



## Dragonflies Draw Visitors at Open Day



Governor Matt Darby leading the way, KLNR Open Day, August 2018

On Sunday 19th August the Trust held its annual Open Day at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve. The focus this year was on the many dragonflies and damselflies which thrive in this wetland reserve and we were delighted to be joined by County Dragonfly Recorder Mike Averill, a long-time Friend of KCT, who shared his expertise on these fantastic flying insects with our visitors. We also had a guided tour of the reserve led by chairman Adrian Darby for those who wanted to learn more about the reserve as a whole.

The weather was overcast but warm and turn-out was excellent. Our morning guided tour took visitors around the north edge of the lake, across limestone grassland, and through

**Are you looking for a new hobby? Do you have a few hours spare a month? Do you have a passion for spotting snakes or counting crickets? If yes, why not volunteer with the Trust? We are always looking for enthusiastic people to assist us to protect local landscapes and the flora and fauna that rely on them. If you would like more details, please contact Support Coordinator Kate Aubury by email [kate@kemerton.com](mailto:kate@kemerton.com).**

the surrounding woodland, highlighting the mosaic habitat which makes this site so rich in wildlife. Highlights included a Brown Argus butterfly, as well as a profusion of plants in flower such as Purple Loosestrife, Common Fleabane and Water Mint.

In the afternoon Mike led a dragonfly walk and we were excited to spot the Small Red-Eyed Damselfly from Water's Edge Hide; a recent arrival in the county and still relatively rare. The overcast day meant the dragonfly numbers were lower than usual but there were still plenty of Darters, Common Blue Damselflies and the odd large Hawker to keep everyone's interest and our younger visitors enjoyed the challenge of spotting resting insects among the reeds and sedge.

We made a small profit from entrance fees, refreshments sales and member donations on the day. The money raised all goes towards the work of the Trust, helping us safeguard the site for the future. We also introduced more members of the public to the wonderful wildlife right on their doorstep, which is one of our key aims.

Thanks goes to all our fantastic, hard-working 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!



Ruddy Darter on Purple Loosestrife (left), Mike Averill and Adrian Darby at KLNR (right), August 2018

## Light Shone on Nocturnal Nightlife



A female Otter cub on Squitter Brook, trail camera, December 2016

In late November local farmer and Friend of KCT Jamie Smith shared his fantastic footage of otters, badgers, deer and other shy animals captured using trail cameras set up in the local area. Jamie has spent many years learning about the otters on our waterways, finding rutting deer and badger setts on Bredon Hill and filming these mammals in their natural habitat. The resultant clips

are a wonderful peek into a rarely seen world. Intimate close ups of otters in their holt were a particular hit with our members.

Jamie's remarkable clips were followed by an in-depth talk on British Bats given by our Support Coordinator Kate Aubury, who is a licensed bat worker and carries out bat surveys for the Trust. Kate shared a few stories from the field with members, talked a bit about bats' unique biology and covered the various bat species we have here in Worcestershire.

The evening was well attended and feedback was excellent, everyone who came especially loved being able to watch film of animals which are normally

secretive and next to impossible to see in person.

Thank you to Jamie for volunteering his time and sharing his superb shots with us. I'm sure more than one attendee was inspired to go out and purchase their own trail camera as a result! The Trust has also used trail cameras as a conservation tool, they are very useful.

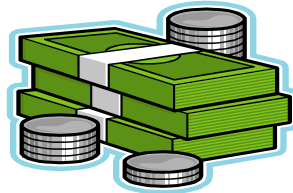


Brown Long Eared Bat in the hand, Aldwick Wood, 2010

## Funding Update

In the last six months the Trust has submitted two grant applications; one for an invertebrate project on Bredon Hill which was sadly unsuccessful, and the other for core funding which we will get a decision on in March.

No other grant funding work was completed in the second half of 2018 but we have a several projects in planning stages, including a large partnership project, which we will report on in the next newsletter.



In October we received our annual dividend from local oil buying club SeSaME. We receive a dividend of £0.5ppl from Kemerton members and for the 2017/18 year the dividend totaled £22.50. If you buy oil and want to know more and get great prices, check out their website [www.sesame.me.uk](http://www.sesame.me.uk).

