop of seeds then used to 'bulk up' natural stock at Kemerton.

As the project gained ground, managing the nursery (weeding, harvesting, seed-processing) became more time consuming and so interested local volunteers joined us. Sue McLeish was one of the first and later Sue Chandler took over. Now she and Pamela are helped by Lis Coates and new volunteer Anne Trott, whilst Geoff Bryant has been growing plants and harvesting seed in his garden.

We've been working with a farmer in the Cotswolds who found the native Cornflower on her land and from one seed head we're now able to grow them at Kemerton.

Acting as adviser to Overbury Estate, I offered seed to the farm for use in their arable field margins: the take was very successful and walkers on the hill were treated to wonderfully colourful sights and the sound of thousands of bumblebees and other pollinators.

As part of KCT's outreach work, and in response to requests from Natural England's, seed mixtures have been given to six Cotswold farms between Cirencester



Poppies & Cornflower in bloom on Overbury Estate

and Stow and we were invited by one delighted farmer to view the result.

KCT has invested much time and effort into growing wildflowers but the rewards for wildlife and farming – here and elsewhere - have made the hard work of our volunteers really worthwhile.

Three Year Higher Level Stewardship Project at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve is Completed



The Scrapes, KLNR, with *Crassula helmsii* covering the foreground

In 2010, a three year HLS (Higher Level Stewardship) funded project at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve began. Led by Kemerton Estate, who own the land, but with input and volunteer assistance from the Trust, the project focussed primarily on the grassland meadow and scrapes to the north of the lake, as well as the mining bees banks and the reed beds around the lake edge.

The main aim of the project was to improve the areas for wildlife. The meadow to the north of the lake had become overgrown with bramble and coarse grass, out-competing more fragile grassland wildflowers, the mining bee banks require regular work to keep the ground bare and willow needs removing from the reed beds and scrapes every year. In addition, the project intended to trial a new potential method of removing the infestation of non-native *Crassula helmsii* which has covered the scrapes for years and dried them out.

As part of the project, a stock-proof fence was erected around the meadow above the lake and cattle were introduced to graze

the area in late summer/early autumn. This management will continue into the future and will help native wildflowers to flourish. The *Crassula* trial was sadly not successful, but almost all other works were carried out as planned. The exceptionally wet weather in summer 2012 led to delays in some work so the project was extended to end of March 2014, when it was completed.

Although this HLS project was led by Kemerton Estate, KCT volunteers helped with aspects of the work and monitoring done by Trust staff and volunteers helped to measure the impact of the project. The results of the project will help inform ongoing management.

Trail Cameras Capture Fabulous Video Footage

The Trust has recently been able to purchase two Bushnell Nature View HD Max trail cameras, thanks to a generous grant from a funder who wishes to remain anonymous.

These trail cameras are motion activated and have infra-red sensors to allow them to capture night-time images. They can be set to take still photos or video and are used by conservationists and nature lovers to capture footage in the field without disturbing the animals.

We are very excited to have been able to buy these cameras



A Badger emerging from a sett, still from video, Bushnell Camera

and intend to use them to primarily capture footage of elusive and nocturnal wildlife that would otherwise be almost impossible to obtain. We are particularly hoping to get video of otters at Kemerton Lake, badgers at two known setts and

any other wonderful wildlife that might otherwise be missed.

The cameras have been out in the field for several weeks now and we've been delighted with the results so far. A week outside an active badger sett resulted in over 40 clips of badgers and other wildlife and the cameras are also helping us to gather data for the Ash Bed Trial Project (see below). Some of the better clips, including a montage from the badger sett, can be found on our new Nature Notes blog on the website and we'll be adding to this as time goes on and more fantastic footage is collected.

KCT Website Gets a Fantastic Facelift

Our website has just been relaunched following a major update and refresh.

The website, which contains lots of great information on our work, our wildlife and our reserves, was a bit out of date and the photos looked dated, so over the last twelve months, Governor Matthew Darby, Support Coordinator Kate Aubury and website designer

David Aubury of DJ Computing & Design have worked on re-writing much of the text, adding new sections on governance, history and our wildlife sites and replacing old images with high-res digital photos. We have also launched a new Nature Notes blog, which will feature informal updates on wildlife on the reserves as well as photos and videos that our members will hopefully enjoy.

We hope the revamped website will help people learn more about the Trust, allow visitors to easily find information on visiting the reserves and encourage more people to become 'Friends of KCT'.

Please do go and take a look at our refreshed and updated website at www.kemerton.org, and take a moment to check out the new blog!



© Kate Aubury
Protecting coppice stools, Ash Bed, March 2014

The Ash Bed Restoration Project began twelve months ago when funding was received for a project which included

Update on Ash Bed Restoration

undertaking much-needed coppicing in the Ash Bed (a remnant Ash Coppice on Bredon Hill) along with planting of new shrubs and trees, and a short trial to monitor the effects of grazing animals such as deer and rabbit on the ground flora and shrub layer of woodland.

The trial work began last July and was completed this month, with a short report due soon to

outline the conclusions of the trial. The new trail cameras were used onsite to gather a more accurate picture of the animals grazing the woodland. The coppicing of selected Ash was carried out earlier this year and our warden and volunteers planted a number of shrubs in March, as well as guarded the new coppice stools. As a result of all the work, the site is now looking rejuvenated!

Kemerton Clippings July 2014

Edited by Kate Aubury

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Print services provided by Fleet Graphics (Tewkesbury) Ltd

This newsletter is published bi-annually. The next edition will be issued in January 2015.

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



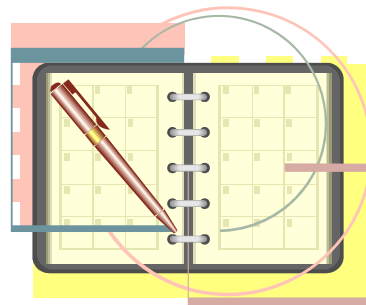
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Marbled White on Knapweed, Bredon Hill, July 2014

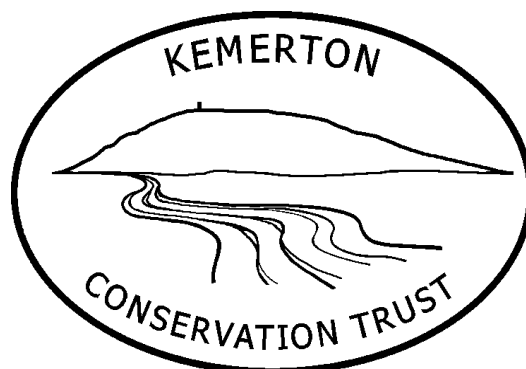
Save the Date!

- **Sunday 10th August - Member-only Bat Walk & Talk**, KLNK (8.30pm start) - *booking essential*
- **Saturday 30th August - Working Party** (10am start, Upstones Orchard)
- **Sunday 31st August - Member-only Walk, Beggar Boys Wetland**, Westmancote (2.30pm start)
- **Saturday 27th September- Working party** (10am start, Beggar Boys Wetland)
- **Saturday 18th October - KOW Apple Day** 1-5pm, Victoria Hall, Kemerton
- **Saturday 25th October - Working party** (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 29th November - 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.



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