



# MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

# **NEWSLETTER**

No. 21  
March  
1998

**M**ALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP has reached some significant milestones. Our third A.G.M. and Birthday Party has coincided with important developments in two areas which are at the heart of our concerns.

Firstly, the Bishopsworth and Malago Conservation Area has at last reached its final stages, as you can read on page 2. 'Final stages' of being set up, that is. Designation of the area may be the end of one campaign but it's only the beginning of never-ending efforts to maintain what is good and improve what is bad - and, of course, that is the purpose of M.V.C.G. in a nutshell both in the conservation area and throughout south west Bristol.

The second item is at the opening stage of what we expect will be an exciting and fruitful development. The Allied-Domecq South Bristol Rivers Initiative, which we have reported on in recent *Newsletters*, has just appointed a Project Worker. Her name is Caroline Smart and she will be based at the Wildlife Trust. The current thinking is to develop the pond in Manor Woods and improve the water quality, with the possible thought of a new fishing lake near the Vale Lane entrance. This will all be in the conservation area and will be a fine start to the enhancement which a conservation area should help bring about. We are looking forward to meeting her and working with her and all the other groups and individuals who want to help bring about improvements to Manor Woods.

At the A.G.M. two long-serving Committee members stood down. Richard Eddy was a catalyst for the group which proposed the conservation area in 1993; and Chris Lillington has been an efficient minutes secretary (her minutes form the basis for the report on page 4). We thank them both for their hard work. Since the A.G.M., Vanessa Van Eecke has volunteered to become our minutes secretary. We welcome her and the other new members.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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## THE CONSERVATION AREA

**W**E'RE ON THE LAST LAP! At its meeting on 25 February, the City Council's South & East Planning Committee approved for public consultation the proposed Bishopsworth and Malago Conservation Area - the boundaries are shown on the map opposite.

The paper which went to the Committee (from which the map is taken) drew heavily on the report which was prepared in 1993 by a group of volunteers who went on to form M.V.C.G. The report was praised by the officers and councillors at the Committee and we have been happy to agree to help the Council in the public consultation process which will be happening over the next few months. If all goes well, the Conservation Area will be formally designated by the Planning Committee in October.

The whole process has been a most constructive partnership between the City Council and ourselves. Robin Smyth, who wrote the report, asked us for a list of our activities which will help in maintaining and improving the Conservation Area and this is what we came up with:

- We have prepared an enhancement plan for 'Elm Tree corner'.
- We run monthly litter collections, including on two occasions so far collecting rubbish from the pond in Manor Woods using an inflatable boat.
- Promotion and education through publication of regular newsletters, guides etc. and involvement with local schools.
- Consultation with the City Council on planning applications, Tree Preservation Orders etc.
- Liaison with Leisure Services over the grass cutting regime in Manor Woods and at Highridge Common (which areas should be left long for wildflowers) and helping them to monitor its correct implementation.
- We have put pressure on the N.R.A./Environment Agency on water quality in the Malago.
- Liaison with other local groups, including the Highridge Forum, Hartcliffe Community Campus, Dundry Hill Group, Community Networks, University of Worthywood etc. We are actively involved in the Allied Domecq/ Groundwork 'South Bristol Rivers Initiative' to improve the Malago and other features in Manor Woods.

We are looking forward to carrying on with these activities, and adding new ones where possible, in the context of the conservation area and throughout our BS13 'patch'.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