Long-term local supporter-  
Bredon Forest School

donated another £1000 to the Trust in the second half of 2018. These are unrestricted funds which are used to help with general costs including volunteer tools, materials for repairs etc. We are very grateful for their generous support.

We also received another £500 donation in August from Miss K.M Harbinson's Charitable Trust, also unrestricted funds, and we are very grateful for their continued support too.

**Thank you to all who have supported us so far this year!**



## KCT Governors' Annual Board Meeting 2018

At least once a year KCT Governors meet for a Board Meeting to review the past year's work and set goals for the new year. In addition to the governors the meeting is also attended by John Clarke and Kate Aubury, who both report on their activities for the year.

2018 has been a quieter year for the Trust in part because of John Clarke's continued illness however we still had plenty to report on. Our new logo was officially launched in January and in May we had to deal with implementing GDPR. Out on the reserves we completed some essential silt trap management at Beggar Boys Wetland with funding from Severn Trent (see news in brief), received confirmation that Upton Ham SSSI had been successful in its application to Countryside Stewardship, and we erected signs about ground nesting

birds such as Curlew, Redshank and Skylark at Asham Meadow in partnership with Gloucestershire Naturalist Society. We also carried out a full review of H&S at all our reserves. Further afield our partnership work with Kemerton Estate and CCARP has continued. However, it was agreed that the Trust urgently requires more staff resources to deliver more projects.

At the meeting, it was announced that governor Dr Margaret Palmer was resigning due to personal circumstances. The Trust is very grateful to Margaret for her involvement and help and wish her all the best for the future.

After reviewing the past year, the governors identified their priorities for 2019; raising funds for part-time staff, continuing work with CCARP and focussing on invertebrate projects on Bredon Hill. We will also look at the feasibility of purchasing



KCT Governors in Aldwick Wood, October 2018

more flood meadow.

Following the meeting and lunch, the governors visited The Bushes SSSI and Aldwick Wood SSSI on Bredon Hill, which are both part-managed by the Trust under an agreement with the landowner.

The 2017/18 Chairman's Report, Annual Accounts, Conservation Officer's Report and Support Coordinator's Report are all available to read on our website now in the 'News & Events' section.

## News in Brief

In September a contractor used a digger to clear two silt traps at Beggar Boys Wetland, with the work funded by Severn Trent through a 'Cash for Catchments' grant. Although not a major job, digging out the silt traps every 10yrs is crucial in maintaining water quality to the lake, which supports lots of wonderful wildlife. We are grateful to Severn Trent for their financial support.

On 17th November ornithologist Mike Smart spotted a rarity amongst the Canada Geese on Twyning Ham SSSI (where the Trust owns several parcels); a



A newly cleared silt trap, Beggar Boys Wetland, September 2018

Greenland White-fronted Goose. This was the first record for Worcestershire of a winter migrant normally only found in Ireland and West Scotland. Excitingly, the bird was wearing a satellite collar so Mike got in touch with Prof. Anthony Fox,

an expert on geese based in Denmark, and he supplied more details of the bird's movements. She was an adult female who was headed for Wexford in Ireland but went off course, heading over the North Sea towards Belgium in late October, returning to England, then back over northern France, back to southern England before eventually ending up on the Glos/Worcs border on 28th October. She remained in the area for several weeks and visited Twyning Ham, Bredon's Hardwicke, Coombe Hill and roosted overnight at Kemerton Lake once. A fascinating glimpse and our thanks to Mike Smart for all the information.

## A Keen Eye: news from the hides

- by David Keen, Friend of KCT



© David Keen

Mute Swan, KLNLR, November 2018

It is now late January, which seems a long time since the long hot days of summer 2018 when the lake and surrounding fields were alive with activity. There were young birds on the water and in the sky all making the best of the weather; there were swifts, swallows, sand martins and house martins but although all four species could be seen there did not seem to be the same numbers as we have seen in the past or was it the presence of the hobbies which are quite capable of taking them in flight that was keeping them away?

