

Kemerton Clippings

Issue 8

July 2011

Appeals for Help!

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

Event Helpers Needed

The KCT Open Day is on Saturday 3rd September. We will require help with the refreshment stand, car parking and also the admissions stand. 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 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.

Orchid Walk Unveils New Maps and Signs at KLNR

On Monday 20th June, in rather wet conditions, a band of twenty hardy Friends and KCT staff met for the official unveiling of the completed lottery funded map and signage project at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve.

The project centres around a new map of the reserve, showing all the public and permitted access in and around the reserve, as well as new signage to assist visitors. The new map is available from the website as a download, in leaflet form, and can also be viewed in the noticeboard on the South Ride in the Arboretum.

The project has been funded by the Big Lottery Fund through the Awards for All strand, and has included money for a new information leaflet on the Trust as well as the new map and signs.

The event combined the official unveiling of the completed project with an orchid walk. The nature reserve and surrounding woodland boasts a total of seven species of orchid, with impressive displays of Common Spotted, Bee and Southern Marsh Orchid being the highlights. As the walk was held in late June, the Bee and Pyramidal Orchids were at their peak, with literally hundreds of Bee Orchids in flower along the Friends-only Lake Walk.



© Kate Aubury

A beautiful Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera* at KLNR June 2011

The walk was led by Adrian Darby, KCT Chairman, and Kate Aubury, KCT Support Coordinator, and our newest governor Dr Margaret Palmer also joined us for her first official visit. Attendees learnt about the fascinating biology of the Bee Orchid, so-called because of its startling resemblance to a bee. This resemblance is an evolutionary adaptation designed to attract a male bee for pollination, but these orchids are usually self-pollinated in the UK, as the bee species is not found here.

Whilst the weather was not in our favour, the orchids shone as the stars they are and the walk ended at the East Hide where attendees were able to enjoy the sight of a floating Great Crested Grebe's nest on the lake.

Our grateful thanks to the Big Lottery Fund for generously funding this project.



© David Aubury

An example of the new path way markers

Update on our Crayfish Ark Site

Our last edition featured details of a joint project with Buglife to create an Ark Site at KLNK for our endangered native White-clawed crayfish. This project has been supervised by KCT Warden Alan Marsh. Below, he gives an update on activity this year.

Having been involved in all elements of the current project except the actual transfer and introduction I jumped at the chance for the second translocation, literally with both feet into the river at the donor site in south Warwickshire.

In mid-April the Buglife team, EA staff, volunteers and I set traps overnight on two days (crayfish are largely nocturnal). We carefully placed the traps along the river in locations where one would expect the crayfish to take refuge e.g. tree roots, stony areas overhanging muddy banks etc. The trap placement was



A berried female crayfish

carefully recorded, the trap itself anchored to a tree or the bank and marker tape applied to ease finding the locations. If no crayfish were found on the first check, the trap was re-baited and moved upstream. Handling bits of mackerel that had spent 48 hours in a warm atmosphere was not for the faint hearted!

The crayfish caught were inspected by licensed ecologists to ensure that they were disease free native species, measured to indicate their age, recorded and then transferred to holding cages in the river, segregating males from females. For transit to Kemerton grass was added to the tanks to simulate their natural environment and provide some movement absorbency.

The crayfish breeding season is September to November and when water temperature drops below 10°C for an extended period. Females overwinter with a clutch of fertilised eggs held beneath their tails which appear like small berries giving rise to the term 'berried females'. In the April transfer there were 59 males and 32 females of which 13 were berried. Hopefully, this should give the population a good start albeit juveniles are more prone to predation. Overall a total of 178 crayfish have been transferred to Kemerton Lake.



Alan Marsh collecting a crayfish trap at the donor site

Surveys at the lake will take place over the next 5 years. The success criteria will be based on the presence of breeding adults and young crayfish. As a protected species all monitoring will be undertaken by licensed staff from Buglife and the South West Crayfish Conservation Group.

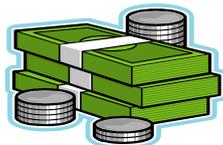
On a personal note, I have found the project extremely rewarding. I am delighted that KCT has been able to take part in this important national initiative and even more so that John Clarke, Conservation Advisor to KCT, has been able to fulfil another one of his goals for the lake conservation area.

