



## Fantastic Flood Meadow Flora Walk

© Kate Aubury



Upton Ham with the town in the background, June 2018

On Sunday 17th June the Trust held a guided walk at Upton Ham SSSI in partnership with Upton In Bloom (UiB) to celebrate both the wonderful wildflowers on the Ham and UiB's amazing achievements winning Gold in the Heart of England in Bloom category very year since 2003. The walk was led by our Chairman Adrian Darby but we were delighted to be joined by Plantlife's Reserves Manager Joe Costley, who brought a wealth of plant knowledge to the walk (part of Upton Ham is leased to Plantlife as a reserve).

Upton Ham SSSI is a traditionally managed flood meadow still using the medieval Lammas Meadow system; the meadow is split into various parcels under different ownership

**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 Trust owning several large sections at the northern end) and is shut up for hay through spring and early summer, the hay is cut in late July and then after Lammas Day (1st August) the Ham is grazed in common. It floods regularly through the winter and early spring. The flooding and traditional management results in a specific - and rare - suite of plants only found on such meadows including the tall burgundy spikes of Great Burnet (seen in the photo left).

Although the weather on the day was grey, the turnout was good and we had a wonderful ramble through the meadow searching for the many beautiful flowers and grasses that make the Ham so special. Two young attendees proved particularly good plant hunters! We found all the species we had hoped to see and the Great Burnet was flowering in larger drifts than we had seen for many years, which is a fantastic confirmation that the management is having a positive impact on the site.

Although the focus of the walk was the Ham's flora, we were also treated to some stunning Skylark singing, and the distant call of a Curlew from the more remote southern end. Lots of the attendees were from Upton itself and it was great getting feedback on how much they had learnt about the magnificent meadow on their doorstep.



Joe Costley (1st Pic, Right) & Adrian Darby (2nd Pic) lead the walk, Upton Ham, June 2018

## Spring Signs Aplenty on Seasonal Walk



© David Aubury  
Chairman Adrian Darby, centre, with walk attendees, KLNLR, March 2018

On 24th March a large group of members joined Chairman Adrian Darby and Support Coordinator Kate Aubury for a spring saunter around Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve and adjoining Kemerton Woods.

After the icy 'Beast from the East' in February, the walk aimed to highlight the start of spring and the beginning of a time of high activity on the reserve as plants and animals

begin the race to reproduce during the warmer summer months.

Unfortunately the day was overcast and dreary, but there was still plenty of activity on the lake and attendees were treated to some Great Crested Grebe courtship dancing, always an amazing sight. Some of the winter wildfowl were still in situ, including Wigeon and Pochard, although most had already relocated to their breeding grounds.

In March, the queen bees emerge from their winter hibernation to start a new colony. It is a key time for these pollinators, as there is very little nectar yet available. Only a few Buff-tailed Bumblebees were spotted on the walk, no doubt due to the cold, grey conditions, but those that were seen were found near the willow trees that were already in

flower, highlighting their importance as an early nectar source. Also in flower were the wild Daffodils which have been planted in Kemerton Woods. It was fantastic to see their bright yellow drifts, which were also attracting bees.

In the trees the Chiffchaffs were singing, newly arrived from Africa, and everywhere were the signs of new life starting as the woodland woke up from winter.



© Kate Aubury  
Wild Daffodil in flower, Kemerton Woods, March 2018

## Funding Update

In February, the Trust successfully applied for a £500 grant to purchase a new projector and portable projector screen for use at our talks after our existing projector suddenly stopped working. Our generous funder wishes to remain anonymous, but we are very grateful for their support.

With help from the CCARP Facilitation Team we applied in June for a small grant from Severn Trent's 'Cash for Catchments'

funding pot, receiving £470 to pay for the cost of excavating two silt traps at Beggar Boys Wetland. Keeping the silt traps working efficiently helps to avoid build up of silt on the site and maintain water quality in the lake so we are grateful to Severn Trent for funding the digger hire.

Long-standing Corporate Sponsor Cotswold



Agricultural Merchants continues to support our pollinator and wildflower verges work with their annual £200 donation, helping pay project costs.

