



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

No. 8
January
1996

HAPPY NEW YEAR and welcome to the first *Newsletter* of 1996. This is a time for looking both back and forward; back to take stock of where we have got to in our first year, and forward to consider how best to continue the ideas we have under way, and also - resources permitting - what new initiatives to undertake.

The main forum for doing these things will be the Annual General Meeting on 20 February. We need you to tell the Committee whether we are doing the right sort of things in the right sort of way, and if there are other things we ought to be tackling to improve the amenity and environment of south-west Bristol. To help you to help us, there is a very short questionnaire enclosed with this *Newsletter*. Please spare us a couple of minutes to fill it in, and return either to me (at 14 Queens Road) or to any Committee member. It would be helpful to have the completed questionnaires before the A.G.M., but any feedback at any time is always welcome.

The other implication of the New Year is that membership subscriptions become due! We do try hard to give value for the £4.00 p.a. per household, with six newsletters per year and a range of talks and visits. Equally important, if not more so, is to have the *support* of a goodly number of Bristol citizens in our efforts. I'm pleased to say that we have had nothing but polite co-operation from the City and County Councils so far. But it is in the nature of things that at some stage someone (a councillor, an official, a developer, whoever) will find us, as they see it, obstructing their pet project. That's when the challenge will come - 'Just who are M.V.C.G. anyway?' - and that's when we need to be able to point to a solid membership who know what the Group are doing and are behind it. So please rejoin - there's a form enclosed - and please come to the A.G.M.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Malago Valley Conservation Group will be held on Tuesday 20 February at St Peter's Rooms, Bishopsworth, starting at 7.30pm. Under our constitution, the Officers and the Committee members retire each year but are eligible for re-election. The current Officers have agreed to continue if elected (see the back page for the names of the Committee members).

Nominations for either Officers or Committee members must be made to the Hon. Secretary in writing at least 14 days before the A.G.M. They must be supported by a seconder and the consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained. At the inaugural meeting we neglected to elect a Vice-Chairman, so that post requires filling. The Hon. Secretary is Chris Lillington and her address is 23 Grange Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 8LE (tel. 964 7578).

New members of the Committee will be very welcome, so please don't hesitate to let us know if you're interested in becoming involved.

So far as the meeting itself is concerned, the formalities will be kept to a minimum. We are planning the event to be more of a party to celebrate our first birthday. We will have short illustrated talks from a variety of people to explain what we have been doing; there will be some guests from outside M.V.C.G.; and there will be wine (or fruit juice) and cheese (or other nibbles) to help make it a social occasion. See you at the Party!

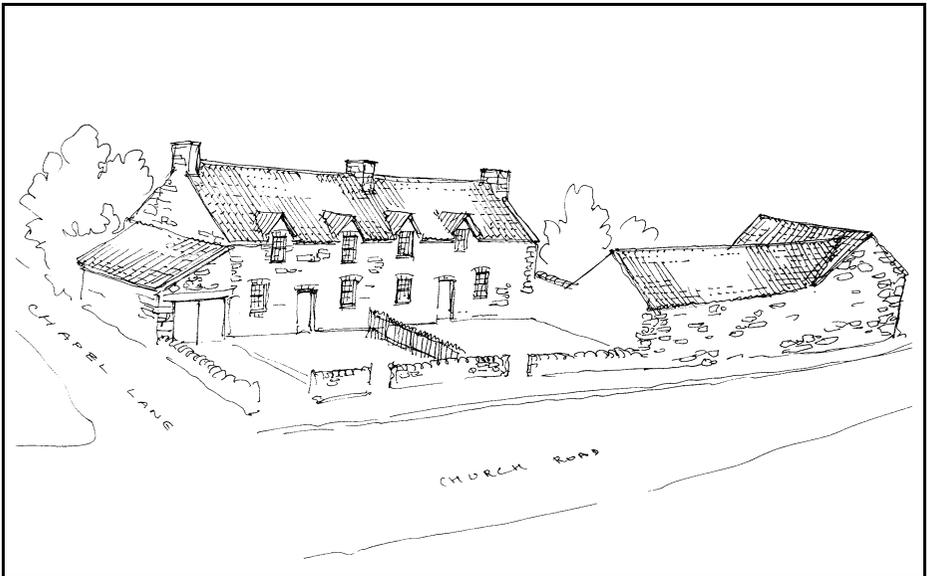
ANDRÉ COUTANCHE



BISHOPSWORTH VILLAGE ENHANCEMENT

IN NEWSLETTER NO. 5 (July 1995), John Taylor reported on the state of the local shops in the BS13 area. One rank of shops which had completely closed is in Church Road, Bishopsworth, opposite St Peter's Church. We wondered whether a well-designed housing development might not be more appropriate for the site.

ANTON BANTOCK has drawn up a possible design, which responds to the existing buildings which survive in the historic core of Bishopsworth village:



Proposed: two (there may be room for three) 'cottage' style homes with stone facings to harmonise with existing stone barns, stone church and stone school (now church hall) opposite.

