

Kemerton Clippings

Issue 2

July 2008

Appeals for Help!

In addition to looking for more volunteers for the monthly Volunteer Working Party Group, the Trust is looking for volunteer help in the following areas:

Veteran Tree Recorder:

Worcs. Wildlife Trust is carrying out a survey of the county's oldest trees and we would like to contribute records. If you are a local Tree Warden, or an enthusiast who can identify different species of tree and are willing to train in recording, we need you! The information required is; species of tree, estimated size, general condition, land use around it, a photograph, OS reference, nearest village, circumference of tree at 'breast height'. If you are interested please contact us for further details.

Help in the John Moore Nature Reserve:

This small reserve in Kemerton needs occasional work such as mowing and clearing debris and litter from the path and keeping an eye on young trees. About 5-10 hours per year would be enough to manage this wildlife haven. If you can help please contact us.

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

New Rides Open to Public

Kemerton Conservation Trust is pleased to announce a new set of rides through Kemerton Arboretum are now open to the public following a successful event which over fifty 'Friends of KCT' and local residents attended.

The Opening Event, which was held on Sunday 20 July, included the official opening of the permissive paths to the general public, a guided tour of the new section of the Arboretum by KCT Chairman Adrian Darby, and a talk by KCT Conservation Advisor John Clarke on current projects in the arboretum, including our new bat scheme and ongoing leaf litter trials.



Christina Darby cutting the ribbon



Kate Aubury, Support Coordinator, leading the walk

Trustees and volunteers were on hand during the event to answer questions on the conservation work KCT undertakes in the local area and to identify specimen trees of particular interest on the new walks, including our impressive collection of Giant Redwood in the California section.

The new paths were created thanks to a grant from Natural England through DEFRA's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF), which supported the further development of the arboretum around Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve, opening up new walks which will treble the area available to the public during the summer. It has also paid for the materials to label 800 trees and to produce a full catalogue and map showing every specimen tree, which will be available to 'Friends of KCT' and other interested parties at a small cost.



Campanula Glomerata, a rare wildflower spotted on the walk by Meriel Darby, not believed to have been recorded in Worcestershire for nearly 10 years!



Easter Egg Hunt goes down a treat with nature loving local youngsters!

Strong gales, snow and even hail could not stop local children from attending the Easter Egg Hunt organized by KCT!

The event, held on Saturday 22 March at Kemerton Court, was a huge success, with an eggciting chocolate egg hunt through the grounds for the younger participants, and a more challenging nature trail for the older kids — with chocolate prizes, of course!

In addition to the fun egg hunt, competitors were invited to take part in a drawing competition to find the most creative artist's impression of the Lesser Spotted Easter Bird. We

were extremely impressed with the wonderful drawings entered and the judges had a difficult time choosing winners for each age group. All the pictures have been on display at the Eastern Hide over the summer so go see for yourself! The overall winner was Johan Beavis Berry and his fab drawing is shown here. Well done, Johan!

KCT is very grateful to the local schools, who allowed us to issue invitations to their pupils, helping to ensure a great turnout for the day. We raised over £100 for the Trust and best of all, everyone had fun! We hope to make this a regular annual event.



The Lesser Spotted Easter Bird:

Name of Artist: **JOHAN BEAVIS BERRY**
Age: **8**



Huntsmans Quarries Ltd delivers the goods

The Trust needed better access into the woodland and arboretum to enable vehicles to work there and provide a safer approach for visitors.

Huntsmans Quarries Ltd from Naunton, who excavated the sands and gravels at the lake, have generously donated 80 tons of hardcore made from

recycled material. They have also provided a stockpile of recycled material to use in the future maintenance of the

main access track and the public footpath where it crosses the reserve.

Kemerton Conservation Trust is extremely grateful to Huntsmans Quarries Ltd for their advice and generous contribution.