On the water the tufted duck and little grebes could not cope with the onslaught from the gulls and you could see their numbers fall by the day. On one particular day I watched a little grebe swim out past the island with two of her chicks. Within minutes

she had lost one but she very cleverly fluffed up her feathers and took the remaining chick on her back and made it safely back to the reeds. The geese that breed on the lake move their young about in tight convoy on the water so even they are aware of predators.

2018 was a great year for kingfishers and although I did not see any until the 31st of August there have been regular sightings of them at the lake giving people a great opportunity to see and photograph them. Each time I looked on KCT's Facebook page someone had posted photos of kingfishers, some great action shots amongst them.

On the 23rd of September I took a long shot of a duck that landed at the far end of the lake and although it was not a clear photo it did enable me to identify it as a drake pintail just starting to get his winter coat. I took several photos of him over the following weeks and he looked better each time as his winter plumage came through. Unfortunately in the weeks leading up to Christmas and new year I could not get to

the hide as much as I would have liked but when you go there you always hope to see something rare and in early January a fellow photographer sent me a photo of two drake smew not seen at Kemerton for some time. I did manage to get a shot of one of them on Monday the 14th of January and again on the 17th.

Hopefully it will not be long now and we will see the oystercatchers and great crested grebes return to the lake; this will trigger the start of a new season and with five swans on the lake at the moment we could have a breeding pair to watch but it is early days and we have not finished with the winter yet and there could still be lots to see! Kemerton is fast becoming the place to visit not only in the summer but the winter as well.



© David Keen

Northern Pintail Drake, KLNLR,  
November 2018

## John Clarke Receives WWT Wildlife Hero Award



© Pamela Clarke

John Clarke (seated) receiving his award, WWT HQ, September 2018

To celebrate their 50th Anniversary last year, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust launched a new Wildlife Heroes Award aimed at highlighting and applauding individuals, groups, businesses and schools that have helped wildlife locally during the last 50 years. All recipients were nominated by the public.

The Trust is delighted that our very own Conservation Advisor John Clarke was one of the first to receive this award, for his many years working for nature here at Kemerton and beyond. John has been very unwell in recent months so we hope this proved a welcome boost for him, and is certainly much deserved!

## Starlings and Smew Steal the Show this Winter

© Kate Aubury



Starlings Murmuring at KLNR,  
January 2019

One of the biggest wildlife spectacles that we play host to on our reserves is that of murmuring starlings in winter. Nearly every year large numbers of these birds gather to roost in the reed beds at the lake every evening from November onwards and perform their incredible aerial ballet, so reminiscent of shoaling fish, as the sun sets over the water. It is eagerly anticipated by those in the know and there was huge disappointment last year when the starlings failed to turn up (Ed: interestingly our bird

expert Rob Prudden tells us there were no murmurations anywhere in Worcestershire last year.) So it was with great excitement that we confirmed the starlings return on 13th November.

The starlings stayed much longer than they have in the past, and moved around the lake as different sections of reed bed became flattened. We estimated peak numbers at around 25,000 - not huge compared to some roosts but still enough for a spectacular display - and Water's Edge Hide gave the perfect view. After the roost was included on an online map we had large crowds visit to watch over the Christmas break and the hide was frequently full!

Our Support Coordinator Kate filmed a murmuration which can be seen on Youtube <https://youtu.be/2WjhItdOzyE>

if you weren't lucky enough to see the show live.

Just as the starlings were winding down, another star arrived at the lake; two male Smew dropped in briefly on 2nd January, left after 24hrs, and then one returned on 14th January and was still on site as this went to press. Small numbers of these ducks overwinter in England (c.180 as per RSPB) but are rarely seen here, with our last record from 2008. As word got out, yet more visitors filled Water's Edge Hide to enjoy this stunning Scandinavian migrant up close.



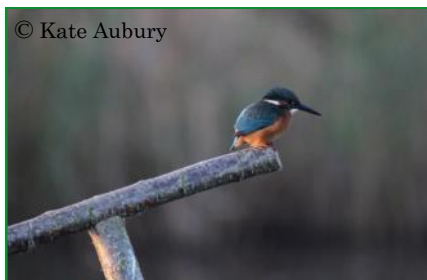
Male Smew, KLNR, January 2019

## Kingfisher Perches Prove Perfect for Fishing

In our last newsletter we announced that kingfisher perches had been installed in the water near Water's Edge Hide at Kemerton Lake, which we hoped would be utilised for fishing and allow visitors glimpses of these beautiful birds. We are delighted that the perches have proved very popular and our Kingfisher can be seen using them on a daily basis.