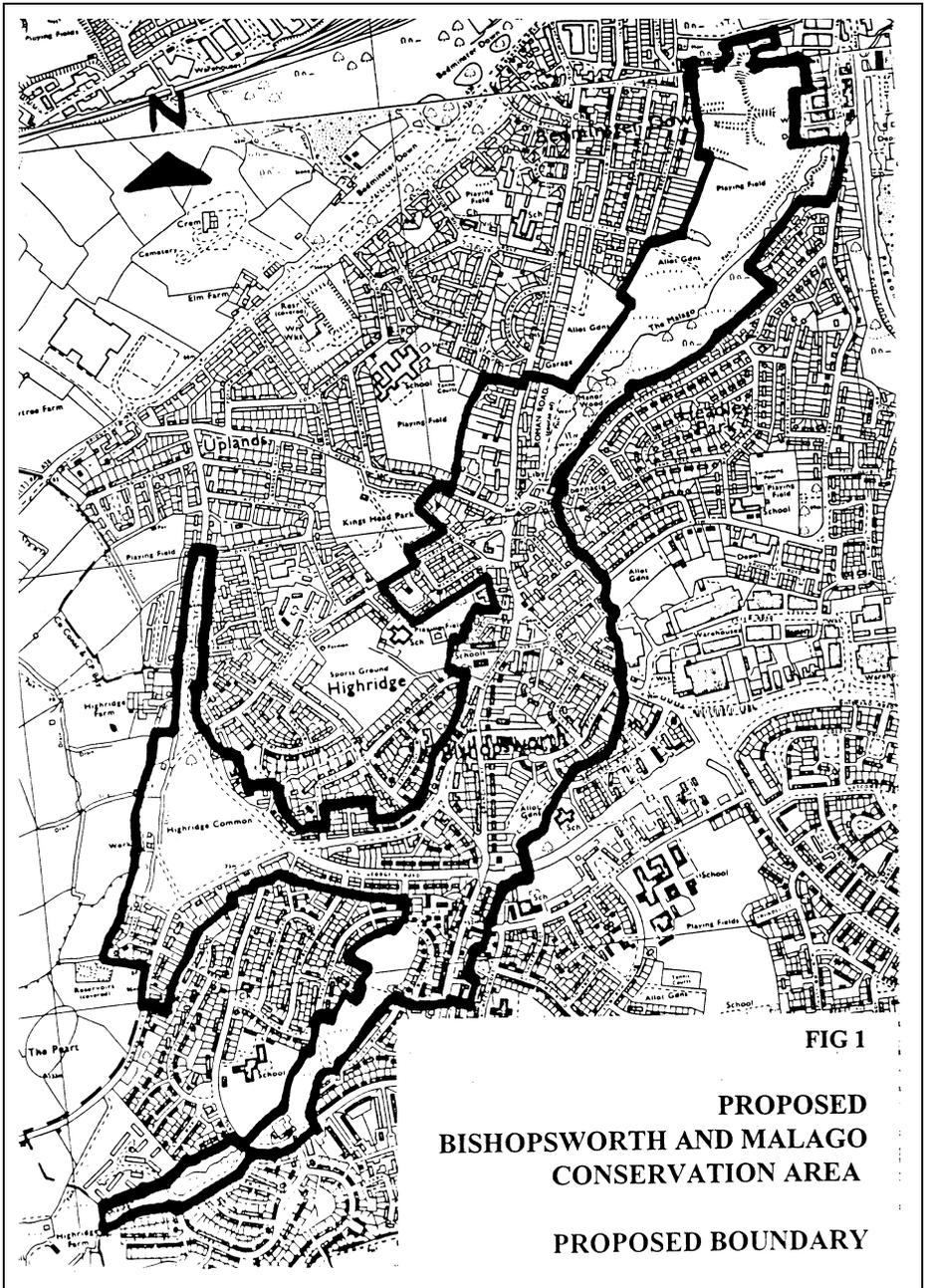


FIG 1

**PROPOSED  
BISHOPSWORTH AND MALAGO  
CONSERVATION AREA  
PROPOSED BOUNDARY**

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**T**HE THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (and Birthday Party) of Malago Valley Conservation Group was held on 17 February. André Coutanche (Chairman) welcomed the fifty or so people present. A special welcome was given to representatives of SCALA, the Brislington Conservation and Amenity Society, Hartcliffe Community Campus, Highridge Forum and the Dundry Hill Group; also to Vanessa Van Eecke representing the Western Partnership, local councillors present, Colin Blackburn from the Planning Department and Steve Sparks, our ever-supportive 'litter man'.

**Accounts:** The 1997 accounts had been circulated and showed income of £506.72 and expenditure of £337.67, leaving a total balance of £523.54 being carried forward into 1998. A vote of thanks was expressed to our Treasurer, John Taylor.

**Programme Report:** Lola Hardingham reported that our indoor meetings had included talks on Permaculture, Bristol Water, Agenda 21, Insects, and Astronomy and light pollution. We have had several walks and visits, including Dundry farms, Bristol Water's conservation garden and control room, Stockwood Open Space and an organic farm at Timsbury. There was a treasure hunt and picnic in August and an enjoyable Christmas meeting. Plans are in hand for future programme and ideas are welcome from members. André thanked the Programme Group - Lola Hardingham, Beryl Heaton, Sue Walker and Chris Lillington.