The Trust would like to thank Alan for his hard work throughout this project, including the many extra, unpaid hours he has put in to make it a success.

Funding Update

Fundraising began well in the new year, with the receipt of 3 new grants.

The Trust applied for five grants in the new year and were successful in three; a grant from the Ryklow Trust for bat survey equipment (see page 4), a grant from The



Rowlands Trust for the purchase of a new hay rake (see page 7) and a grant for equipment for a new butterfly surveyor, who is being trained for next year's season.

The Friends scheme continues to grow slowly, and Bredon Forest School gave us a very generous donation at Easter which paid for the purchase of essential tools for our volunteers and some new equipment for events.

Thank you to all who have supported us this year!

Eggcitement and Fun at the Easter Egg Hunt!

On Saturday 23rd April, with the sun shining, sixty children and accompanying parents arrived at Kemerton Court to take part in our fabulous annual Easter Egg Hunt.

As always, the kids had great fun searching the grounds for hidden eggs and, for the older children, there was a nature trail to follow, with questions to solve to get the chocolate prize. Parents could enjoy the lovely gardens in the balmy April sunshine, and catch up with friends along the way.



The event was held in the morning, and shortly after 10am, the sound of eggcited shrieks filled the air and for several hours, Kemerton Court was overrun by chocolate covered youngsters! The gardens are a really great place to hold a treasure hunt, with lots of different hidden areas and paths to follow.

This year we held an Easter egg art competition alongside the hunt, with participants encouraged to make, paint or draw a beautiful egg. Photos of the best entries were uploaded to our website after the event, and congratulations to all who submitted a picture.

The annual Easter Egg Hunt is the only event the Trust holds that is specifically aimed at children, but our upcoming Open Day will include a nature trail and other activities for



© Kate Aubury

Easter Egg Hunt Participant
Emma Aubury, age 3

kids, so do bring them along!

The Easter Egg Hunt raised a small sum for the Trust's work, and provided a lot of happiness to the many attendees, so was deemed a big success as usual. We'll see you again next year for more eggcellent chocolate filled adventures and bad egg puns!

News in Brief

The eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed some new fencing going up around the lake on the north side by the scrapes. This fencing is part of the HLS-funded work at the lake and is to enable us to graze Lake Meadow. The flora in the meadow has gradually been degrading, with a high level of bramble taking over. Grazing with sheep or cattle will bring this under control and enable the lovely wildflowers to flourish. The fence will make the meadow stock-proof.

The launch of our new map and access signage includes a new section of permissive path for Friends only in the Arboretum.



© David Aubury
A stunning Small Tortoiseshell
on a hedgerow at KLNR

However, please note that part of the new path is unfinished and therefore is not yet open, although shown on the map. Our apologies for this delay; we had hoped to have the path completed in time for the project launch, but were unable to do so.

This path will now be completed in the autumn and we would ask

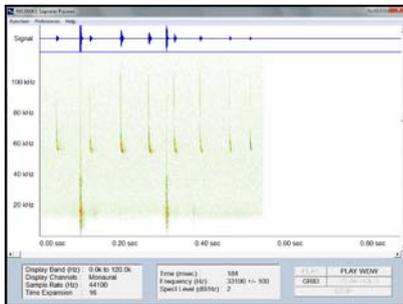
for your patience until then. Signs on the woodland path will keep you informed.

Please remember that the Trust operates a No Dogs policy on all our permissive paths; this is to protect the breeding birds and other wildlife on our reserves.

The Trust has just heard that we have been successful in obtaining a substantial grant from the Environment Agency for a partnership project, led by KCT and coordinated by Worcestershire LBAP, to improve the Carrant Brook Catchment Area. The project is only in the early stages, so we will bring you more on this exciting new development in the next newsletter.

KCT Bat Survey Programme Receives Funding from The Ryklow Trust

In April, the Trust was pleased to hear that we had been successful in a grant funding application to The Ryklow Trust for equipment to support our ongoing bat survey programme. A generous grant of £2000.00 was awarded to KCT to purchase more bat detectors and accessories to improve the accuracy of the surveys and provide equipment for the lead surveyor, survey assistants and bat walk attendees.



