

Kemerton Clippings

Issue 9

January 2012

Appeals for Help!

The Trust is looking for volunteer help in the following areas:

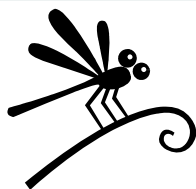
Event Helpers Needed

The KCT Easter Egg Hunt is on Saturday 7th April. We are looking for helpers to assist with running the admissions stand and help with general tasks on the day including set up beforehand. If you are able to volunteer for an hour or so on the day, your help would be appreciated! If you are interested, please contact KCT Support Coordinator Kate Aubury either by phone on 07765 334 776 or by emailing kate@aubury.co.uk

Work Party Volunteers

Do you like wildlife, hard work and the outdoors? If so, our monthly work parties may be just what you are looking for! We meet once a month on a Saturday (dates on back page) and carry out practical conservation work on KCT reserves and managed land. All tools, safety wear and training is provided. Why not come along to one and give it a try?? If you are interested, please contact Support Coordinator Kate Aubury either by phone on 07765 334 776 or by emailing kate@aubury.co.uk.

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.



Inimitable Insects are the Highlight of our Open Day!

KCT's Annual Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve Open Day was held on Saturday 3rd September this year, and was bigger and better than ever!

Our main guided walk this year centred on the wonderful array of invertebrates found on the reserve with particular focus on dragonflies, butterflies and bugs. The walk was led by local naturalist (and Friend of KCT) John Meiklejohn, who is a fount of knowledge on many subjects and so was happy to branch out into a detailed explanation of plant galls when a question arose! His walks were interesting and educational and the kids enjoyed meeting all our resident creepy-crawlies!



© Kate Aubury

Local naturalist John Meiklejohn leads a walk around the reserve

In addition to our invertebrate walk, KCT Chairman Adrian Darby also led a walk through the exotic arboretum which surrounds much of the lake reserve and contains many beautiful and unusual trees in its collection. It is also a wonderful woodland habitat full of birds, insects, fungi and more, with permissive rides for visitors to use.



© Kate Aubury

Shield Bugs on a bush, KLNLR Open Day 2011

As well as the walks, there were also stands to visit, including a stall by Kemerton Orchard Workers, yummy refreshments available to revive attendees after their exertions, a fun nature trail for the kids and a raffle which included prizes donated by local artist Katie Hough, the London Camera Exchange, Walcot Organic Nursery, Norton Garden Centre, Gotherington Nurseries, Countrywide, Haywards (Tewkesbury) Ltd and Aubury Computer Systems Ltd. The first prize (a limited edition print entitled 'Hare') was won by Friend of KCT Sue Chandler, who was delighted with it.

Huge thanks go to our guest expert John, to all our volunteers who helped out on the day to ensure everything went smoothly, and to the generous businesses who donated to our raffle. It was a great day and, thanks to ticket, raffle and refreshment sales, as well as donations and new member signups on the day, made the trust a profit of almost £700 which was a terrific result! In 2012 we are planning to expand the Open Day even more so watch this space...



© David Aubury

Wildlife Protection V Public Access

In order to engage with the general public and our own members, we have a number of permissive paths through our largest reserve: Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve (KLNLR) and the surrounding woodland and exotic Arboretum, as well as two bird hides, all aimed at allowing better access to nature. However, there is a balance required between the two sometimes conflicting aims of wildlife protection and public access, and in this article we would like to highlight this and explain some of the access decisions we have made at the lake.

One of the most important elements of access management is limiting disturbance to wildlife and habitats, especially during the sensitive bird nesting season (April-June).

The Trust aims to minimize disturbance by implementing the following rules: no dogs on the reserve (except on the public footpath), visitors to keep to signed paths at all times, restrictions on some paths to members only, and the closure of some woodland paths during nesting season to protect birds. We also do not allow any access to the lake edge or surrounding fields (except during guided Trust events) to protect the wading birds that live there.

We regret that dogs cannot be taken on the reserve, even on leads, but as the main focus of KLNLR is the bird life, with particular emphasis on wildfowl, dogs can potentially do a great deal of damage.

Opening up permissive paths to allow controlled access to the reserve is the best way to protect the flora and fauna whilst letting everyone enjoy the beautiful site, so it is discouraging to see so many visitors ignore the rules and straying off paths.