Visitors to the hide may spot this flashy female at any time but if you are hoping to photograph her heading down early is your best bet. She often arrives just after dawn for her breakfast and will use several of the perches as the

© Kate Aubury



Kingfisher on perch, KLNR,  
November 2018

mood takes her. We know she is a female because male Kingfishers have an entirely black beak whereas female Kingfishers have orange on their lower beak, which can be clearly seen in photos (although it may be more than one bird).

The perches have been placed

close enough to the hide that visitors can get a nice view but far enough away that the bird is not disturbed, and she can often be seen fishing from the perches to the right of the hide, catching small fish which she takes back to the perch, stuns, repositions and then swallows head first.

Sadly the lake does not have suitable habitat for nesting but the regular appearance of at least one Kingfisher over the last few years suggest that its rich fishing means it is an important part of her territory and the provision of the perches has hopefully made it even more Kingfisher-friendly.



# News from the Carrant Catchment Area Restoration Project - by Joanne Leigh, FWAGSW

Happy New Year! What a great year 2018 was for the group, we now have 26 members and cover 8400ha.

Our events this autumn have been focused around trees, hedges and pest management. We started with Orchard Management which was well attended, more training is available if you get in touch with Martin Haynes of the Gloucestershire Orchard Trust and visit the Longney site in Gloucestershire. Raptor Aid specialist Jimmi Hill joined us for the orchard event, he is always on hand to supply bird boxes if you need them. He pointed out that having a perch for little owls was beneficial in orchards for pest management of voles, which can decimate newly planted orchards overnight. The Veteran Tree Event at Bredon Hill NNR was very interesting, showing us how to preserve the veterans of tomorrow. Aidan Fallon, NNR site manager, is very happy to make visits on Bredon Hill to advise on management. We also had a Good Nature trap talk from Sam Middleton of Wessex Woodlands, the traps for squirrels will be available this month and could be a game changer.

© FWAGSW



CCARP Veteran Tree Workshop,  
Bredon Hill NNR, November 2018

Just before Christmas we had an evening with Dr Johnny Birks who gave us an exhilarating talk on native Polecat, this was an engaging event that led to discussions on farmer experiences. Finally, right at the end of the year we held a Hedge Cutting Demonstration at Overbury with the new Pro Saw. It gave a very clean cut, those who attended were impressed with what they saw.

In 2018 the group was successful in gaining help from external partners, which provided additional funds to help support habitat creation and connectivity. Over 1200 plants will be planted by new partners DHL as part of their Global Carbon Mitigation Program. We hope that this will be the blueprint of further planting projects within the group on farmland that has public access. Projects such as this can really benefit habitat connectivity by linking wildlife corridors across the catchment, as well as increasing carbon capture and attenuating water. The Environment Agency are kindly funding habitat creation on the Carrant Brook at Aston on Carrant, to enhance the stream by letting in more light, providing areas for fish refuge and creating water attenuation pools, this project is ongoing. And finally, I have £2000 of funding for trees still available from the Cotswolds AONB Sustainable Development Fund, some of you have ordered trees but there is room for more!

© FWAGSW



CCARP Orchard Management event,  
Overbury, October 2018

We welcome all external funding opportunities, and so have joined up with a wider network of partners through CaBA (Catchment Base Approach) for the Warwickshire Avon and Severn Vale catchments. Hopefully we shall see some new opportunities arising from this collaboration.

The new year brings new events and to kick start the year I am hoping to do a bird ID day at the end of January which will help us to record birds for the GWCT Big Farmland Count. On February 14th FWAG have secured guest speakers Brendon Freeman from the Climate Change Committee and Joel Williams, plant and soil health expert and educator, for our Preparing Farming for Climate Change Conference at the RAU, please book early to avoid disappointment. More ideas for events are most welcome and I ask that you get them in as soon as possible so as I can secure the very best for our group.