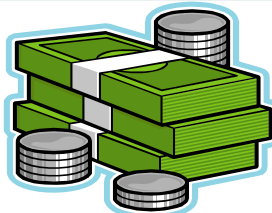
"Huntsmans have donated 80 tons of recycled hardcore to the Trust"

Funding Update

A fundraising campaign by Trustee Roger Workman has seen a tremendous response from local residents in Bredon, Westmancote, Kemerton, Kinsham and Overbury. Many generous donors have opted to set up an annual standing order, which allows KCT to plan ahead. All

donors become part of our 'Friends of KCT' scheme as our way of saying thank you.

Our grant from ASLF has now come to an end, so we are urgently seeking additional



funds, both through alternative grant sources and the general public/local businesses. A recent appeal saw us gain our first Corporate Sponsors and we are very grateful to Leifeld UK and Aubury Computer Systems Ltd for their support.

Thank you to all who have supported us this year!

New 'Friends of KCT' scheme goes from strength to strength!

KCT is pleased to announce that since the launch of the new 'Friends of KCT' scheme last year, it has gone from strength to strength.

As Support Coordinator, responsible for volunteers and fundraising, I am thrilled that our membership has now passed over 100, and I hope will continue to grow!

With the nonstop efforts of the trust team and all our wonderful volunteers and supporters, 2008 is proving to be a very exciting year for the Trust, with the 'Friends' scheme playing a large part in involving the local community in more aspects of the Trust's work.

The Volunteer Working Party Group, which first met in January this year, has proved extremely successful and is now a vital part of day to day conservation management on our reserves. (See the article on page 4 for more details of what we do.)

Apart from the monthly working parties, there are many other ways wildlife enthusiasts can get involved. In addition to our long term helpers (you know who you are!), we are very pleased to welcome on board Sue McLeish, who is helping John with the wildflower nursery, and Bobby Brewis, who is undertaking habitat management in Upstones Orchard. John has also been able to extend the Glow Worm survey, with new volunteers assisting Sue Chandler, our resident expert, to monitor glow worm activity on Bredon Hill. So if you have some spare time and think you would like to help, just let us know!

No matter how big or small the contribution, all trust helpers and donors become part of the scheme; receiving our bi-annual newsletter, invitations to 'Friends-only' events and free entry to some public events.



Our first 'Friends-only' event was held earlier this year, and despite dismal weather, was greatly enjoyed by those who attended. We plan to hold more events as time goes on so hope to see you there! (see the article on page 4 about our Wildflower Walk).

If you have yet to join the scheme and are interested in learning more, please contact me on 07765 334 776 or alternatively by email on kate@aubury.co.uk.

By Kate Aubury, Support Coordinator

News in Brief

We can confirm that the new bat box scheme is now up and running. Thanks to the generosity of local residents, businesses and Kemerton Orchard Workers, 12 new bat boxes were purchased and placed around KCT's nature reserves. Four can be seen in the arboretum around Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve, with two more in Daffurn's Orchards. Monitoring will begin next year, and we will keep you posted!

'The new bat scheme is up and running!'



A new local reserve, Beckford Nature Reserve, (formerly owned by Huntsmans Quarries Ltd and unofficially managed by local people) is now owned by a local community trust.

They have started a wildlife recording system and will be grateful for any records, which can be left in the hide, at the local stores and post office or on their website:

www.beckford-village.org

Wildflower walk is wet but wonderful!

On Monday 26 May, we held our first 'Friends'-only event—a wildflower walk on Bredon Hill.

The walk was led by our chairman, Adrian Darby, who identified wildflowers on the route for the group and explained about the local area's flora and geological makeup.

The weather was extremely wet and windy, but a dauntless group of 'Friends' arrived bright and early, in full waterproof clothing from head to toe!

The walk's route began at the Quarry Field above Westmancote and was almost

entirely on private land, so the 'Friends' who joined us were able to see parts of Kemerton Estate and Trust land which are not normally accessible to the public, including the Bushes SSSI and the ancient SSSI woodland, Aldwick Wood (both part of Bredon Hill's Special Area of Conservation).

Adrian identified such wildflowers as small flowered buttercup, rockrose, red campion, various thistles and the highlight; a beautiful clump of monk's-hood flowering in Aldwick Wood.