The damage that can be done to breeding waders by walking through the scrapes in spring and summer, or to rare orchids trampled carelessly underfoot can undo years of conservation work in a moment. There are also health and safety hazards to straying from the paths, which are maintained by the Trust throughout the year to ensure they are safe for use.

If you do come across people straying from the paths (particularly with dogs), please feel free to have a friendly word with them on the Trust's behalf, to explain the importance of areas that are disturbance free.

To assist visitors, there is a large map clearly showing all paths (and opening times, restrictions



One of our lovely permissive paths through the Arboretum

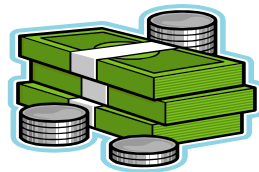
etc.) at the reserve (at the junction of the public footpath and our main permissive path in the Arboretum), and you can also download an A4 pdf copy of the map from our website www.kemerton.org (just go to the 'Contact or visit us' page and you'll find it under the section on Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve).

Update on Bishop's Ride: In the last newsletter we explained that the final section of our new 'Friends-only' permissive path through the western section of woodland, called Bishop's Ride on the map, was regrettably not completed in time for the map launch and we estimated it would be completed and open by the end of the year. Unfortunately, due to delays with our felling licence, the ride is still not finished but we hope it will be ready by the spring. We will keep you updated on progress and thank you for your patience in the meantime.

Funding Update

Fundraising in the second half of the year came mostly from events, as time and project work pressures meant no new grant applications were completed.

However, the Annual Open Day brought in almost £700 (including another generous



donation from Bredon Forest School), and we also signed up some new 'Friends' at various events including our Open Day and the KOW Apple Day.

Our new focus for 2012 is to raise funds for a replacement vehicle for the warden, as the Trust's ATV is no longer adequate. Our target is £6000 and we are currently looking at options to raise the money, including a fundraising appeal.

Thank you to all who have supported us this year!

KOW Apple Day

Kemerton Orchard Workers (KOW) Annual Apple Day was held on Saturday 17th October at Victoria Hall, Kemerton, and KCT was there with a stand about the nine local orchards we own and/or manage.

It was a lovely crisp, sunny autumn day, and the turnout was high, with the apple pressing in great demand as always. Queues formed outside as KOW's Neil and Olivia Chance worked hard to juice thousands of apples!



© David Aubury
The KCT stand at KOW Apple Day

Inside the hall were lots of stalls displaying & selling local orchard produce and related items, including KOW's stall selling the popular Daffurn's Orchard Calendar, Slipstream Organics and Bredon Honey, a display by local botanical artist Beth Phillip, and new for this year; experts from the Marcher Apple Network (MAN) attended to identify apple varieties for members of the public.

A colourful display of apples illustrated the many different traditional apple varieties grown in both Daffurns Orchard and some of KCT's other orchards in Kemerton.

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



© Kate Aubury
KOW members hard at work pressing apples!

The importance of traditional orchards as a wildlife habitat and community resource is increasingly understood. KOW's work at Daffurns Orchard illustrates how a well-run community orchard adds to the local area. KCT is therefore delighted to hear that our neighbours in Overbury and Conderton are now setting up their own community orchard and we look forward to hearing more in due course.

News in Brief

A big thank you to Kevin O'Neill of Walcot Organic Nursery, who has donated 10 apple trees to the Trust for our orchards. Walcot Organic Nursery has supplied many of our traditional variety apple trees over the years and is very supportive of our work.

Friends of KCT Margaret and Keith Dale have also generously donated a new office chair for the KCT office for staff and visitors to use. They offered to help us out after hearing that, due to the lack of suitable furniture, visitors were having to sit on the Conservation Officer's fishing chair! Now trust meetings will be more comfortable.



© Dorset Orchid
A close-up of the delicate white flowers of Autumn Lady's Tresses

At the start of December, the **Little Christmas Fair** held in Kemerton and organised by Christina Kulukundis raised £300 for the Trust through sales of cakes, coffees and from stallholder donations. Our thanks go to Christina and her many helpers for their fabulous fundraising efforts.

A new species of orchid has been recorded at KLNRR this summer by John Day, the county botanical recorder.

During an organised visit by a group of Worcestershire Recorders, John discovered the late flowering **Autumn Lady's Tresses** in Lake Meadow. This is a new record for KCT and the orchid is also a rarity in Worcestershire. This addition brings the total number of orchids found on the reserve and in surrounding woodland to an amazing eight species!

Only one plant was found, but we will be monitoring the area in future and hope to discover more. The planned grazing of Lake Meadow should assist.