**Conservation Area:** André reported excellent progress in our bid to create the Bishopsworth and Malago Conservation Area. We have had constructive discussions with the officer responsible, Robin Smyth, and, with some give and take, the area proposed is satisfactory; it includes the 1920s part of Bishopsworth, Manor Woods, Withywood Park and Highridge Common. A paper will go to the South & East Planning Committee on 25 February followed by public consultation.

**Other Planning Issues:** Tessa Coombes told the meeting of plans for the Hartcliffe Community Campus based around Teyfant School. An Open Day takes place this week to discuss the proposed Millennium Green lottery application, which will include developing play areas and seating among other things.

**Manor Woods:** Vanessa Van Eecke reported on the project being sponsored by Allied Domecq based on water in Manor Woods. Three organisations are jointly co-ordinating this: Western Partnership, the Wildlife Trust and the Forest of Avon. Vanessa has been working on a feasibility study for a new lake, but it was decided to concentrate initially on the existing pond, originally designed to collect

silt (which it does!). A silt trap would be constructed and made into a wildlife feature, and perhaps later the large empty grassed area near the north end of Manor Woods could accommodate a new lake. More consultation is needed, but funding will be provided for work on the existing pond. A job has been advertised for a Project Worker who will work closely with the City Council. Chris McFarling congratulated Vanessa for all her work on this project.



*Anton's drawing of the Amcraft Designs shop which was presented to the owner along with a certificate as one of the first M.V.C.G. Environmental Awards*

**Litter Clearing:** Anton Bantock showed the meeting the M.V.C.G. litter trolley, with its impressive sign designed and made by Bill Gibson. He told the meeting that a group meets on the last Monday of each month and targets the bad areas which are missed by the professionals. He listed these and said they also tackle the Manor Woods pond by dinghy once a year! There are two main functions, and picking up the litter is only the tip of the iceberg. The main point is education, to demonstrate and talk to local people, especially children. All cans are passed to Marie Jo Coutanche for sorting, and this year the sale of aluminium cans has raised over £50. Thanks were expressed to all those who help with the garbage raids, those who collect cans, and to Marie Jo for all her hard work. More people would be very welcome.

**Dundry Slopes:** Chris McFarling who works for C.S.V. Environment and is co-ordinator of the Dundry Hill Group reported excellent co-operation between groups and residents of Dundry, Norton Malreward, Bishopsworth, Withywood and Hartcliffe, as well as local farmers. He thanked M.V.C.G. for support and said that the aims of the group are currently being reviewed with a new business plan which should be complete by the end of March. Activities have included walks, talks, farm visits, dry stone-walling, hedge-laying, bulb and tree planting etc. Funding of £80,000 has now been confirmed for the proposed ranger service from

the Department of the Environment's Environmental Action Fund over three years and matching funding will have to be found.

**Other Activities:** André thanked John Taylor for his swift and efficient work in delivering all the newsletters; and also for his on-going liaison with local schools. We have a strong link with Highridge Infant School and were able to help them buy a frog litter bin for the playground. Bulb planting has also taken place. We are members of VOSCUR, an umbrella organisation for all voluntary groups in the city, and we are now listed on the Internet as part of the VOSCUR Directory.

**Election of Committee:** Chris Lillington and Richard Eddy are standing down this year, and thanks were expressed to both of them, especially Chris who has been in M.V.C.G. since its conception and before! We invite our local councillors to become co-opted members of the committee and four of them have accepted. Also co-opted are Peter Hall (Hartcliffe Park Community Farm), Chris McFarling (C.S.V. Environment) and Sue Walker (Hartcliffe Health and Environmental Action Group). Tessa Coombes and Tania Ford (Hartcliffe Community Campus) and Geoff Clarke (Highridge Forum) have also agreed to be co-opted to the Committee.

Elected Committee members are: André Coutanche (Chairman), Lola Hardingham (Vice-Chairman), John Taylor (Treasurer), Anton Bantock, Brenda Docherty, Beryl Heaton and Mary Sykes. Royston Griffey was also willing to stand. It was proposed by Chris Lillington and seconded by Peter Crispin that these members be elected en bloc: carried unanimously. There is a vacancy for a Minutes Secretary, and anyone else can be co-opted onto the committee during the year.

