



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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IT'S NOT JUST COUNTRY-DWELLERS who are in touch with the passing of the seasons. I always used to reckon it was autumn when the Citroën 2CVs closed up their roofs and the hot-air balloons stopped appearing in the evenings. Now that 2CVs are almost extinct and balloons don't hibernate any more we need other manifestations of the annual round.

For M.V.C.G. members, that's easy. It's autumn because the programme of talks arranged by our inventive and hard-working Programme Group is about to re-start. The first one is a cracker - come along on Tuesday 17 September for a good evening's entertainment. Another sign of autumn is one which we do share with our country cousins - it's fruit-picking time. We had thought to announce a *Bramble Ramble* in Manor Woods in the Programme, but the unpredictability of ripening made that impossible. Still, a few members have had a pleasant stroll admiring the start of the autumn colours and come back with several bags full of blackberries which have now metamorphosed into pots of blackberry jelly which will be on sale at the Coffee Day on 31 October (see page 6). It's not too late to have your own ramble, and if you care to make some jam or jelly for the Group to sell, we'd be very grateful. (Personally I'm waiting a few more weeks for the sloes to ripen; stocks of sloe gin are dangerously low).

One of the founder-members of the M.V.C.G. Committee has resigned because of pressure of other commitments. Ted Thomas has been an invaluable link with Hartcliffe Health and Environment Action Group and has made a very helpful contribution to the Committee's work. Thank you, Ted.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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FLOWER DISPLAY AWARDS

AT THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST we set out to have a look at as much of our area as possible and toured Bedminster Down, Headley Park, Uplands, Highridge, Withywood, Bishopsworth and Hartcliffe in search of this year's prize winners. I hadn't realised there were so many cul-de-sacs to be investigated! There were many wonderfully colourful displays in hanging baskets, window boxes and containers of all kinds, but eventually we drew up a short list and once again Riverside Garden Centre were kind enough to supply us with a judge.

The final placings were:

<i>First Prize</i>	28 Poplar Road	£10 Riverside Voucher
<i>Second Prize</i>	9 Marfield Walk	£5 Riverside Voucher
<i>Third Prize</i>	19 Ilchester Road	£5 Riverside Voucher
<i>Very Highly Commended</i>	14 Brooklyn Road	
	16 Brooklyn Road	
	8 Marfield Walk	
	44 Brooklyn Road	

All received a year's free membership of our Group and the prizes were very warmly accepted. We also gave highly commended certificates to the remaining eleven who had been shortlisted.

Riverside Garden Centre kindly donated the £10 voucher for the first prize and we are again indebted to them for their support and generosity. Thank you, Riverside!

The *South Bristol Observer* photographed the presentation of the first prize and we made the front page - hope you saw it. Another successful event - start planning your planting for next year!

LOLA HARDINGHAM

And warmest thanks from M.V.C.G. not only to Riverside Garden Centre but also to Lola for her organisation and to Jo Hawkins for her help.



WILDLIFE DIARY

AN AUGUST VISIT TO MANOR WOODS yielded many delights. In the brickworks area the teasels were at their best, some in full bloom and others beginning to seed. There were clusters of cinnabar moths feeding on the teasels and the distinctive orange and black striped caterpillars were also in evidence. There was a profusion of wild flowers, including golden rod, thistles, wild scabious and cranesbill.

Alongside the stream the bulrushes were in abundance together with Himalayan balsam and hoary willow herb. We were, however, distressed to witness the relentless invasion of the Japanese knotweed. If it is left to its own devices it will severely overwhelm many of the native species.

The ducks are obviously very contented with life on the pond as they have had many offspring. We counted at least twenty-two ducks and ducklings. We saw a grey squirrel which sat observing us for a while before scampering into the undergrowth.

And finally - the corky-fruited water dropwort was dying back but we were delighted to find many new seedlings springing up all around - a good omen for next year, we hope.

BERYL HEATON

BRISTOL CIVIC SOCIETY has written to us and to a number of local amenity societies throughout the city to propose an improved exchange of information. The idea would be that we could provide items for publication in their Newsletter from time to time and they would provide a column for ours.