We also received another £200 donation in February from Miss K.M Harbinson's Charitable Trust. These are unrestricted funds which are used to help with general costs including volunteer tools and office materials like ink and paper. We are very grateful for their generous support.

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

## Spreading the Conservation Word

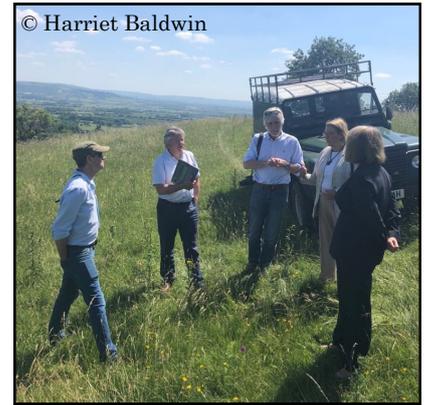
One of the Trust's five key purposes is to educate the public, land managers, and other organisations about conservation priorities and practices. We do this in a number of ways such as public events, talks, practical demonstrations, meetings with local landowners, presentations at conferences etc. One of the less visible but potentially most effective methods is through hosting visits from key local decision makers to talk about the

issues that we think need more attention.

In June, KCT Governor Matt Darby, who also sits on the Cotswold Conservation Board, hosted a visit from Harriet Baldwin MP, Cotswold Conservation Board CEO Martin Lane and Chairman Liz Eyre to discuss landscape conservation issues and view KCT managed land on Kemerton Estate including Oathill Track and Roundhill SSSI on Bredon Hill.

Bredon Hill forms part of the Cotswolds AONB and has the limestone geology and flora that is such a part of the Cotswolds' distinctive charm and the Trust's work on the hill has resulted in sites which are ideal for demonstrating the value of farming in a conservation friendly manner.

Another way in which the Trust seeks to disseminate our work and encourage others is through



© Harriet Baldwin  
KCT Governor Matt Darby (left) with Harriet Baldwin MP (right) and Members of CCB, Bredon Hill, June 2018

guided tours from interested organisations looking to learn from our successes (and learn from our failures!) In June the Trust and Kemerton Estate hosted a visit from a team from the National Trust who came to view an example of farming and conservation in action, visiting our reserves and conservation areas on the estate. Being able to visit a working farm and see the wildlife friendly practices in the flesh and ask questions is invaluable for those seeking to replicate it elsewhere.



© Kate Aubury  
KCT Chairman Adrian Darby surveying the arable field margin at Oathill Track, August 2013

## News in Brief

The recent sunny, dry weather has proved perfect for butterflies and our volunteer Butterfly Recorder George Day has added some interesting sightings to our records.

In June, George spotted a male Purple Hairstreak on one of the woodland rides near Kemerton Lake. Although not particularly rare, their habit of spending most of their time in the canopy of oak trees makes these lovely butterflies hard to spot and it is a new record for KCT. Apparently this species is best spotted with a pair of binoculars as it flutters



© George Day  
Male Purple Hairstreak *Favonius quercus*, Kemerton Woods, June 2018

around the oak leaves so we'll all be looking up more from now on!

In addition to the Purple Hairstreak, George recorded lots of Brown Argus at a new site near the Carrant Brook, and also

spotted a rather ragged Silver Washed Fritillary on a ride in Kemerton Woods. This large orange patterned butterfly was recorded for the first time on the site last year so we're delighted to have evidence of successful breeding this year.

Those who visit the lake and pop into Water's Edge Hide will no doubt spot our new Kingfisher perches. Made by our volunteers from hazel cut on site and sited by our intrepid warden John, these perches will, we hope, encourage Kingfishers who visit the lake to use them as fishing posts and thus afford hide users a fantastic view of this gorgeous little bird.

# A Keen Eye: news from the hides

## - by David Keen, Friend of KCT



Oystercatcher pair, KLNLR, 2018

In mid-February the lake had been frozen over twice but the first signs of spring were beginning to show; there were lots of Wigeon, Teal and Tufted Duck as well as a few Pochard - the males standing out with their reddish brown head and dark red eyes. The Oystercatchers have returned and taken up residence on the island closest to the Water's Edge Hide. They have had a difficult time being mobbed by a family of Carrion Crows that set up home close by.