**Environmental Awards:** After the interval André presented three of our new M.V.C.G. Environmental Awards to Amcraft Designs (2 Grange Road) for bringing the shop and garden to life again; the residents of 47 Queens Road for restoration of an old Bishopsworth house; and to the homes built on the site of the demolished flats in Bishport Avenue (the latter being accepted by Cllr Holland).

We were then given an interesting talk by Cllr Helen Holland on 'a day in the life of a Planning Committee Chair'. She told us that the majority of planning issues seem to be centred around transport these days. She touched on the local issues of the Wills' site and the Hengrove Park site, and also the south Bristol Transport Study, the result of which will be announced next week. This has been looking at the impact of certain proposed roads if they were built. She said she truly believes that the light rail transit system will happen in the not-too-distant future.

The meeting closed at 10.00pm with thanks to Helen Holland for giving us such an interesting insight and to all those who attended.

## PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

**A**S USUAL, we are happy to include the events and activities of the other groups we co-operate with. (HHEAG) is the Hartcliffe Health and Environment Action Group and (DHG) is the Dundry Hill Group. If you would like more information about either group, the phone number is the same for both - 946 5285.

**Sunday 22 March:** *Walk from Dundry to Barrow Tanks* (HHEAG). Leave Dundry Car Park at 1.30pm.

**Monday 23 March:** *Garbage Raid*. Meet at the 'Elm Tree' at 3.30pm.

**Saturday 18 April:** A *Special Garbage Raid* as our contribution to National Spring Clean month. We will have our annual go at the rubbish in Manor Woods pond and round about, so meet at **10.00am** at the Bishopsworth Library entrance for an amphibious operation (wellies advised).

**Tuesday 21 April:** MARY JAMES of Castle Farm, Bridgwater Road and the National Farmers Union will talk to us about *Farming and the Environment*, including the Countryside Stewardship scheme. St Peter's Rooms; 7.30pm.

**Saturday 25 April:** *Walk around Woolard and Publow* (HHEAG). Leave Gatehouse Centre at 2.00pm.

**Monday 27 April:** *Garbage Raid*. Meet at Withywood Post Office at **4.00pm**. *Please note the return to our 'summer' time.*

**Wednesday 29 April:** *Garbage Raid* - not ours this time, but Dundry Hill Group's. Meet at Dundry Church at 3.30pm (DHG).

**Monday 4 May:** *Open Day* at Hartcliffe Community Park Farm (end of Lampton Avenue).

**Thursday 14 May:** *Strawberry Lane Work Day* (HHEAG).

**Saturday 16 May:** *Hill House Farm Open Day* (HHEAG). Take yourself to the Farm, or meet at 12.30pm at the bottom of Strawberry Lane to walk to the Farm.

**Tuesday 19 May:** BOB WILLIAMS will talk to us about *Local Archaeological Sites*. St Peter's Rooms; 7.30pm.

*The Programme sheet which is enclosed is for those members who find it convenient. If you don't need it (because you put the dates in your diary, for instance) please pass it to a friend or neighbour.*

## IMPERIAL PARK

**Y**OU PROBABLY WILL HAVE SEEN the publicity from Tesco about their proposed new supermarket at 'Imperial Park' - the former Wills' Hartcliffe cigarette factory. M.V.C.G. Committee has started to discuss this massive development and its implications.

The City Council intend to consult widely on this issue from about mid-April. Look out for that, and if you have any views, now or after the consultation, please let us know. You can also write with your opinions to the Director of Planning, Transport and Development Services, Brunel House, St George's Road, Bristol, BS1 5UY, quoting Planning Application 0099/98P.

### Malago Valley Conservation Group Committee Members

<b>Chairman</b>	André Coutanche	964 3106
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Lola Hardingham	964 1116
<b>Treasurer</b>	John Taylor	964 2913

#### Other Members

Anton Bantock, Brenda Docherty, Royston Griffey, Beryl Heaton, Mary Sykes.

#### Co-opted Members

Geoff Clarke, Tessa Coombes, Tania Ford, Peter Hall, Chris McFarling, Vanessa Van Eecke (*Minutes Secretary*), Sue Walker, 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 are 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.