We have written to the agent for the site to ask what the current situation is and we hope to influence the owners' plans in due course. It's far too early to say what might actually happen here, but provided the replacement was in scale and in character with the surroundings, the Group would not regard the disappearance of the 60's shops and flats as a major loss!

HIGH TIMES IN HIGHRIDGE

THE HIGHRIDGE FORUM was set up in 1994 as part of an initiative by Bristol City Council to attract government funding to bring about improvements on the Highridge estate centred around Lakemead Grove and Highridge Playing Fields. M.V.C.G. was in its early 'steering group' phase then but we have been present at all the public meetings and kept in touch with developments through contacts with individual Forum members.

The Bristol architects, Ferguson Mann, were engaged by the City Council to develop ideas for improvements, including the Council-owned flats, the shops at Lakemead Grove and the Highridge Playing Fields.

We have been aware for some time that one of the ideas included building on the lower part of the open space. The Housing Department has now made a planning application for a change of use of the land to self-build housing and sports/community pavilion with parking. The map opposite shows the area concerned; the grey area is the land for which the change-of-use application is being made and the black areas are the housing and the pavilion. Access would be between the two blocks of flats on Sandburrows Road.

The planning application is an outline one. This means that only the principle of building is at issue. There is nothing about where things would go or what they would look like; that would be covered in a further, detailed, application.

The M.V.C.G. Committee spent some time discussing this important development and we have written to the Planning Department with our views. We have misgivings about the general principle of building on open spaces, though we recognise the need for upgrading the whole area and providing extra and better facilities. We have said that a detailed planning application would be preferable so that we could properly assess the pros and cons. We have made the point that a high quality scheme is needed with a full range of community facilities.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

TREE PLANTING EXTRAVAGANZA

DURING NATIONAL TREE WEEK held at the end of November nearly 2,500 trees were planted along the edge of Highridge Playing Fields adjoining Highridge Infants School. The event was organised by local resident Mil Lusk with the backing of the Highridge Forum.

Mil's enthusiasm for the project convinced the Witherwood Area Housing Manager, Graham Sims, to back her and pay for most of the trees (the playing

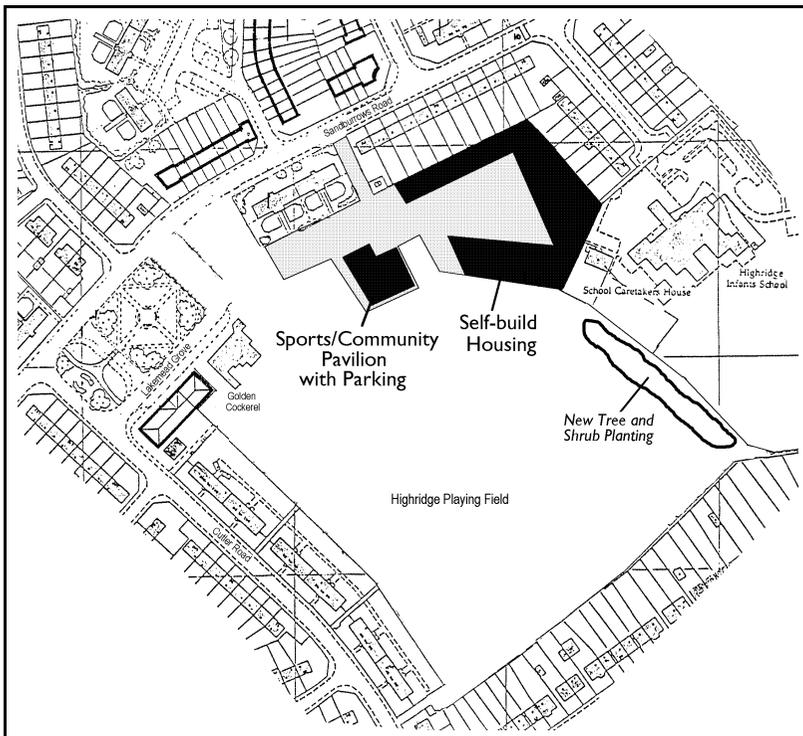
fields belong to his department). Mil also managed to rope in virtually everyone else she could find. This included everyone from children from the infants school, the football club, the probation service and even elderly people from Elm Hayes. Tools were lent by CSV Environment who also gave 250 trees grown at their tree nursery in Hartcliffe.

Despite appalling weather during the first planting sessions all the trees were planted creating a wide thicket and hedge. This will provide an attractive wildlife area in years to come.

If you are interested in trees, planting them, names of particular ones or want to help protect them you could become a Tree Warden under a new scheme being run by the City Council. You will receive free training and support from the City's Tree Officer. If you are interested phone Peter Hall or Sue Walker on 946 5285.