I saw my first Great Crested Grebe of the season on February 22nd and by March 6th we had two pairs displaying as they do standing upright, bobbing heads and then diving to collect weed from the bottom of the lake and offering it to each other. One pair set up home just to the side of the Water's Edge Hide and although they were sitting on eggs for a couple of weeks they lost their nest to predators (maybe a mink) and about a week later I was surprised to see both birds back on the water displaying and nest building again. Although my book says one brood a year, on July 6th I was pleased to see them back on the water with one chick. I visited the lake

on July 9th and 10th and did not see the grebe chick but it may be hidden in the reeds.

April saw the first Swallow and although it was still quite cold a brief spell of sunshine managed to bring off a hatch of flying insects to coincide with their return. May saw the first of the Hobbies return to the lake. In June I managed to get some of the best photos that I have taken of the Hobbies but this year has been a bit slow and a lot of hunting was over the grass fields and not over the lake which is where you see this bird at its best. Unfortunately on my last five visits to the lake the last being on July 16th I have not spotted them.

This is a time of highs and lows on the reserve; with so many young birds about there are bound to be losses, and with so many gulls moving inland they have become one of the top predators. The gulls take so many of the young birds, not only from the water but from nests high in the trees, and with few natural enemies and some being protected species not a lot can be done to stop them. I have seen them take young crows from the nests.

The small birds in the woods fared well despite the earlier cold spell, Goldfinch have been spotted flying around in quite large flocks, Bullfinches, Goldcrest and of course Robins could be seen and there has been no shortage of Cuckoos. When walking quietly along a woodland path looking for

wildlife I always have my camera with me, on a tripod, and I prefer to find a quiet spot and stand for a while and see what comes along. It is surprising; a few weeks ago I looked up and down the rides with nothing in sight, I set up my camera and within a few minutes I had spotted three Muntjac and two Roe Deer, also a green woodpecker.

Grass Snakes have been seen swimming in the lake; I spotted three on one very hot day from the Water's Edge Hide. The Little Grebe has been showing well just in front of the hide diving and catching lots of Minnows and dragonflies; some of the dragonflies look too big for them to swallow!

The bird that I have not seen in five months is the Kingfisher but John the Warden has put out some perches that can be seen from the hide and when they return we should get some good sightings and for those of you with cameras the new perches offer a great opportunity to photograph them diving to catch food. This is the time of year that I try and put in as much time as I can and the next three months could be busy right through to October and the start of the deer rut...



Little Grebe with dragonfly, KLNLR, 2018

## Worcestershire's Pollinators Conferences 2018



© Laura Wood  
Kate Aubury giving a talk at the Pollinators' Conference, March 2018

In late March Worcestershire County Council hosted two day long conferences on pollinators; one aimed at schools and the other at community groups especially parish councils. The Trust was invited to present at the communities conference and our Support Coordinator delivered a talk entitled 'Enhancing Existing Ecosystems for Pollinators; Case Studies from KCT'.

The conference was aimed at educating attendees on the importance of pollinators and inspiring them with practical ideas on how they could improve their communities for these vital insects.

KCT's presentation focused on the practical projects we have carried out over the years aimed at improving sites for pollinators, such as arable field margin trials and the wildflower nursery, the Woodland Shrubs & Wildflowers Project and the Magnificent Meadows project. There were also examples of lessons learnt and tips on small ways to enhance a garden or community patch, with emphasis on ensuring nectar throughout the active season for bees and other pollinators.

The conference was very well attended, there were lots of interesting presentations from a range of organisations including the county council, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and Buglife and we had some very positive feedback from attendees that our talk had inspired them. We also made some valuable new contacts.