An example of a sonogram recorded on the Griffin: this one shows a Soprano Pipistrelle bat

The bat survey programme is run by Kate Aubury, KCT Support Coordinator, with assistance from her husband David, Worcestershire Bat Group and (for the bat box checks) David Worley of Gloucestershire Bat Group. The bulk of the grant was for the purchase of a Batbox Griffin for use by Kate, as well as a Batbox Baton and recorder for David. There was also funding for a second Batbox Baton, which will be used when running member bat walks.

The Batbox Griffin is a much more sophisticated detector than the type KCT was using, allowing recording of the bat calls heard on surveys and analysis of the sonograms produced by the call on a PC after the survey is complete. This allows greater accuracy, as in the field, you have very little time to identify a bat as it



Batbox Griffin

passes by you, and a sonogram can capture extra data.

The 2011 bat survey programme is already underway, with the new equipment proving extremely valuable. A detailed report will be in the next edition of the newsletter.

Our next member bat walk is at KLNK on Sunday 7th August at 9pm. Please contact Kate Aubury at kate@aubury.co.uk or on 07765 334 776 to book a place.

We are very grateful to The Ryklow Trust for their generous support of our bat

Bat Survey at Daffurns with KOW

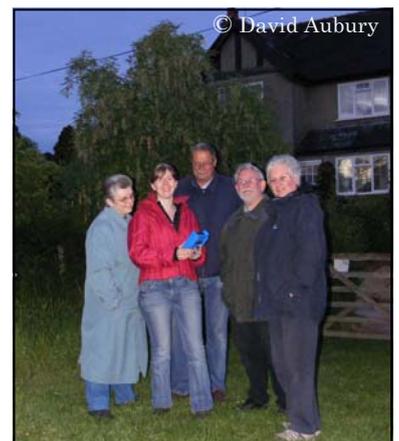
On 28th May, members of Kemerton Orchard Workers (KOW) took part in a bat survey at Daffurns Orchard in Kemerton.

The orchard was being surveyed as part of the Trust's annual bat survey programme, and as part of a wider survey programme of orchards owned and managed by KCT as part of the recent Orchard Project. As KOW manage the orchard for the community, an invitation was extended to any interested volunteers who wished to come along and learn a bit about one of our most elusive mammals.

The survey began with a talk about the fascinating world of bats, and then, as the dusk deepened, we took out the bat detectors and waited for the bats to arrive.....and waited.....and waited!

Our patience was tested to the limit before finally, an hour after sunset, the first Common Pipistrelle arrived. Shortly afterwards, the bat detectors picked up a Brown Long Eared bat, and we watched it weave around the orchard for some time before it moved on.

It was a quiet night overall, but



Members of KOW with Kate Aubury, KCT Support Coordinator, listening out for bats

a nice display of Soprano Pipistrelle bats over the orchard meadow was a treat. Apologies to the members of KOW for the long cold wait though!

Work Party Update by George Day

I have lived in Bredon for thirty years and have seen Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve, which is managed by KCT, go first from fields to gravel pits, then to the nature reserve it is now.

Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve is a great place for everyone whatever their interests - birds, butterflies, bugs, plants, the list goes on. It's also a very nice place for a walk.

I am now retired from full time employment, and two years ago I became a KCT volunteer. As I enjoy photography, most things to do with the natural

world, and have an interest in conservation, these all manage to slot together very nicely with the volunteer work.

I also volunteer for the Malvern Hills Conservators where we do similar tasks, although usually on a steep slope and often with lots of bracken involved!

There are many threats to our natural species; from the rapid growth and spread of intrusive plants like willow, to the invasion of foreign species. So it is quite satisfying to contribute to the upkeep and provision of habitat to help



George Day (left) with Rob Burcombe, making log faggots in the Arboretum, April 2011

our local species survive and thrive, and maybe encourage a few new ones to take up residence too!

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.



KCT Website designer Jim Verrechia all at sea!

In this article, we would like to focus on KCT website designer Jim Verrechia.

