



# MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

# **NEWSLETTER**

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1997

**H**APPY NEW YEAR! Malago Valley Conservation Group is coming up to its second birthday shortly and you'll find details inside about our A.G.M. and birthday party. That's the good news. The very slightly less good news is that this is the time of year when membership subscriptions are due for renewal.

If you joined the Group after 1st October 1996, don't worry; we're not asking for another subscription payment yet - your membership runs through until the end of 1997. For most of us, however, it's time to fill in the membership renewal slip you will find inside and send it off to our Treasurer with your £4.00. I hope you think this is a reasonable sum for six newsletters per year and the excellent range of talks and activities which our ever-inventive Programme Group organise for us.

But we don't just want your money. It's worse than that - we want your energy and your ideas. M.V.C.G. could do a lot more than we are doing at present. There are some ideas which are pretty well worked out but which need more time to follow up. The Garbage Raids could always use more people. There are whole areas (both geographical within BS13 and areas of activity) which we've scarcely begun to consider and where some bright ideas would be most welcome.

Can you help? If you've any thoughts on how we can improve our part of Bristol, please get in touch. The *Newsletter* always has room for readers' letters. If you think you might like to join the Committee (it's good fun), please let the Secretary know (see page 2), or have an informal word with any Committee member first if you prefer. We've achieved some good results in 1996. With your help, M.V.C.G. can do more in 1997.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AND BIRTHDAY PARTY**

**T**HE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Malago Valley Conservation Group will be held on Tuesday 18 February at St Peter's Rooms, Church Road, Bishopsworth, starting at 7.30pm. The Officers and 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 current Committee members and Officers.

Two Committee members, Freddie Alliston and Denis Bristow, will not be seeking re-election at the A.G.M. New volunteers for the Committee would be very welcome. Nominations for either Officers or Committee members should 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. The Hon. Secretary is Brenda Docherty and her address is 136 Church Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 8JY (tel. 983 9901).

Please don't be put off by these formal constitutional requirements if you are interested in joining the Committee. Co-options can be made at any time, so don't hesitate to talk to any Committee member if you would like to know more.

Last year's A.G.M. and (First) Birthday Party seemed to be enjoyed by all concerned, so we are planning a similar format this year. Short reports from a variety of people on our activities during the year will be followed by a break for wine/fruit juice and cheese. We are inviting guests from other groups and organisations we have worked with, and our special guest speaker will be Vic Love, whose architectural practice on Bedminster Down (opposite the 'Cross Hands') kindly displays the posters for our regular talks.

Please come and join in the fun. If you would like to bring any friends who are not M.V.C.G. members, please do so; this would be a very good occasion for them to find out what we are all about.

BRENDA DOCHERTY

## WINTER WALKIES

**E**VEN IN DECEMBER, a walk in Manor Woods is full of pleasures, some of them unexpected. A gentle hour's stroll, one Sunday afternoon before Christmas, was almost as full of colour and sound as late spring.

It was no surprise to see robins, but the relative absence of other small birds meant that the wrens were conspicuous, both in their shrill chatter and their lively movement in and between bushes. The bushes themselves seemed sometimes lost in Old Man's Beard - wild clematis - and gave the impression of sleeping under a heavy snow-fall (that was before there really *was* a heavy snow-fall). Greenfinches were busy, and long-tailed tits brought an otherwise dormant tree alive.

On the pond (bird sanctuary? lake?), it was business as usual for the ducks and moorhens - but what were those other duck-like birds with the bright colours? Not mallards, not with the ruddy coloured striped head. Trying to look them up later in the bird book, the nearest we could get was teals, but the size seemed quite wrong. Anyone know?

Happily, we're not the only ones to think of Manor Woods in winter (dog walkers, of course, get no time off for good behaviour or bad weather); another M.V.C.G. member took a stroll there on Christmas afternoon, thereby presumably adding turkey to the list of birds present.