The M.V.C.G. Committee was in favour of the idea, though there may be a practical problem in fitting extra pieces into our *Newsletter*. Our Committee thought it would be good for Civic Society readers to know what was going on in the 'U.S.A.' - the Uther Side of the Avon.

There are already close informal links - and Jerry Hicks of Bristol Civic Society is the first speaker of our autumn season - but if any member would like to know more about the Civic Society, please contact me,

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

DUNDRY HILL GROUP

JUST OCCASIONALLY everything seems to come together - the place, the weather and especially the company. The walk and picnic at Hill House Farm on Sunday 8 September was just such an occasion.

Thirty walkers, including some very young children, left Withywood at 12.30pm and made their way to David Hurford's farm via Strawberry Lane and the 156 (or 157, or 158) steps up to Dundry Church. There they joined approximately another thirty visitors to the Farm's open day. Most brought a picnic, although refreshments, including delicious home-baked cakes were kindly provided by Mrs Hurford.

A range of activities was available throughout the afternoon, from demonstrations of corn dolly and rag rug making, to pond dipping, badge making and displays of old farm memorabilia. However, the high point of the afternoon was, undoubtedly, the farm tour led by David Hurford, who not only spoke of the benefits of his environmentally sympathetic approach to farming the land, but also informed and entertained everyone with his tales of the history of the farm, which dates from the twelfth century.

The views from the farm are staggeringly beautiful. During the farm walk we were able to see both Severn Bridges and the Clifton Suspension Bridge, Lansdown in Bath, Pen Hill on Mendip and, with a little imagination, the faint outline of the Brecon Beacons in the far distance. The wildlife was just as exciting - skipper butterflies, swallows and badger sets; scabious, sorrel and many other wild flowers and plants.

Mr and Mrs Hurford worked extremely hard to provide such an enjoyable afternoon, especially as they had invited local farmers interested in Stewardship to view the farm in the morning. However, without doubt their work paid off, as it was impossible not to notice the real enjoyment of everyone - young and 'a little older'; city and country folk.

The Dundry Hill Group is not only working to improve the environment and amenity value of the area, but also to bring together rural and urban communities to jointly care for, understand and enjoy the Dundry countryside. This event certainly contributed a great deal to these aims and our thanks go to David and Lesley Hurford for their generosity in opening their farm and making us all so welcome.

SUE WALKER

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HIGHRIDGE

A FORTIETH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION was held at Highridge Infant School on Tuesday 3 September. The Headteacher, Mrs Jill Hughes, and her staff had researched old records and photographs to identify past pupils and staff so that they could be invited to attend the celebrations. The school and the Chairman of the Governors, Martin Powell, are both members of M.V.C.G. Martin has always had close links with the school since he was a pupil himself from 1963 to 1968.

Bishopsworth School started in a room of one the local cottages in 1841, which was replaced in 1842 by a stone-built classroom adjoining the new St Peter's Church. There were several additions and improvements to the school which have now become the Church Hall (where M.V.C.G. meetings are now held) and, to the rear, Social Security offices. The Church School was eventually replaced by a newer and larger school which was built in the field behind the Church and is now known as Bishopsworth Junior (Church of England) School.

Due to the rapid expansion of local housing in the early 1950s, Bristol City Council decided that there was a need for an Infant School and in 1956 Highridge Infant School was opened to cater for the growing numbers of young children.

During the fortieth birthday celebrations, ex-pupils and teachers were able to look through old photographs and records as they swapped memories and enjoyed a slice of the celebration cake.

The investigations of the Headteacher and staff also highlighted the value of the school mural, sited in the entrance hall, when it was pointed out that it had been painted by Mary Fedden, who recently had her work shown at the Royal West of England Academy at Queens Road, Clifton. It is now planned to restore the mural and no longer use it as a notice board!

Pupils spend the first three years of their early education at Highridge Infant School before progressing to Bishopsworth Juniors, the school next door, for a further three years before going to 'the big school', Bedminster Down Comprehensive.