The view of the valley from the hill was delightful, even in the drizzle!



Monks-hood, *Aconitum Napellus*, in Aldwick

After the walk, a picnic had been planned but, due to bad weather, was relocated to Kemerton Court, so many thanks to Adrian and Meriel for accommodating us.

We hope to organize another 'Friends'-only event in the near future, so will keep you updated!

Volunteer Working Party Group update

Following the launch of the 'Friends of KCT' scheme in November last year, the new Volunteer Working Party Group began meeting in January this year.



Our aim; to assist KCT Conservation Advisor, John Clarke, with practical habitat management on the reserves.

The group meets up once a month, on a Saturday for about three hours, and undertakes practical conservation work. We have now met six times this year, and have undertaken a variety of jobs from removing broken fencing, chipping

brashwood, clearing the access track at the lake, repairing the muddy footpaths and cutting back nettles etc. to tidying the new rides in the arboretum, litter picking at the lake and the woods and raking grass off the banks on Bredon Hill to allow the Glow Worms and Orchids to flourish.

KCT is extremely grateful to all those who have joined us on these monthly working parties. Particularly thanks go to long-term volunteers Andy Hull and Alan Marsh, who have given their skilled assistance to the group.

We are still looking for more volunteers to join us. Anyone interested in attending should contact our Support Coordinator, Kate Aubury, on 07765 334 776 or by email on kate@aubury.co.uk. All relevant tools and safety equipment will be provided, no experience is necessary and volunteers attend as and when they can.

Kemerton Cuttings

Biological Records Report from John Clarke (October 07-March 08)

Kemerton Lake

Water levels remained high throughout this period and in late March work was carried out to improve the sealing of one of the pools to the west of the foot-path.

The permissive path to the East Hide is now open until October (no dogs allowed). Work is progressing towards the opening of a second path to the west and this small, circular route will pass through part of the Arboretum, passing other parts of the ongoing Leaf Litter trials.

1st October – a male Pintail, 92 Greylag Goose, 274 Canada Goose, 215 Lapwing, 14 Shoveler. 11th October – 11 Skylark, 4 Stonechat, Water Rail, Raven, 330 Canada Goose, 192 Greylag Goose (apparently the highest ever count in Worcs), 14 Little Grebe. The record number of Greylag Goose was beaten again on 14th with 195. Also a Little Egret & 2 Swallow. 24th October – 269 Canada Goose, 189 Greylag Goose, 12 Shoveler, 2 Water Rail, 18 Snipe, Little Owl. 31st October – 61 Lapwing, Stonechat, 21 Teal, Kingfisher & 14 Shoveler. 2 Grey Wagtail on 3rd November, 8th November - c500 Canada Goose, c50 Greylag Goose, 120 Mallard, 6 Meadow Pipit & a Woodcock. 14th November - Starling roost estimated at 1400 birds while 84 Reed Bunting came into roost near the observer. 10 Siskin in a nearby plantation. On the lake there was a Goldeneye, 42 Wigeon, 145 Mallard, 13 Shoveller & a Ruddy Duck with 2 Water Rail calling.

This winter was good for Woodcock records with birds reported from 15+ sites across the estate. 4th December - 60 Wigeon, 110

Greylag, 9 Snipe, 4 Jack Snipe, a Goosander & 24 Siskin. By 10th December Siskin numbers had increased to 50 in the woodland with 13 Snipe, 5 Jack Snipe & Water Rail on the reserve.

13th December 39 Teal, 125 Wigeon, 11 Mute Swan. 12 swans on 12th & 25 Pochard. There were several sightings of Goldcrest & Treecreeper in nearby woodland. There were 21 Snipe there on 18th. 21st December - 126 Coot, 50 Teal, 22 Shoveler, 48 Mallard, 15 Wigeon & 7 Little Grebe. 2nd January a male Smew & a male Red-crested Pochard were present. 80 Wigeon on 5th. A total of 11 Cormorant were there on 9th January – also 85 Wigeon, 2 Gadwall, 36 Mallard, 23 Pochard, 39 Tufted Duck, 42 Snipe & 15 Jack Snipe.