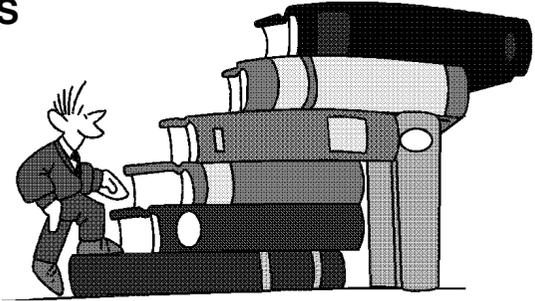
Now that there are just starting to be a few hints of spring, as the days lengthen and the sun occasionally shows itself, the robins are the first up in the mornings, singing (shouting?) away, even while it is still dark.

Another member recently reported that he had seen a kingfisher in Crox Bottom. With a recent sighting in Manor Woods as well, this is very encouraging. Why not try *your* luck? Winter walks when you're wrapped up can be just as warm and enjoyable as in the summer.

MARIE JO COUTANCHE

## OUR LOCAL LIBRARIES

**HARTCLIFFE LIBRARY**, situated in Peterson Square next to the main shopping area along Symes Avenue, is a popular library used by a wide range of community groups



and individuals, from local school children to the pensioners. Links with the community include an 'outreach' to the local house-bound to deliver books and cassettes. The Library itself is used as a home for a Toy Library, Witherwood and Hartcliffe advice centres, and local councillors hold a surgery there once every fortnight. Local organisations also hold events and produce displays at the library.

The library hosted a local history display in November which was put together by local people and readers. Local publications are promoted, sold and displayed on the premises, including *Malago* magazines and M.V.C.G. *Newsletters*.

STEPHEN KING, Librarian in Charge

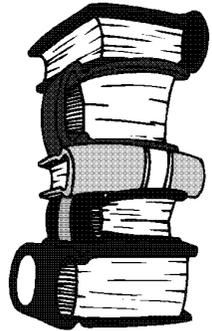
**BISHOPSWORTH LIBRARY**, situated on the corner of Bishopsworth Road by St Peter's Rise, is one of the busiest in the new County of Bristol. Built almost exactly 35 years ago, it serves a wide population, including readers from as far away as Chew Magna, Blagdon, Churchill and Winford.

Apart from the issuing of books for recreational reading and study purposes, the staff answer approximately 400 queries and obtain up to 100 specific books requested by readers each month. The library also hosts visits from at least three school classes each week, and even run a children's craft club every other Monday evening during term time. The club, and other children's activities held in the school holidays, make good use of scrap materials from 'Scrapstore' and other sources. Books that are withdrawn from circulation are offered for sale wherever possible so they are not just discarded. The library is also pleased to accept donations of books and jigsaws from the public.

VALERIE LAWRENCE, Librarian in Charge

## *Library Statistics*

	BISHOPSWORTH	HARTCLIFFE
Registered Readers	5,367	3,312
Stock of books, cassettes and jigsaws (approx.)	16,000	11,000
Items issued 1995/96	95,622	52,873



We wish to thank Val Lawrence and Stephen King for providing the information about our libraries. Bishopsworth is the third busiest library in the South and East District of the County and Hartcliffe is the fifteenth busiest in the County of Bristol.

The libraries are an important community resource. If you are a regular reader you will be aware of the wide variety of services that they provide; if not, and you have never visited the buildings, do pop in to see what they have to offer. The staff are friendly and will be only too pleased to help you.

JOHN TAYLOR

### **GOOD NEWS**

**B**ACK IN NOVEMBER 1995 we reported that a planning application had been made to develop a bus depot at the northern end of Manor Woods off Vale Lane. We wrote to oppose the application because it would have destroyed a valuable wildlife site and would have been visually intrusive and a source of noise and air pollution.

Recently we heard informally that the application had been withdrawn, and we have just received the official letter from the Council Planning Department which confirms this.

This is excellent news. The whole Manor Woods area is slowly but surely attracting more attention and prospects for the future are hopeful. Now that one negative possibility has been removed, we must concentrate on putting forward positive ideas.

## THE H.H.E.A.G. CHRISTMAS WALK *or A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE*

**T**HEDAY was overcast, with mists hanging in the valleys and the last of the autumn colour still clinging to the trees and hedgerows. The walk started pleasantly and gently, from Dundry Church, for most of the thirty-five walkers, although a few intrepid souls did start out on foot from Hartcliffe.