Work Party Update by Bobby Brewis

For some years I have been a member of the team of volunteers who do conservation work for KCT one Saturday morning each month. The work we do is light, enjoyable, outdoors, and varied: visitor paths need maintenance; the scrapes at Kemerton Lake would soon become a forest of willow if the saplings were not removed annually; the foreign invader Himalayan Balsam would evict all but a few plants from the borders of streams if it was not regularly cleared; attractive wild flowers such as orchids and cowslips, which have established themselves in places once grazed by sheep, would be stifled by long grass if it was not cut and carried, nor would the glow worms thrive.

The volunteers are also a varied bunch of people. All ages from teenagers through to pensioners are represented. All of us, I expect, have at least *some* interest in natural history, if only to learn what is going on in the countryside around us. And we have many opportunities to meet the real experts, who can open our eyes to the secrets of nature.

I greatly enjoyed participating in a bat detection evening at Kemerton Lake with a machine that translates bat squeaks into clicks that the human ear can hear. You can identify the species of a bat flying invisibly by you by the frequency of the clicks, since each species uses a different



Bobby Brewis raking up hay in Upstones Orchard, July 2011

one. We learned that several species visit the lake, some of them from several miles away. For they arrived very late in the evening when we were packing up to go home!

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



Debbie running Forest School

In this article, we would like to focus on KCT work party volunteer Debbie Manns, who also runs Bredon Forest School (www.forestschool.org).

Debbie is a part-time lecturer at South Worcestershire College where she teaches a mixture of Health & Social Care, Early Years and Life Skills to a range of students from mainstream to young people with learning difficulties.

Debbie also runs Kemerton Early Years at Victoria Hall, with Thursdays spent at Forest

Focus on a Friend: Debbie Manns

School. She set up the forest school in 2002 after attending a talk. As she was already involved in outdoor play with Bredon Playgroup it seemed a natural extension, and she was able to undertake the Forest School Leader award at work.

Debbie first became involved with KCT shortly afterwards when, having attended a Trust Open Day, she approached our chairman Adrian Darby to ask about the possibility of using some woodland for forest school for both Kemerton and Bredon playgroups. Adrian was happy to oblige and a suitable site was found within Kemerton Woods, where Debbie has set up camp ever since!

Since then, Debbie and her husband David have joined our work party volunteers and also

tirelessly raise money for the Trust through forest school fun days.

In addition to all her current activities, Debbie is now going one stage further and is building up woodland survival skills on an instructor mentor scheme with Dave Watson and the Institute for Outdoor Learning.

Debbie is passionate about the sense of freedom the outdoors brings and wants all children to be able to experience it. She volunteers in order to give back to the community she lives in and to protect our natural heritage for her own children and for future generations.

KCT would like to thank Debbie and all her family for their valuable contribution to nature education and to our work.

Annual Governors Meeting 2011

On 9th November, KCT's governors met for the Annual Governors Meeting.

The Governors Meeting is a chance for all KCT's governors to get together, to review the annual accounts, set the budget for the next year, hear activity reports from our Conservation Officer John Clarke and Support Coordinator Kate Aubury on Trust activities, and discuss priorities, issues and opportunities for 2012.



© Kate Aubury
KCT Chairman Adrian Darby showing governors Dr Margaret Palmer & Carl Nicholson winter barley on Bredon Hill

At the meeting this year, the main issue identified was the requirement for a new Trust vehicle. Our warden Alan Marsh has been using an ATV Quad Bike for the last few years to get to and around our reserves to do his job but due to more volunteers getting involved in our mid-week work, the Trust now needs a 4-seater UTV.

Due to the urgency of the requirement, it is unlikely we will be able to raise the funds for a second hand vehicle through grants, so we are now launching an appeal to existing members and are planning a fundraising campaign for new members in Bredon. Our fundraising target is £3000, with the Trust matching this with £3000 from our own surplus to reach the £6000 required to purchase a second hand UTV.

At the meeting, the governors also reviewed and approved the



© Kate Aubury
In The Bushes SSSI viewing HLS-funded work

Chairman's Report, which is now available on our website for public view (go to 'News and events'). A copy of John Clarke's Annual Report is also on the website.

After the meeting, some of the governors went on a guided tour of The Bushes SSSI on Bredon Hill to see work that has been undertaken as part of a Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Special Project, as well as viewing some other HLS-related farm activities, all of which KCT is advising on.

