



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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A S YOU WILL KNOW, we are living in interesting times so far as Bristol City Council is concerned. Although the elections on 1 May resulted in significant changes which have led to a hung council, in fact there was no difference in the party representation in the three wards in our area.

We congratulate Richard Eddy, re-elected in Bishopsworth ward, and Helen Holland, re-elected for Whitchurch Park. In Hartcliffe, there was a change of councillor, though not party, since Bernard Chalmers stood down after very many years as a councillor on Avon and Bristol councils. We have thanked him for his interest in M.V.C.G. and his help, but we will remain in touch, since he will be staying involved with the Highridge Forum and other groups in the area. The new member for Hartcliffe is Mark Brain, and we are pleased to welcome him as a councillor for our area - and delighted to welcome him as a paid-up member of M.V.C.G.!

Whatever happens about the future control of the Council, we will in any case have to come to terms with some new arrangements. NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIPS is a phrase we will be hearing more of in the months ahead. Exactly what it will mean in practice is far from clear, but it is based on the three wards in BS13 coming together to discuss local issues and - in ways not yet defined - influencing Council decisions and possibly spending. M.V.C.G. was invited to a introductory meeting to hear about it but this was postponed because of the current uncertainty. Watch this space!

Finally, nearly everyone has now renewed their M.V.C.G. membership for 2003. If you renewed recently, you should find your membership card enclosed. If there is a renewal form, then you are one of few we are still waiting to hear from. Please renew, or I'm afraid this will be your last *Newsletter*.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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PLANNING MATTERS

THE PLANNING APPLICATIONS which we have reported in previous *Newsletters* are still with us, and some of them are likely to be so for some time.

At HIGHRIDGE PLAYING FIELDS, permission was granted by the South & East Development Control Committee after a long debate for levelling the ground to make a new main football pitch, installing flood lighting, building a new pavilion/changing room and car parking and renovating the existing club house. I made a statement at the Committee saying that M.V.C.G. reluctantly opposed the application as it stood and asked for a decision to be deferred until more details were clarified. In our opinion there were far too many loose ends, and we lacked information on landscaping, boundary treatment and materials. Rather than defer, the Committee gave permission with a long list of conditions, requiring the applicants to submit the missing information for approval before any work could start. Zoë Willcox, the Team Manager for South & East Area Planning, said that the information should be provided as a package, rather than in dribs and drabs, so that a further round of consultation could be carried out. A Highridge Community Sports Council will also have to be formed, independent of Highridge United Football Club, before development can take place.

The application at PENTIRE AVENUE for a block of six flats was withdrawn following objections from the Environment Agency concerning flooding. A revised application has now been made, but we will still be asking for it to be refused because the proposed building remains too large and intrusive for the site. It is not yet clear whether the new application meets E.A. requirements.

The PARK & RIDE on the A38 at Bedminster Down is also firmly in the pending tray. There have been many objections to the application, including from ourselves, Bedminster Down and Uplands Society and Bristol Civic Society, and there is no date at present for it to go to the South & East Development Control Committee.

There is also one major new application which has aroused a lot of opposition. A scheme for a WASTE MANAGEMENT STATION, off Cater Road, was the subject of a public meeting called by (then) Cllr Bernard Chalmers on 2 April. Residents in Headley Park voiced concerns about noise and traffic, which we share, and we are also asking the planners to look carefully at pollution control issues (the Malago is near-by) and the visual effect of what would be a very big shed.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE



Spring in Manor Woods. A superb photo by Rod Davidson which you can enjoy in colour on our website at www.mvcg.cjb.net. There's another on the back page.

INCPEN

OUR MEETING on 15 April was extremely well attended, and several people have subsequently said how interesting and thought-provoking the talk was.

JANE BICKERSTAFFE visited us from INCPEN - the Industry Council for Packaging and the Environment. All of us have complained - usually just to ourselves or whichever family member happened to be nearby - about modern packaging. Jane covered the subject from the point of view of the manufacturer, the distributor, the retailer and the consumer, and showed how some of their interests clashed, but mostly it was a question of emphasis and balance. She also dealt with the environmental effects of packaging, and again convinced us that there were some interesting shades of grey in what is often painted in stark black and white.

As well as the prepared talk, there was a lot of time for questions and discussion, all of it handled by Jane with understanding and expertise.