JOHN TAYLOR

COFFEE TIME

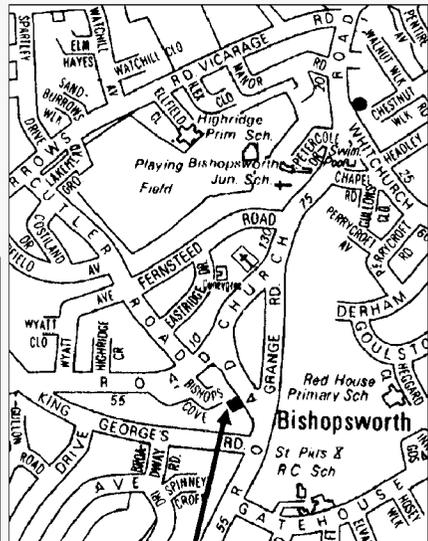
THERE WILL BE a Coffee Day to raise funds for both Malago Valley Conservation Group and the Wildlife Trust on **Thursday 31 October**. The event will be at 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth (see map, below) and the doors will be open from **2.00pm to 9.00pm**.



Admission is free. There will be a small charge for coffee and biscuits, with the proceeds going to M.V.C.G. Home-made jam and bramble jelly (made from Malago Vale blackberries picked on the bramble ramble) will also be on sale for the Group.

The Wildlife Trust will have a wide range of goods on sale, including attractive gifts suitable for all ages (Christmas is coming!), along with books, cards, children’s toys and their famous honey from Folly Farm.

Make a note of the date in your diary now - and bring a friend.



14 Queens Road

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

THE NEW AUTUMN PROGRAMME of talks is getting under way. All the evening meetings are held at 7.30pm in St Peter's Rooms, which are by the side of St Peter's Church, Church Road, Bishopsworth.

Tuesday 17 September: *Why Bristol isn't Bath: classical town planning and its alternatives.* The programme of evening talks gets off to a flying start with JERRY HICKS of Bristol Civic Society. If you were at our A.G.M. you will have heard Jerry's sparkling and provocative style. The evening is guaranteed to be amusing and thought-provoking. 7.30pm at St Peter's Rooms.

Monday 23 September: *Garbage Raid.* We will have a go at the path leading down into Manor Woods from the bottom of Valley Road. Meet at the top of the path (junction of Valley Road and Brooklyn Road) at **4.00pm.**

Tuesday 15 October: *Nature Conservation on the National Trust Mendip Properties* by ADRIAN WOODHALL of the National Trust. 7.30pm at St Peter's Rooms.

Monday 21 October: Garbage Raid. Meet at the 'Elm Tree' at **4.00pm.**

Thursday 31 October: COFFEE DAY to raise money for M.V.C.G. and the Wildlife Trust at 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth from **2.00pm to 9.00pm.**

Thursday 21 November: A speaker from ENGLISH HERITAGE. 7.30pm at St Peter's Rooms. Further details in the next *Newsletter*. Please note that this meeting will be on a Thursday instead of our normal Tuesday to avoid clashing with the Bishopsworth Quiz.

Tuesday 17 December: The CHRISTMAS MEETING. Last year's was great fun; expect a similar mixture of entertainment and eats this time.

The MALAGO Society

OUR VERY GOOD FRIENDS, the Malago Society for local history, have just published a new book of historic photographs which will be of great interest to M.V.C.G. members. The photos cover 'village' Bishopsworth and its surrounding farms, now covered by Hartcliffe and Withywood estates. Old buildings - some gone, some neglected, a few restored - are included, along with lost landscapes traversed by meandering country lanes which are now dual carriageways through industrial areas. The captions are by Anton Bantock and are - as you would expect - strong on local colour and character studies. The book is a joint exercise with a professional publishing company and is done to a high standard. M.V.C.G. members who are also Malago Society members will find it on sale at Malago Society meetings; it is also available in local shops and libraries and in Bristol bookshops.

Malago Valley Conservation Group Committee Members

Chairman	André Coutanche	964 3106
Vice-Chair	Sue Walker	946 5285
Secretary	Brenda Docherty	983 9901
Treasurer	John Taylor	964 2913
Programme Co-ordinator	Brenda Docherty	983 9901

Other Members

Freddie Alliston, Anton Bantock, Denis Bristow, Richard Eddy, Peter Hall, Lola Hardingham, Beryl Heaton, Chris Lillington, Mary Sykes.

Co-opted Members

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.