For further information of how to get involved please contact [Joanne.Leigh@fwagsw.org.uk](mailto:Joanne.Leigh@fwagsw.org.uk) or [Jenny.phelps@fwagsw.org.uk](mailto:Jenny.phelps@fwagsw.org.uk).

## Work Party Update by Tony Wood

Volunteering for KCT is one way of getting closer to wildlife. It's not an onerous or difficult undertaking, just one day a month at most, but having spent an age working in an office it's my opportunity to give Mother Nature a helping hand and learn something at the same time. It's a bit like gardening, only on a much grander scale!

As a member of the volunteer work party, I've erected and maintained tree guards, repaired hedges, raked hay in orchards and flood meadows, planted native bulbs in woodland and improved a variety of habitats for wildlife. I play a small part in a grander

scheme which aims to improve our local environment.

Let's not forget, however, that I benefit too. Working outside with like-minded people, all of whom are only too willing to pass on their knowledge and expertise, is good for my physical and mental health.

Over the Christmas period I have visited the lake at dusk on a number of occasions to marvel at the miracle of the starling murmuration. I have seen so many different people there, all of whom are enjoying and benefiting from this wonderful spectacle. The whole reserve is an asset. Maybe, my small contribution



Tony (left) with KCT volunteers next to collected used guards and litter, Quarry Wood, April 2018

will play a part in setting up other such wonderful wildlife encounters!

*If you are interested in volunteering with the Trust please contact Kate Aubury, Support Coordinator by email [kate@kemerton.com](mailto:kate@kemerton.com) or by phone on 07765 334 776.*

## KOW Apple Day Celebrates Bounty of our Orchards



© Kate Aubury

KCT volunteers manning the stand, KOW Apple Day, October 2018

On Saturday 13th October it was Kemerton Orchard Workers' Annual Apple Day at Victoria Hall and the Trust was there to support our sister organisation. KOW manages Daffurn's Orchard in Kemerton for the local community and the annual Apple Day is their main fund-raising event.

As in previous years, KOW had arranged for apple pressing and juicing and there were cakes and hot drinks

available in the hall, alongside a stand selling cards and tea towels. KCT brought along an information stand packed with information about the nine orchards the Trust manages and their importance for a wide range of wildlife.

The event was originally scheduled for 20th October but the hot summer had led to an earlier apple harvest so it was decided to move the Apple Day date to ensure there were enough apples for pressing. Unfortunately there wasn't much time to advertise the new date and attendance was lower than normal as a result but there were still lots of locals who turned up laden with apples from their own fruit trees. For those who don't have orchards of their own, apples from Daffurn's Orchard were pressed and the delicious

juice available to buy on the day. One of the highlights for children is the chance to throw apples in the scrapper (which pulps the apples) or turn the handle on the apple press and watch the golden liquid pour out.

Although turnout wasn't as high as we'd like, the day went well (the weather was kinder than last year!) and KOW raised valuable funds which will help them with orchard management in 2019.



Visitors enjoying cake and a chat, KOW Apple Day, October 2018

## Kemerton Clippings January 2019

Edited by Kate Aubury  
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For more information on the work of KCT please visit our website: [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org)

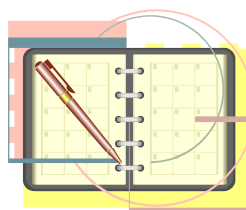
© Kate Aubury



Male Common Blue *Polyommatus Icarus* on Common Fleabane, Beggar Boys Wetland, August 2018

## Save the Date!

- **Saturday 26th January** - Working party (10am start, KLNR)
- **Saturday 23rd February** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 30th March** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 27th April** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Sunday 28th April - Woodland Walk, Aldwick Wood** (2.30pm start) - see 'News & Events' on website [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org) for full event details
- **Saturday 25th May** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 15th June - Annual Open Day, KLNR** (gates open at 11am) - see 'News & Events' on website [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org) for full event details
- **Saturday 29th June** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Sunday 14th July - Arable Field Margins Walk, Upper Westmancote** (2.30pm start) - see 'News & Events' on website [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org) for full event details
- **Saturday 27th July** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)



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