BRISTOL LIVING RIVERS



THE BRISTOL LIVING RIVERS PROJECT is a new initiative which could have very positive implications for the Malago and the Pigeonhouse streams in our area, and for all the watercourses throughout Bristol.

The Living Rivers Project is a partnership committed to raising the profile and standard of Bristol's rivers and streams, and increasing people's pride in them. The groups and organisations involved include the three bodies which have statutory responsibility for various aspects of Bristol's rivers - Bristol City Council, the Environment Agency and Wessex Water.

Those three organisations were well represented, along with many others, at the *Living Rivers Workshop* which took place on Friday 23 May. M.V.C.G. was invited to attend, along with other groups from our area such as CSV Environment, the Dundry Hill Group and Hartcliffe Health & Environmental Action Group. Also there was Ben Barker from the Southville Community Development Association, whose inspired (or daft) idea about the Malago you can read about opposite.

The Workshop was organised by Kathy Derrick, who is the Water Quality Officer for Bristol City Council based at the CREATE Centre. Kathy recently set up some excellent pages on the City Council website covering water quality; these include useful information about the Malago and Pigeonhouse, and show the results of the twice-yearly sampling which the City Council does on our streams. You can see them by visiting the City Council's site at www.bristol-city.gov.uk and searching for "water quality". (Don't forget that if you're not on the internet at home, all libraries offer free internet access).

The event was kindly hosted by Burges Salmon Solicitors at their offices, appropriately enough on the City Docks, at Narrow Quay. Jeff Bishop, a well-known local environmental facilitator, ran the workshop exercises, which were well thought out and good fun to do.

As well as the 'formal' event, there was, of course, plenty of opportunity for networking, and some useful contacts were made and ideas exchanged. We look forward to being fully involved in future developments under the 'Living Rivers' banner.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

THE GREAT MALAGO TREK

STREAMS AND RIVERS, like all natural phenomena, take no notice of man-made boundaries and administrative divisions. So we 'share' the Malago with our neighbours downstream in Bedminster.

And good neighbours they are, too, like the Southville Community Development Association, the very active gang who created the Southville Centre out of a former school, and one of whose leading lights, Ben Barker, has been to speak to us when he was Chair of VOSCUR.

One of the things which SCDA are working on is a directory of green spaces and streams as part of their 'Sustainable Southville' project - and this includes, of course, the Malago. Out of this arose the idea of drawing attention to the existence and value of the stream by a high-profile walk along its route from the Cut to Dundry.

Ben approached us, and we were quick to agree to join in and help organise the event. Details are still being worked out, but the date is definite - **Sunday 17 August**. Anyone can join in anywhere along the route and you won't be obliged to walk all the way to the end! There will probably be alternative routes up through Manor Woods or Crox Bottom, and the target will be the Malago Spring artwork above Aldwick Avenue. One thing is certain - the event will finish with a picnic on Dundry slopes.

This will tie in very well with the Bristol Living Rivers Project, and Kathy Derrick is part of the organising group and is helping with maps and other information.

If you'd like to help on the day, then M.V.C.G. will be providing some 'sherpas' en route to make sure the people from the lowlands don't get lost in the *terral incognital* of BS13. Give me a ring on 964 1116 or e-mail me on lhardingham@yahoo.co.uk if you'd like to be involved. Otherwise, look out for more details in the next *Newsletter* and join in the great Malago Trek!

LOLA HARDINGHAM

- Kathy Derrick will be coming to speak to us when our programme of talks restarts in the autumn. Look out for confirmation of the date in a subsequent *Newsletter*.

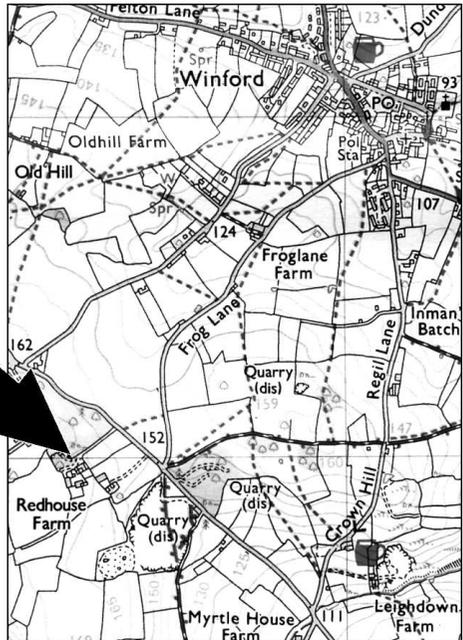
A RED(DING) LETTER DAY

TUESDAY 15 JULY is a day to get in your diaries, because that is when we will be visiting the REDDING PITS, near Winford. Some of you may have already been there, perhaps as a result of following Walk number 10 in the *Walks on Dundry Hill* book.