Jim is a freelance IT specialist who lives in Bredon with his wife Jenny and son Andrew. For the last ten years he has run his own computer business im² Computer Systems www.im2web.co.uk.

Jim first became involved with KCT about ten years ago, when he and John Clarke got their heads together and decided that a website would be a good idea to help with the Trust's profile.

Focus on a Friend: Jim Verrechia

Jim freely admits that his initial involvement was a purely selfish attempt to get another website into his portfolio, but as time has gone on, it has become much more than that.

His involvement has led to friendship developing with John and Pamela Clarke, and Jim feels that he has learnt a great deal about conservation and wildlife from working with John.

In addition to designing and maintaining our website, Jim even got involved in practical conservation in the early years; assisting with manual tasks such as fencing apple trees in the orchard. Nowadays, he sticks to the website design!

The website has undergone several overhauls in the ten years that Jim has been running it, as activities have expanded

and more reserves have been purchased. It is currently undergoing a redesign, which should be finished by the end of August.

If you have never visited our website, why not have a look at www.kemerton.org - there is lots of information on who we are, the work we do, details of our reserves and a regularly updated news and events section.

Jim has donated a huge amount of time and expertise to the Trust over the last ten years. He is pleased that he has helped to bring conservation awareness to the local community and farther afield.

KCT would like to thank Jim for his valuable contribution to our work. Our website is very important in informing people of the work we do and reaching as many people as possible.

An Evening of Arable Weeds and Crayfish Conservation

On Friday 25th February we held an evening slideshow talk on Arable Weeds and Crayfish Conservation. The event was free for members and was led by KCT Chairman Adrian Darby who, as former Chairman of Plantlife, is an arable weed expert. We had lined up an expert on crayfish (and someone involved in the Ark project) but unfortunately she had to pull out at the last



A beautiful field of poppies: a rare sight these days

minute due to illness, so members got a double helping of Adrian instead! Pulling a talk on crayfish out of the hat only a few hours before an event might faze some people, but here at KCT we always rise to the challenge!

The first talk focused on Arable Weeds, a group of native flowers found on arable land such as poppies which are under increasing threat here in the UK, thanks to intensive farming and pesticides.

KCT and Kemerton Estate have done a lot of work over the years with field margin projects and unsprayed headlands to improve the flora on the farm, and now that the Trust and the farm is entering Higher Level Stewardship, management of these weeds will be even better.



The audience waits for the show!

There was a Q&A session after the first talk, where Adrian and KCT Governor Peter Doble answered lots of questions on the practicalities of farming without pesticides and striking a balance between profit and conservation.

The second talk on crayfish focused on the Ark project and the threats facing our native White-clawed crayfish, and whilst our knowledge could not match our original speaker, we hope everyone learnt something.

New Rake Will Make Hay while the Sun Shines!

Thanks to a £500 grant from The Rowlands Trust KCT has recently purchased a tractor mounted hay rake to assist with habitat management at Upstones Orchard and Richards Wood.

This new rake will be a great help with these small areas of grassland that are mown for hay, which up till now have been raked by hand by our fabulous volunteers—a back-breaking labour intensive job! Now, with this new kit, the hay can be raked into rows in a fraction of the time and manual labour is only required to pitchfork the piles of hay into the haywain. This will enable our volunteer time to be better used on other habitat management jobs.

The tractor mounted hay rake will be used by KCT Warden Alan Marsh and also by local contractor John Threadingham, who already does all the forestry work for KCT and Kemerton Estate and will also assist with the hay making in future.

Cutting and carrying hay from some of our grassland areas is an important part of their site management, encouraging more diverse flora to flourish. Upstones Orchard has in the past been a great site for grassland fungi, and with more intensive management, we hope to return it to its former glory. However, the nature of these sites, and their size, has made using large farm machinery impossible, so this new kit is a perfect solution and a time-saving innovation.

A big thank you to The Rowlands Trust for funding this purchase and also thanks to John for assisting Alan with assembling the kit on delivery, with demonstrating the correct use of the tractor and hay rake and for allowing the Trust to use his tractor for hay raking. We really couldn't do it without him!



