



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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2000

LOTS AND LOTS to squeeze in to this edition, but I'll start by saying 'thank you' to all of you who have renewed your membership for the year 2000. We're grateful for the quick response - and those few of you who haven't quite got around to it yet will find a renewal slip in this *Newsletter*.

The planning application for Chestnut Court which we reported last time was granted. This is *potentially* very good news - subject to a satisfactory design being agreed for the boundary where the new houses face onto Vicarage Road. However, at the time of printing this *Newsletter*, no work has started, and there remains an unprotected hole in the roof. If the new owner intends to sell on the building with planning permission, that is his right - but M.V.C.G. will pressurise both him and the City Council to take action to protect the house in the meantime.

There has been a planning application by Severn Vale Bowls Club to turn the disused tennis court at Kings Head Park into a carpark; there would also be new gates onto Vicarage Road. We were initially opposed to this, and didn't like the design of the gates, but the club asked us to meet them. We met on site, together with City Council people from Planning and from Leisure Services. The Club are keen to make a positive contribution to the area and have come up with a much better design for the gates. We are happy to agree, and to continue to co-operate with them and the Council on landscaping.

The idea for a 'Youth Shelter' (originally proposed for Manor Woods) seems to have reached the end of the road after a series of public meetings failed to find a site which everyone could agree on. If a new site is suggested in future, we will again respond as positively as possible.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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ELM TREE CORNER

THINGS HAVE MOVED QUICKLY since the last *Newsletter*. We prepared a leaflet explaining our ideas and took it to all the shops.

They were all very helpful and agreed to put it on display so that people who used the shops would know what was proposed. Some of them also kindly agreed to receive completed questionnaire forms which we then collected. We also did a house-to-house delivery of the leaflet/questionnaires in the roads all around 'Elm Tree Corner'.

The public meeting, held at the 'Elm Tree' on 14 February, was very well supported - about fifty people came. We were also grateful to three City Council officers for attending - Alison Malcolm, the Arboricultural Officer, Karen Stagg from Leisure Services, and traffic engineer, Mike Boxall. Alison brought us the good news that she had money available for a 'millennium avenue' of trees somewhere in south Bristol and she proposed planting up Highridge Road to extend our scheme.

We had very good feedback from local people - over sixty questionnaires were returned, either via the shops, at the meeting or through André's letterbox. Most people agreed with most of our ideas and we will be looking in more detail at the reservations and other suggestions. One point which we hadn't thought of was made by several people - why not demolish the ugly and (unnecessary?) toilet block? We emphasised at the meeting that nothing would happen very quickly except for the trees - and they happened very quickly indeed!

A few days after the public meeting, a group of us met Alison who told us that she proposed planting hornbeams along Highridge Road. They're a native species which would do well in our heavy clay soil. We therefore agreed to add three more hornbeams to carry the line down to Bishop's Cove. Alison also told us that elm trees which were resistant to Dutch elm disease were becoming available, so we have decided to plant a resistant elm tree outside the pub in the autumn, so re-establishing the historical tradition. At the same time we will also plant spring-flowering bulbs. Over the summer, we will raise funds for this and further trees.

The date set for planting the hornbeams was 10 March - it had to be soon as this winter's planting season is now over. Alison had written to consult the people in Highridge Road and had no negative replies - and several people took the trouble to reply positively. So on the Friday morning the contractors arrived and by lunchtime our new avenue of hornbeams was in place.



We will help monitor their progress and help with watering if we have a dry summer. Meanwhile we will plan for the next planting season, in the autumn, and carry on the longer-term discussions with Bristol City Council.

LIS PIBWORTH AND ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

SPRING IN MANOR WOODS

SPRING has arrived in Manor Woods, and quite a few people were out strolling on Sunday morning - some even without dogs. It was a pleasure to spot the first spring flowers - the strange butterbur, lady's smock just starting to open, and coltsfoot, amongst others. Near the path through the woodland we saw dog's mercury, and small patches of violets and wood anemones were trying to compete with the wild garlic which is already making its presence known to the nose, though the snowy white flowers have yet to appear.

Among the birds we saw were long-tailed tits, and chiffchaffs were calling. The path at the side of the pond (the one which used to go through to the dam) is half open until the spring growth gets going, and we stood with a panoramic view of the pond waiting unsuccessfully for the kingfisher. But we were rewarded with a sparrowhawk whizzing past low over the water. The heron then approached, didn't like the look of us and circled away, giving his strange cry as he went.

The path along the Malago from the dam to the Interceptor which some of us re-opened last year was still passable but will need some work soon with the secateurs. And the bed of the stream could do with a welly-patrol to remove the rubbish which has accumulated since our amphibious garbage raid last August. Any volunteers?

MARIE JO COUTANCHE

A.G.M AND BIRTHDAY PARTY

THE FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Malago Valley Conservation Group was held on 15 February. André Coutanche (Chairman) welcomed everyone, including our guests from the City Council and other local organisations.