We ambled through the village and down Littleton Lane, with its high hedgerows, and fascinating variety of ferns - there were even champions in flower. However things did not remain so idyllic and at times the walk felt more like army manoeuvres, than the gentle winter stroll we had anticipated.

Half way down Littleton Lane ‘bullets’ and other fall-out rained down on us from a clay pigeon shoot in an adjacent field. We hurled ourselves over a variety of constructed obstacles, intended to be stiles, and at one point were dive bombed by a cloud of angry midges. But the obstacle which encapsulated the army analogy, indeed the feeling of a First World War battle, was the mud encountered on the path just yards away from Winford church and civilisation.

When the route was ‘recce-d’, by our intrepid leader, the pathway was fairly dry, but in the meantime a herd of cows had done its best to create a quagmire. It is at this point that words fail to portray the horror (and humour) of the situation - if only we had taken photographs instead of trying to ‘save’ walkers from sinking into oblivion. Thirty five walkers did emerge safely, in the end, but the total dry-cleaning bill must have been astronomical.

Here the analogy with battlegrounds ends, as once past the church we were soon at the festively decorated village hall and being plied with cups of piping hot mulled wine, mince pies, coffee and tea.

After refreshments the lure of a warm mini-bus back to Dundry and Hartcliffe was too great to resist for most of the walkers, although a few hardy individuals were rewarded for their long foot-slog back up the slopes by a beautiful and interesting route back to Dundry.

Our thanks to everyone who helped to provide the refreshments and Tony Fouracres for leading the walk. We promise to ask him to lead his next walk in the summer - after a long drought.

SUE WALKER

## PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

**A**LL the evening meetings are held at 7.30pm in St Peter's Rooms, which are by the side of St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth. Non-members are very welcome and will be asked to pay 50p to help cover hall hire.

**Monday 27 January:** *Garbage Raid*. Meet at 3.30pm at Bishopsworth Library. How about a New Year resolution to support our regular bit of direct action to improve our neighbourhood?

**Wednesday 5 February:** Bristol Ramblers Association has arranged a WALK ALONG THE MALAGO GREENWAY from central Bristol to Dundry. Meet at the Arnolfini Art Gallery at 10.00am. Further information if needed from Julie Boston on 942 8637.

**Tuesday 18 February:** Our *Annual General Meeting* and second Birthday Party. See page 2 for the formal announcement. Our special guest is VIC LOVE, a well-known local architect and an entertaining speaker, who will give an illustrated talk on 'Architecture in the Community'. Come along for a sociable and entertaining evening.

**Monday 24 February:** *Garbage Raid*. Meet at 3.30pm at the 'Elm Tree'.

**Tuesday 18 March:** A talk on *Permaculture* by Mark Warner of the CREATE Centre. Further details in the *March Newsletter*.

**Tuesday 15 April:** *Conservation and Recreation at Bristol Water's Reservoirs*: a talk by CHRIS KLEE of Bristol Water. More information next time.

**Tuesday 20 May:** A Conducted Tour of *Bristol Water's Gardens* at Bridgwater Road. More details later.

**18-27 April** will be this year's TIDY BRITAIN WEEK. As usual, Malago Valley Conservation Group will arrange a special event, preferably in conjunction with other local groups. Steve Sparks of the City Council has already been in touch to offer help. More details in the *March Newsletter*, but let us know if you have any ideas for publicity-attracting activities, or particular areas which need attention.

## GUTES NEUES JAHR!

**J**ULIA BOLZEK, the German student who produced the excellent management plan for Manor Woods and gave us an inspirational talk in September 1995, has been in touch with a attractive card of Hannover in the snow.

She sends greetings to everyone and drops a hint that she may be in Bristol again in 1997. It would be very good to see her again - and hopefully there will be the first signs of some improvements on the ground this year, too.

Happy New Year - Gutes Neues Jahr - to Manor Woods and to all our area.

### Malago Valley Conservation Group Committee Members

<b>Chairman</b>	André Coutanche	964 3106
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Sue Walker	946 5285
<b>Secretary</b>	Brenda Docherty	983 9901
<b>Treasurer</b>	John Taylor	964 2913
<b>Programme Co-ordinator</b>	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*).

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**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.