© Alan Marsh

John Threadingham on his tractor with the new hay rake

Phase Two of the Beggarboys Wetland Complex Restoration is Completed



The emergency overflow before restoration: the bank had eroded under the liner

Phase two of the restoration work at Beggarboys Wetland Complex was completed on schedule in June 2011. This involved repairing the Monk Weir, which controls the level of the lake, repairing the emergency overflow and cleaning and enlarging the silt traps on the feeder streams to improve water flow.

This project was funded by Severn Waste Environment Fund through Welcome to Our Future, project managed by KCT Conservation Advisor John Clarke and much of the work was carried out by local contractors AMRS & R J Styles, with assistance from KCT volunteers, particularly Mike Walton. The project allowed the Trust to offer Mike specialist training working alongside the contractors.

The existing Monk Weir at Beggarboys Lake had been leaking for some time because the boards required replacing. Green oak boards were used and the lake level was lowered to allow the

repair to go ahead safely. The new boards are now in place and the lake water level will gradually increase to a higher level now that the leaks are sorted.

The lake has two feeder streams that run off the hill, but the natural silt traps at the entrance to the lake reserve had become completely silted over and had stopped working. These were therefore excavated with diggers and the help of volunteers and the natural pools expanded to improve silt retention. This work should last for up to 25 years and will improve water flow to the lake considerably.

Finally, the emergency overflow had degraded over the years and was no longer performing its function. The bund was therefore filled and re-profiled with Fuller's Earth clay, and a new channel cut and lined with UV resistant sheeting. This emergency overflow will ensure the lake's level does not get too high in periods of prolonged rain and prevent flooding; the excess water will drain into a ditch behind the lake.

All the work undertaken is part of a long-term plan to restore and enhance Beggarboys Wetland Complex, and phase one and two were particularly aimed at stopping leaks, improving in-flow and raising the level of the lake. The recent dry weather means that it may take some time for the lake to fill, but once the

water returns to the original levels, hopefully over the coming winter, the habitat will flourish. Without this work, the lake and marshland would have drained, with the loss of the rich flora and fauna known to exist there. These repairs should last in excess of 25 years and will be supported by regular habitat management at the reserve.

Phase two of the project would not have been possible without generous funding from Severn Waste Environment Fund through Welcome to Our Future, but it also relied on help from our own volunteers and from Gloucester Vale Conservation Volunteers, so we are very grateful to all who donated their time to help on this important project. Special thanks must go to Mike Walton who donated a huge amount of time to bring the project in on budget and on time.

Phase three of the project will begin in 2012 and be paid for by Higher Level Stewardship through a special project, and more details will follow in a future newsletter.



The emergency overflow after cutting a new channel and re-lining

Kemerton Clippings July 2011

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

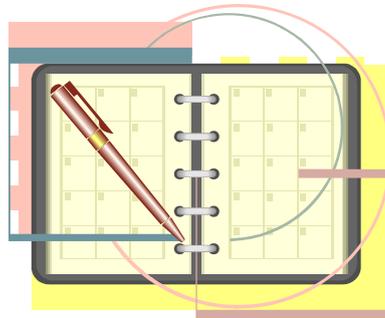


Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum* at
Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve
August 2010

Save the Date!

- **Saturday 30th July** - Working Party (10am start, Upstones Orchard)
- **Sunday 7th August** - Member Bat Walk at KLNLR, 9pm start (booking essential)
- **Saturday 27th August** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 3rd September** - **Annual Open Day at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve** 11am-3pm
- **Saturday 24th September** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 29 October** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 26th 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.



KEMERTON COURT

TEWKESBURY

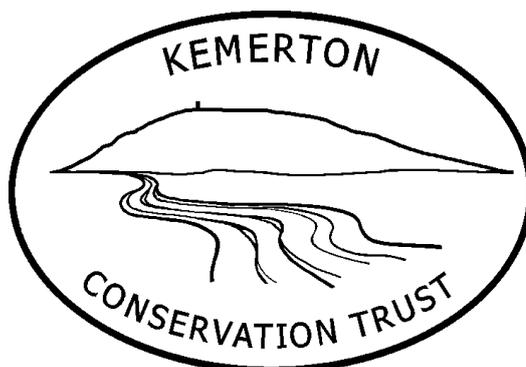
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