Treasurer's Report: Beryl Heaton presented the annual accounts and pointed out that £500 of the balance was the grant from the City Council for the 'My Manor Woods Book'. A large portion of our income was being spent on hall rental, with this expenditure being partially offset by the bring and buy sales. A special thanks was given to Marie Jo for all her efforts in sorting and recycling cans; an estimated 8,700 cans were collected in 1999 - quite an achievement! The accounts were approved.

Programme Report: Lola Hardingham reported that we have had talks from Tony Targett, on Geology and on Energy Conservation. The Christmas Meeting went well, as did the Bat Walk, Botanic Gardens visit and Hartcliffe Community Farm tour. It has been noticed that the numbers attending meetings is dropping, and Lola asked if it was because of the content of the talks - did anyone have any suggestions of what they would like to hear about/visit? There were no immediate suggestions.

Planning Issues: André spoke about the Symes Avenue project where an outline application has been received. The Wills Site ownership has changed throughout the year and there are now two sites - the office site and the original site, where there is now an application for a B&Q and other stores also some light industrial units. A route for the L.R.T. has been reserved which is a great improvement on the originally suggested line. We had no objection to an application for 14 flats at the 'Matties' Block. At 55 Whitchurch Road (Brook Farm) a car wash has been approved and the farm house is to be demolished, as unfortunately it is not in the conservation area.

At Chestnut Court, the furniture company application was withdrawn and a new application had recently been made for the house to be restored and converted into six flats, with four new houses in the carpark area. M.V.C.G. welcomed the restoration but objected to the density of the new build and also questioned the access onto Kings Head Lane; but the traffic officer had stated that this arrangement was acceptable. We will push for a re-think of the whole junction. There has also been an application from Severn Vale Bowling Club at Kings Head Park, Vicarage Road, who are liaising with M.V.C.G. over the design of the new gates and landscaping of the area.

Progress with Projects: Mary Sykes reported on the South Bristol Rivers Initiative; unfortunately support was withdrawn during the year by Allied Domecq. The City Council have completed work at the side of the Manor Woods pond which should make it more secure, and work is continuing on the path through the woods. There may be a possibility to extend the path alongside the Malago and the Council would maintain this. The 'My Manor Woods Book' is almost ready to go to the printers and may be available at the end of spring. We had installed two owl boxes and fingers are crossed that the owls will use them. The pond clearance was held later than usual to avoid disturbing nesting birds and it is hoped that the pond will be de-silted during 2000. The garbage raids have continued throughout 1999 - only the December one had to be cancelled due to inclement weather - and more volunteers are welcome!

A grant of £500 has been raised for the Elm Tree Corner project; this is from Britain in Bloom and is for the planting of trees and bulbs in the area. A meeting of local people was arranged for feedback on planting and also traffic issues around this area. Wessex Water rebuilt the wall outside the Elm Tree Pub in a very suitable manner. The fingerpost at the junction of Grange Road and Highridge Road had just been restored and is now waiting for Council safety approval - and a coat of paint!

Dundry Slopes: Barbra Wharton brought a model of the Spring Project for all to see and photos of the existing site. The spring is located in Mannings Wood which is a Woodland Trust site. The dry stone wall area will be rebuilt and a seat fitted. The artist is working with local people and children's groups/local residents and has suggested footprints of medieval animals upon the stepping stones.

Election of Officers and Committee: The Officers and Committee were returned unopposed: André Coutanche (Chairman), Lola Hardingham (Vice Chairman), Lis Pibworth (Hon. Secretary), Beryl Heaton (Hon. Treasurer), Anton Bantock, Brenda Docherty, Royston Griffey, John Taylor.

André thanked John for all his work as Treasurer and Beryl for stepping in. Danny Heaton thanked André for his work in keeping M.V.C.G.'s profile up. André replied that the greatest tribute to everyone's efforts in our first five years was that M.V.C.G. was now 'part of the scenery'.

Presentation of 2000 Environmental Awards: Three awards were given for: new housing at Elm Hayes; new benches in Manor Woods; the Millennium Green at Hartcliffe Community Campus.

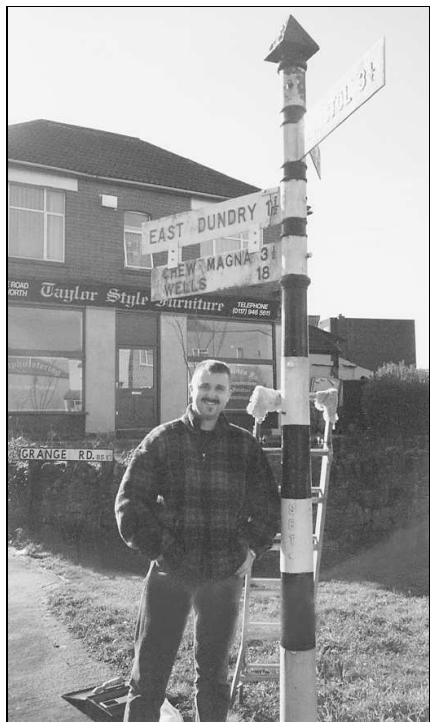
The formal business being completed, refreshments were served to celebrate the Group's fifth birthday.