On 8th February - 79 Tufted Duck, 21 Pochard, 46 Wigeon, 33 Teal, 5 Shoveler, 5 Gadwall & 80 Coot. Also there a pair of Red-crested Pochard, 40 Snipe & 3 Jack Snipe. On 13th February - 8 Shoveler. 2 Oystercatcher on 17th & on 19th February a Peregrine was hunting. 21st February - 60 Wigeon and there were 39 Pochard there on 26th. 15th March - 6 Sand Martin & 3 Curlew. A Siskin was seen in the nearby woods 30th March.

Elsewhere around Kemerton

A few sightings of Stonechat throughout the winter. A flock of Lapwing – variously reported as 150-200 birds was reported occasionally in the Carrant Catchment area.

Possibly two reports of Short-eared Owl in the Bredon Hill area. Regular sightings of Barn Owl across the estate with two found dead during the winter.

28 Brambling feeding under beech on Bredon Hill 26th November.

During January, February & March mixed flocks of Fieldfare & Redwing were feeding in an orchard & parkland at Kemerton – c400 Fieldfare & c200 Redwing 6th January, c500 Redwing & c200 Fieldfare on 23rd February.

A Goldfinch roost at Aston Under Hill, first reported last winter had increased to c100 birds. A Lesser-spotted Woodpecker was feeding on peanuts in a Kemerton garden on 23rd January. Several groups of around 7-8 Bullfinch were recorded – usually in association with areas containing Blackthorn scrub. A pair of Blackbird began nest-building on 27th February – the nest was complete but empty on 19th March, female sitting on 26th.

First calling Chiffchaff reported on 6th March. Pair Brambling in woodland at Kemerton 12 March. A Red Kite was seen in the Beckford area 18th March.

First Bumblebees reported 12 January – Bumblebees & Honey Bees active 20th January.

Grey Heron are scarce in our area & it was sad & somewhat macabre to see (26th March) a dead bird that was suspended by one foot trapped in the cleft of a branch high up in a poplar tree, close to a nest previously used by Buzzard.

Kemerton Conservation Trust is particularly grateful for the records provided by contributors to the recording scheme.

**By John Clarke,
Conservation Advisor**

Kemerton Clippings & Cuttings July 08

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This newsletter is published 6-monthly. Next edition will be issued in January 2009.

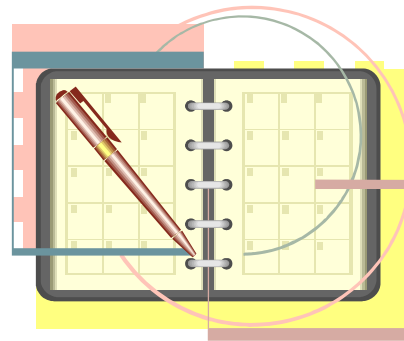
For more information on the work of KCT, please visit our website:
www.kemerton.org



A beautiful Pyramid Orchid by the lake (July)

Save the Date!

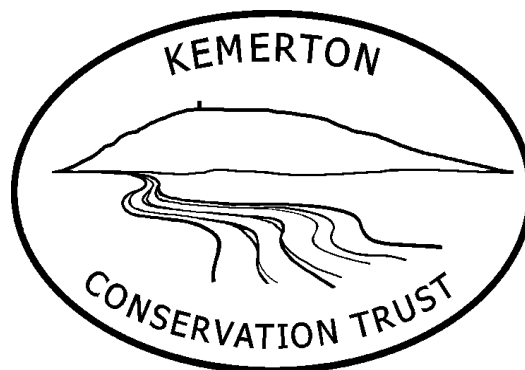
- Saturday 30th Aug 2008 - Working Party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- Saturday 20th Sept 2008 - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- Saturday 25th Oct 2008 - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- Saturday 29th Nov 2008 - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)



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