It's a fascinating area which combines landscape, industrial archaeology and considerable wildlife interest, including horseshoe bats. The redding pits themselves, from which red ochre was extracted until the 1930s, are owned by Lionel and Melanie Patch, of next-door Red House Farm. They are maintaining the area for wildlife and they encourage people to visit and explore the area in a responsible way. They will be our guides on 15 July. There is also a delightful woodland which contains orchids and other rare species.

We will meet **at 7.00pm at Red House Farm** off Redding Pit Lane (O.S. grid reference ST532639). There is plenty of room to park cars in the farmyard and parking on the lane by the redding pits is difficult and dangerous. If you know 'The Crown' at Regil, then the easiest route is carry on pass the pub, turn first right onto Redding Pit Lane and first left after about 600m into the Farm. The more direct road out from Winford, Frog Lane, is narrow and difficult. If you would like a lift, or can offer one, please ring Lola Hardingham on 964 1116.

Meet here



The walking isn't particularly difficult, though there are a some slopes, and the ground may be damp in parts, especially if it has been wet before we visit. Walking boots are perfect, sensible shoes are fine, but, if in doubt, take wellies!

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

SUMMER HAS ARRIVED - according to the calendar, at any rate - so we have some attractive outings lined up. There are also the walks organised by the Greenworks Project (GW) which carry on the Dundry Hill Group tradition. M.V.C.G.'s own events are shown by the **M** symbol.

Sunday 1 June: *Walk to Crox Bottom/Manor Woods.* Meet at 10.00am at the Gatehouse Centre on Hareclive Road. Return by 12.00 noon. (GW)

M Friday 6 June: An informal *Visit to Emmaus House garden*, Clifton Hill, Clifton. The garden is delightful, and the views spectacular. 6 June is an open day at the garden, so you can visit any time between 10.30am and 4.30pm. However, M.V.C.G. members will be assembling at 2.00pm for an informal tour around together. There is a charge of £2.50 payable at the entrance. If you want to make it a day out and have lunch before meeting at 2.00pm, there are many places to eat in the area, including the restaurant at Emmaus House itself. If you need or can offer a lift, please let Lola know on 964 1116.

M Monday 30 June: *Garbage Raid* at Highridge Playing Fields. Meet at 3.45pm at the lane from Fernsteed Road.

M Tuesday 15 July: *Visit to the Redding Pits* (near Winford). Meet at Red House Farm by 7.00pm. See opposite page for more details. Wear suitable footwear for slightly rough walking and possible wet patches.

M Monday 28 July: *Garbage Raid.* Meet at 3.45pm at the 'Elm Tree'.

Sunday 10 August: *Fossil Walk on Dundry* with SIMON CARPENTER (TO BE CONFIRMED). Meet at 10.00am at Dundry Village car park. Return by 12.00 noon. (GW)

M Sunday 17 August: *The Great Malago Trek.* See page 5, and look out for more details in the next *Newsletter*.

Sunday 7 September: *Walk through Strawberry Lane to Dundry.* Meet at 10.00am at Sherrin Way. Return by 12 noon. (GW)

Sunday 5 October: *Walk to Malago Spring.* Meet at 10.00am at Aldwick Avenue. Return by 12 noon. (GW)



Spring in Manor Woods: another of Rod Davidson's splendid photos

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, Don Bartlett, Brenda Docherty, Mavis Palmer, Jack Price

Co-opted Committee Members

Tania Case, Valerie Gay, Paul Mizen, Ted Thomas, Sue Walker, CSV Environment, Cllrs Mark Brain, Peter Crispin, Richard Eddy, Royston Griffey, Ron Hodges, Colin Smith, Mary Sykes (*All the City councillors for Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe and Whitchurch Park wards are invited to become co-opted Committee members*).

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Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome.

The opinions in this *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of M.V.C.G.