TREE FACTS *Did you know it takes 2000 seedling trees to provide enough oxygen for just one person while a mature beech tree will provide enough oxygen for eight people!*

PETER HALL



CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

THE 'CHRISTMAS THEME' EVENING arranged on 14th December was a great success. There were about thirty or so members/guests, plus the choir who entertained us with carols and Christmas songs. The Hartcliffe Singers' love of singing was obvious and we thank them for coming and wish them every success in the future.

Mary Bishop stepped in at the last moment and showed us how to try to create various different sorts of floral decorations - she made it look so easy - and some brave members attempted to produce some for themselves. One of Mary's arrangements was raffled and the sum of £8.50 was raised for her fund to help her very severely disabled and handicapped grand-daughter, for which she was delighted. Our thanks to her for coming, especially as it was at very short notice.

After seasonal refreshments of mulled wine, mince pies, etc., Mary Powell then showed us how to make decorations with salt dough, which is kneaded, shaped, slow baked and painted and varnished. Again, some members played around with the dough which was great fun. Thanks also to Mary. As our Chairman was unable to participate due to succumbing to 'flu, Sue Walker stepped into the breach and made a good job of it, so thanks go to her as well, also to members who supplied the greenery, etc. and refreshments. I think we can safely say 'A good time was had by all'.

BRENDA DOCHERTY

KEEP CANS COMING!

WINTER WEATHER means fewer drinks being consumed in the streets and parks, and thus fewer cans being dropped where our garbage raids pick them up. On the whole, that's a good thing, so it's just as well that some people have got into the habit of saving the cans from the drinks they (or their children, or grandchildren) consume at home.

Why don't you do the same? M.V.C.G. makes a few bob, and you have a good conscience. Please deliver cans to me at 14 Queens Road, or give me a ring on 964 3106 and I'll collect them. Thank you.



ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

HERE ARE THE LATEST DETAILS of the programme of activities. The talks will be held at 7.30pm at St Peter's Rooms (by the side of St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth). Please note that non-members are very welcome at the talks and will be asked to pay a visitor's fee of 50p.

Tuesday 16 January: *The Woodland Trust and its Work on Dundry* with CLARE ROBINSON, Assistant Woodland Officer. This will be a very interesting talk and ties in with M.V.C.G.'s involvement with the meetings being arranged to discuss the future uses and management of Dundry Slopes.

Monday 29 January: *Garbage Raid* at 3.30pm - meet at *Bishopsworth Library*.

Tuesday 20 February: *Annual General Meeting*. An A.G.M. with a difference. Reports on our first year's activities, surprise speakers, and wine and cheese to help things go with a swing. Come and discuss future plans - and join the Committee if you want to get involved. See page 2 for more details.

Monday 26 February: First sign of spring! The time for the *Garbage Raid* goes back to 4.00pm - meet at the '*Elm Tree*'.

Tuesday 19 March: *Nature Conservation and the Malago Area* with HELEN HALL, Bristol's Conservation Officer. A chance to discuss how we build on Julia Bolzek's excellent report on Manor Woods.

Monday 25 March: *Garbage Raid*. See the next *Newsletter* for details.

Tuesday 16 April: *Talking Flowers*, a talk by PLANTLIFE, Britain's only charity exclusively saving wild plants and their habitats.

Thursday 18 April: *Visit to Folly Farm* to see, amongst other things, the wild flowers which have never suffered from pesticides or artificial fertilisers. There will be a small charge and bookings must be made in advance. Details in the *March Newsletter*.

Tuesday 21 May: *Visit to Windmill Hill City Farm* - more information in the next *Newsletter*.

Tuesday 18 June: *Visit to Gatcombe Court*. More details next time.

OUR LOCAL WILDLIFE

THE WINTER IS UPON US and the first snows have already fallen. Whilst most of us are warm and snug in our homes, our local wildlife has to survive these hard times with the remains of the harvest that nature has provided during the preceding summer and autumn.

A little help can be given to our local birds and mammals by providing seed, nuts, fat products and, most important, open clean water in our gardens and open spaces. By providing this service it is amazing how many varieties of birds can be attracted to our otherwise bare gardens during the winter period. It has been known for some local residents to count as many as thirty different types of birds attracted by a regular food supply.



JOHN TAYLOR

Malago Valley Conservation Group Committee Members

Chairman	André Coutanche	964 3106
Secretary	Chris Lillington	964 7578
Treasurer	John Taylor	964 2913
Programme Co-ordinator	Brenda Docherty	983 9901

Other Members

Freddie Alliston, Anton Bantock, Denis Bristow, Peter Hall, Lola Hardingham, Martin Powell, Ted Thomas, Sue Walker

Co-opted Members

Richard Eddy, Cllr Bernard Chalmers, Cllr Terry Cleverley, Cllr Peter Crispin, Cllr Paul Walker (*All the City and County of Bristol councillors for Bedminster, Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe and Whitchurch Park wards have been invited to become co-opted Committee members*).

Newsletter edited by André Coutanche, 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 8LB; telephone 964 3106. **Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome.** The opinions expressed in this *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of Malago Valley Conservation Group.