© Kate Aubury  
Male Orange Tip on Ground Ivy, KLNR, May 2018

## Kemerton Woods Wildflower Project Completed

In April 2017 the Trust received a £500 grant from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous to plant 1000 bluebell and 500 wild daffodil bulbs in Kemerton Woods. This was a follow on to the larger Woodland Shrub and Wildflower Project which had finished a couple of years ago and focused on increasing the shrub layer and ground flora of these young woodlands.

The grant paid for the cost of the bulbs and the Trust used volunteer labour to plant them in the woods. The bulbs were all planted in our work party in November, with our volunteers putting in sterling work to get them all in the ground as fast as possible. They were planted in small groups through the wood



© Kate Aubury  
Bluebell & Daffodil bulbs ready for planting, November 2017

with lots planted on the edge of rides to enable visitors to enjoy the flowers in the spring. We calculated that the bulbs were planted at a rate of 1.3 per minute!

By spring 2018 we were delighted to spot a few of the bulbs flowering, although the bulk will not flower for a couple of years. From experience we also expect

some to be grazed by rabbits and deer, which sadly do a lot of damage to young plants.

The main aim of this project is to increase the ground flora in Kemerton Woods. Using nectar rich flowers will also benefit pollinators, which is a group broadly in decline and considered a conservation priority.

KCT would like to thank our generous project funder, without whom this work could not have been carried out. We would also like to thank all those who assisted in the delivery of the project, particularly our hardworking volunteers. A full project report is on the 'Current News' page on our website.

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

In the first and second quarter of 2018 CCARP has been focusing on farmers wanting to go into Countryside Stewardship. This is a 5-year agri-environmental scheme funded by DEFRA through Natural England and is a great opportunity for farmers wanting to give some of the farm over to nature and be supported in those decisions.

Some of the options we have been encouraging are those around bird nesting habitat for skylarks and, in the lower regions, curlew. Since collaborating with our neighbour group Severn Vale Guardians we have had the pleasure of visiting sites on the Severn to look at how best to protect breeding waders.

Sometimes it can be difficult to get the supported options we desire, such as those on water quality and this is due to the Carrant not being wholly in a catchment sensitive area. This can lead to frustration and disappointment but being part of the facilitated group CCARP gives rise to other funding opportunities that support water quality; as such we were able to put in claims for



Skylark Nest

the Severn Trent 'Cash for Catchments' funding and the Water Environment Grant scheme (*Ed: KCT successfully bid for funding from Severn Trent with assistance from the CCARP Facilitation Team*). Through doing this we have made greater ties to the wider catchment partnership 'The Avon and Warwickshire Caba group'. This will hopefully help us apply for further habitat restoration funding.

The group continues to gain support from local farmers and partners and is now 25 members strong, but we always welcome more to help support the larger landscape development for our habitat connectivity.

The CCARP Team have organised a number of events since Christmas, including events on riparian management, the environmental value of tree tagging and Redlist Revival. Riparian management helps to reduce shade along the Carrant which allows macrophytes to grow thus enabling fish refugia and supply food to increase the population. Whereas the event on tree tagging was about identifying the veteran trees in the catchment, highlighting that there is a significant gap in our tree ages that needs urgent attention. We will hopefully be selling hedgerow plants and trees again in the winter months if anyone wants to put in an order, it was very good value! We have also been successful in bidding



Veteran Ash, Bredon Hill

for the Heritage Lottery fund for Trees Outside of Woodlands. The development stage will start next year followed by 4 years of planting trees within the landscape. There are always opportunities to plant trees so if you would like to discuss this please get in touch.

The Redlist Revival event was about bird species that are on the decline and how we can help the British Trust of Ornithology record more data on our farms. We are still looking for farmers to register so as we can match them with a bird recorder, this information will be recorded for the British Breeding Bird Surveys twice a year in May and June. This will further highlight the great work farmers do in helping red listed bird species with supplementary winter feeding and habitat management. Please get in touch if you would like to register your farm for next year's surveys.

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 Steve King

I have volunteered before, but, wanting to find something more substantial and build on my 'school boy' knowledge of fauna and flora, I happened across the KCT website which seemed to tick all the boxes.