Cub Scouts Beaver Away for KCT!

At the start of the year, we were contacted by Bredon Cub Scouts to ask if they could make some bird boxes for the Trust as part of their activities, to be sited at KLNR. After giving them a template to use, we were delighted to receive six bird boxes in September.

Our warden has erected the boxes along the South Ride near the East Hide, set back slightly from the path, so that the cub scouts can view their work when walking to the hide.

After putting up the boxes, KCT was pleased to host a visit by

the cub scouts to the reserve as a thank you for all their hard work.

On 17th October, 20+ cub scouts and their leader descended on the reserve and received a guided tour from Support Coordinator Kate Aubury.

The boys were thrilled to see their boxes in-situ, and hope they will soon be in use. The type of box made will primarily attract Blue Tits, Coal Tits and Marsh Tits, and we expect them to move in in spring, so keep your eyes peeled!



© David Aubury
Bredon Cub Scouts on a guided tour of KLNR, 17th October 2011

The highlights of the walk were the fungi, spotting birds on the lake, and one eagle-eyed cub spotted a Pipistrelle bat in the woods!

We would like to thank the Cub Scouts for donating the bird boxes to the Trust.



Bat Survey Update - by Kate Aubury



KCT's Bat Survey Programme continued in 2011, and with the addition of the new equipment purchased using funds from The Ryklow Trust, even more data was collected.

We completed nine surveys through the summer, as well as two bat box checks (in May and November). Some of these surveys were repeat visits to sites surveyed in 2009 and



© Kate Aubury

A male Common Pipistrelle in a box at KLNLR, November 2011

2010, but we also surveyed four new sites (Daffurns Orchard, The Bushes SSSI, The Ashbed and a Lesser Horseshoe Roost in Kemerton).

I am still analysing the many recordings taken and will be producing my annual report shortly. However, I am already finding the Batbox Griffin data has improved the accuracy and number of records, which is great.

The Lesser Horseshoe Bat Roost survey was a personal highlight. These bats are relatively rare and highly protected. I was notified of the possibility of the roost by the building's owner and arranged an emergence survey in September. This type of survey involves counting the number of bats in the roost as they leave

for the evening. In total we counted four bats. Watching the bats flutter in and out of the building for 20 minutes before they flew off was wonderful!

We have been given permission to record the roost as part of a national monitoring scheme (the NBMP) and are planning more surveys to monitor it.

The bat box checks were also great, and we found approx. 10% of boxes occupied by Common or Soprano Pipistrelle bats on both occasions.

It was another great season and my thanks to Worcestershire Bat Group for assisting on some surveys, to David Worley of Gloucestershire Bat Group for supervising the bat box checks and to my husband David for his help on every survey.

Bat Walk at Kemerton Lake Nature

On Sunday 9th August, we held another member-only bat walk at KLNLR.

A small group of Friends of KCT, joined by two members from Worcestershire Bat Group and led by Kate and David Aubury, spent a very enjoyable evening listening to bats on the reserve. They also heard a short talk about these elusive but fascinating little mammals.

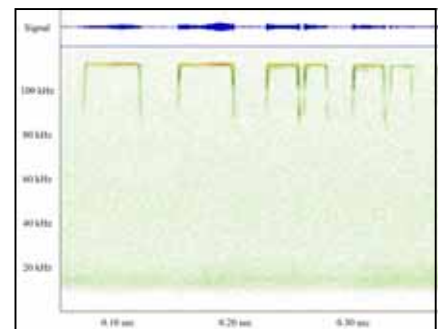
Using bat detectors to convert bat calls into sounds audible to humans, we tramped around the lake marvelling at the number of Pipistrelle bats feeding near the edge of the lake and the lagoon. Both Common and

Soprano Pipistrelle were out in force feeding on midges.

Using the Trust's new Batbox Griffin, Kate demonstrated recording the calls for analysis later, as well as replaying bat calls in Time Expansion mode, which slows down the call and changes the sound.

The importance of recording was demonstrated later, when a review of the night's records on the PC unexpectedly revealed a Lesser Horseshoe call, which was not heard on the walk because the call is at a much higher frequency than we were scanning at the time.

Although we only recorded four species on the walk, it was a



Recording of a Lesser Horseshoe taken during walk, 7th August 2011

very enjoyable evening, and the lake looked beautiful in the twilight.

Using the two new Batbox Batons allowed the attendees to really get involved in tracking the bats in the dark, bringing into focus their normally secret world.