LIS PIBWORTH

POINTING THE FINGER

ELM TREE CORNER (see page 3) isn't the only project which has come to fruition after a longish period of germination. We reported in *Newsletter No. 27*, in May of last year, that Lee Pibworth was working on ways to repair the broken fingerpost at the junction of Grange Road and Church Road.

He's succeeded. A splendidly over-engineered solution (just the sort of thing you'd want in a balloon) has resulted in the missing arm being re-attached with an aluminium mending plate, epoxy resin and aluminium supports.



We asked the City Council to check it out and the word is that we don't need the supports, so we can restore the fingerpost even more closely to its original appearance. All it needs now is a coat of paint, and we understand that the Council are working on that. We'll keep our finger on the subject.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

THE **Ⓜ** SYMBOL means an event organised by M.V.C.G. The regular meetings on the third Tuesday of each month start at 7.30pm at St Peter's Rooms (by the side of St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth). Everyone is welcome (non-members will be asked to pay a 50p visitor's fee). Most months we will also have our successful PLANT AND PRODUCE BRING AND BUY to add to our funds. Everyone is also welcome at events arranged by the Dundry Hill Group (DHG - ring 935 9710 for more information).

Ⓜ Tuesday 21 March: *The Work of the Park Rangers* by PHIL RENDLE, lead Park Ranger for South Bristol. Plus BRING AND BUY.

Ⓜ Monday 27 March: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at 3.45pm at Withywood Post Office.

Sunday 2 April: SPRING FLOWERS WALK. Meet at 10.00am at Dundry Village carpark for 12.00pm return (DHG).

Wednesday 12 April: Talk by Avon Wildlife Trust on LOCAL WILDLIFE. Dundry Village Hall at 7.30pm (DHG).

Ⓜ TUESDAY 18 April: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at 3.45pm at Bishopsworth Library. THIS IS NOT THE USUAL DAY BECAUSE OF EASTER WEEK.

Ⓜ Tuesday 18 April: Our community policeman, MIKE LIPPIATT, will speak about the local scene, including combatting vandalism. Plus BRING AND BUY.

Sunday 7 May: WALK TO BITHAMS WOOD. Meet at Winford Church at 10.00am for 12.00pm return (If there is a service, don't park outside the church) (DHG).

Tuesday 9 May: Dundry Hill Group meeting. 7.30pm at Dundry Village Hall.

Ⓜ Tuesday 16 May: A speaker from the RECYCLING CONSORTIUM. We will also have a PLANT SALE BRING AND BUY - please bring what you can.

COME AND JOIN US

OUR INVENTIVE AND HARD-WORKING Programme Group would like to hear from you. As was said at the A.G.M., some meetings and visits are poorly attended. What would get you going (or coming)? If you have **ideas** for subjects of meetings or visits, or if you would like to **join the Programme Group** (only about four meetings a year), please contact Lola Hardingham on 964 1116.



Barbra at Pickwick Farm

AU REVOIR

WE say fond (and hopefully temporary) farewells to two good allies of M.V.C.G. **Barbra Wharton**, the friendly and hard-working Project Officer of the Dundry Hill Group, has just gone on maternity leave. We send her our very best wishes and look forward to meeting the newest D.H.G. member soon.

And **Chris McFarling**, the CSV Environment officer who has done so much in Hartcliffe and Withywood and on Dundry slopes, leaves at the end of April to (a) travel around the world, and (b) get married. We wish him and Elaine all the very best - and *bon voyage*.

Both will be replaced and we look forward to working with the new people.

Malago Valley Conservation Group

Chairman	André Coutanche	964 3106
Vice-Chairman	Lola Hardingham	964 1116
Hon. Secretary	Lis Pibworth	987 0825
Hon. Treasurer	Beryl Heaton	964 5780

Committee Members

Anton Bantock, Brenda Docherty, Royston Griffey, John Taylor

Co-opted Committee Members

Don Bartlett, Tania Ford, Peter Hall, Mike Jarrett, Anne King, Chris McFarling, Sue Walker, Barbra Wharton, Cllr Bernard Chalmers, Cllr Tessa Coombes, Cllr Peter Crispin, Cllr Richard Eddy, Cllr Ron Hodges, Cllr Dave Johnson, Cllr Mary Sykes (*All the City councillors for Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe and Whitchurch Park wards are invited to become co-opted Committee members*).

Newsletter edited by André Coutanche, 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 8LB; telephone 964 3106; e-mail andrec@flashmail.com; web address www.mvcg.tsx.org. **Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome.** The opinions in this *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of M.V.C.G.