I duly attended my first work party in June 2017 and have attended all monthly sessions since when possible, which have included: collecting dis-used tree guards; waterproofing the Water's Edge Hide, cutting back willow to trial different ways of management and raking hay into piles for grass snakes, during which I met other friendly, much more knowledgeable volunteers keen to share their natural history knowledge/experiences.

Having enjoyed myself so far and having the chance to do more volunteering since semi-retiring in Feb 2018, I now volunteer one day a week, and was asked to inspect and clean all bird boxes at KLNR and nearby and keep pathways clear of vegetation in spring/summer

Completing the H&S paperwork and armed with a tool bag, ladders, and maps, I began cleaning and removing damaged boxes (mostly through woodpecker damage) - this task was completed by the end of March.

KCT Warden John, aware that another pair of hands were available, engaged me to help in the construction of deer fencing during the 'Beast from the East'.



Steve cutting back reeds on the hide boardwalk, KLNR, 2017

I am now keeping pathways around KLNR open, which has given me the opportunity to see some of the fauna and flora I've learnt about since becoming a volunteer.

So within one year, for me, I've met some nice people, had a good time and expanded on my 'school boy' knowledge of fauna and flora, result!



Toff Milway working in his studio

In this edition of Kemerton Clippings, we are focussing on a man who has been using his expertise in pottery to assist the Trust.

Toff is a well known potter with a studio in Conderton on Bredon Hill, where he has been based, along with his wife Georgina, since the early 80s. The couple moved to the quiet Cotswolds after living for some years in Africa and fell in love with the beauty and nature of Bredon Hill immediately.

Toff's initial involvement with

## Focus on a Friend: Toff Milway

the Trust began when he volunteered as part of KCT Conservation Advisor John Clark's lychatcher Surveys, which encompassed many villages around Bredon Hill. Toff has fond memories of sitting watching for flycatchers in the garden while John told wonderful stories about his life in conservation.

Through this friendship, Toff later attended fruit pruning workshops at Daffurn's Orchard and offered his own organic orchard as a site for fruit pressing trials when KOW got the new equipment. And when John mentioned his search for long-term, weather-resistant tree label to identify our many orchard tree varieties when planted, Toff had the perfect solution - a salt-glazed ceramic medallion which could be easily engraved with the tree name and then fired by Toff in his kiln

at Conderton Pottery. The Trust has since used this simple but effective method to label hundreds of apple trees in Daffurn's Orchard and our other orchards.

Toff has often used inspiration from nature in his artistic designs, both when in Africa and here in the Cotswolds, and he feels a real sense of ownership for the landscape and wildlife that surrounds him. He and Georgina carry their love for nature into their own garden, where wildlife is allowed to flourish; he has a deep admiration for the small critters; the organisation of bees and ants in particular.

At KCT we are very grateful to Toff for his help over the years. You can visit Toff's Studio to see his stunning pottery (and the garden), for more details visit [www.toffmilway.co.uk](http://www.toffmilway.co.uk).

## Kemerton Clippings July 2018

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

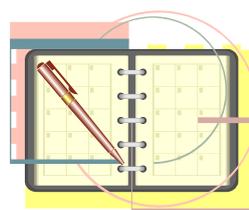


Greater Knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa* amongst other meadow flowers, Bredon Hill, June 2018

## Save the Date!

- **Saturday 28th July** - Working party (10am start, Grange Orchard)
- **Saturday 18th August** - Working party (10am start, KLNR)
- **Sunday 19th August** - **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 September** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 20th October** - **Kemerton Apple Day, Victoria Hall, Kemerton (2-5pm)** - see 'News & Events' on website [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org) for full event details
- **Saturday 27th October** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Saturday 24th November** - Working party (10am start, location to be confirmed)
- **Friday 30th November** - **Slideshow Evening 'Our Wild Nightlife', Victoria Hall, Kemerton (8pm start)** - see 'News & Events' on website [www.kemerton.org](http://www.kemerton.org) for full event details

For details on any of the above events, please contact KCT Support Coordinator Kate Aubury by email [kate@kemerton.com](mailto:kate@kemerton.com) or by phone on 07765 334 776.



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