We intend to hold another member-only bat walk in the second half of 2012.

The Fantastic & Fascinating World of Fungi

Although fungi can be found year round, the best time for a fungi foray is definitely autumn, when they are most prolific and can be found in every woodland, field or garden.

Often overlooked, fungi are truly fascinating organisms that deserve the spotlight, so in this article we will turn our focus on fungi.

Fungi are neither plants nor animals, but form their own separate kingdom. They can be spilt into 3 groups, depending on the way they grow; mycorrhizal (forming a symbiotic relationship with a plant), saprophytic (living off dead plant matter and decomposing it) and parasitic (attacking the plant host and potentially killing it). An example of a parasitic fungi is the dreaded Honey Fungus *Armillaria mellea*, which can kill it's host tree. Another is the edible Chicken of the Woods *Laetiporus sulphureus* (pictured below).

Because of this relationship with their environment, most fungi are very specific in their habitat requirement, with many species growing on or



© Kate Aubury



Blackening Waxcap *Hygrocybe nigrescens*

near one species of tree or in one type of habitat. The jewel bright waxcaps only grow in unimproved grassland, Birch Polypore only grows on birch but most inkcaps can be found in a wide range of habitats including parks and gardens.

Although when speaking of fungi most people think of the cap and stem types, such as the Field Mushroom, they come in many different shapes and sizes ranging from a foot wide to the microscopic, from funnel-shaped to coral-like clumps.

However, the majority of well-known fungi are of the cap and stem variety, usually with spore-bearing gills on the underside of the cap, and these are commonly referred to as mushrooms (such as the Fly Agaric pictured here).



In reality, the mushroom is only the fruiting body, the main structure of the fungi is the mycelium, a dense mass of threads growing underground from which the fruiting body

grows. The mycelium can be large and stretch under the soil for meters. The largest living organism in the world is a fungus in Oregon that covers approx. 3.4 square miles! The fruiting body grows when the conditions are right (usually triggered by rain) and releases thousands of microscopic spores, which is how fungi reproduce.

Although fungi can be enjoyed simply for their beauty, many people are interested in learning to identify edible mushrooms. Although there are some delicious wild fungi, care must be taken if you intend to harvest them, as some edible mushrooms can be confused with poisonous ones. Taking precautions including using a good field guide and taking a spore print (often essential in identifying a species) can help, but our advice would be to stick to those edible mushrooms that cannot be misidentified: for example the Giant Puffball shown below is edible when young (and white throughout) and, due to its football size, is easily identified!

So next time you go for a walk, remember to look out for all these fabulous fungi!



© Kate Aubury

Kemerton Clippings January 2012

Edited by Kate Aubury

Contact email: kate@aubury.co.uk

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This newsletter is published bi-annually. The next edition will be issued in July 2012.

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



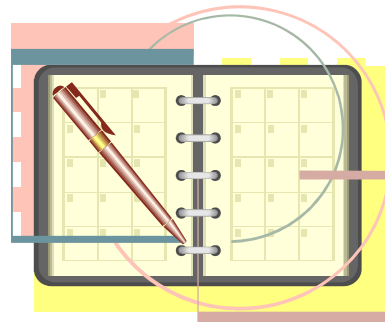
© Kate Aubury

Shaggy Inkcap *Coprinus comatus*, Lillans Orchard, Kemerton, September 2011

Save the Date!

- **Saturday 28th January** - Working Party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 25th February** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Friday 2nd March** - Slideshow & Talk at Victoria Hall, Kemerton (8-10pm)
- **Saturday 24th March** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 7th April** - Annual Easter Egg Hunt, Kemerton Court (details to follow)
- **Saturday 28th April** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 26th May** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 30th June** - 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

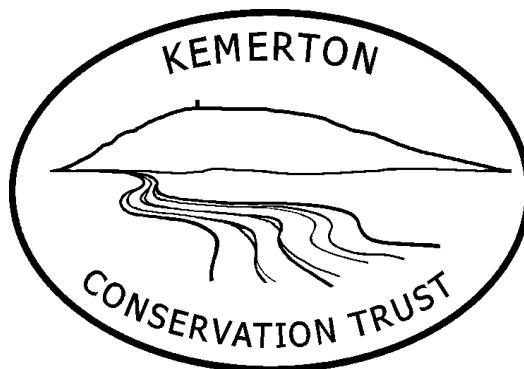
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