



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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THERE ARE TWO personal bits of news of M.V.C.G. Committee members which dominate this *Newsletter*, one of them sad and the other a cause for rejoicing.

Some members will know that Jack Price died on 23 June. We pay tribute to this gentle man on page 8, and our thoughts go out to his children and grandchildren. Jack regularly visited his son, Alan, and daughter-in-law, Chris, in northern France where they live, and his French interests resulted in some bottles which Alan and Chris have kindly donated for M.V.C.G.'s funds. Jack's extensive archives on the history of Dundry have also been donated to the Malago Society where they will be available to future researchers. M.V.C.G. will be planting a tree in Jack's memory, probably in Manor Woods, and Dundry Hill Group, for whom Jack was Treasurer, will be planting a tree for him on Dundry.

The happy news, as most people will know, is that Anton Bantock was awarded the M.B.E. in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. The citation is to 'David Delius Anton Bantock, for services to the community, especially education in Witherwood, Bristol.' The University of Witherwood rightly takes pride of place here, but I choose to believe that 'services to the community' is just officialese for picking up cans from the streets of BS13.

It has been suggested that M.B.E. really stands for 'My Bl**dy Efforts', as opposed to the O.B.E. that often goes to Civil Servants, where it might well mean 'Other B*gg*rs' Efforts'. The fact that this very old joke refuses to die is because it is often true - and never more so than when applied to Anton.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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WILD BS13!

Lots of interesting wildlife reports this time. Please keep them coming ...

A GREY SQUIRREL ran down the pavement of Perrycroft Road, Bishopsworth, in early June, crossed the road and continued on the pavement out of sight into Whitchurch Lane towards Headley Park Did it make it to the woods? We heard the screech of brakes!

A few days later, my neighbour told he had seen A BADGER come out of our drive a few nights before and go beetling up the road. All this the same week Bill Oddie was filming wildlife in Bristol - obviously in the wrong district!



ANGELA JAMES

Later in June, a gang of us went to Manor Woods to check out the orchids. We found a splendid 25 BEE ORCHIDS. The good news is that they are spreading - we were finding them further away from the original site where they appeared when the grass was first left unmown. More good news - we also found a PYRAMIDAL ORCHID (just the one). So far as we know this is the first sighting in Manor Woods. A check on Highridge Common in mid-June revealed three COMMON SPOTTED ORCHIDS, much the same as in previous years.

Left: Common spotted orchids on Highridge Common

As part of recce-ing the route for the Malago Trek (see page 6), I have been spending some time lately at the lake on the Pigeonhouse Stream at the old Wills office block. This really is a neglected gem - both the building itself and the lake, which is incredibly rich in wildlife. Every time I have visited I have seen a KINGFISHER, usually more than once. The DRAGONFLIES are spectacular; there are, of course, MALLARDS and MOORHENS, and the HERON visits as well; but there are also COOT, the only place on the Malago/Pigeonhouse system where they can be seen, since they need deep water. On one visit I counted seven coot chicks.



*Manor Woods
in June*

Left: Knapweed

*Right:
Burnet moths*

*Photos by
Beryl Heaton*



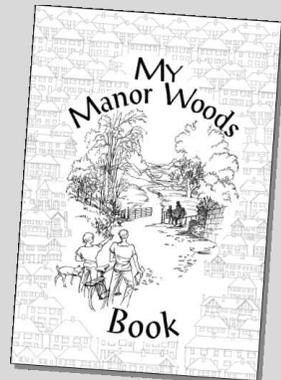
There is also a lot happening *in* the water. On two occasions, we have seen something large making continuous splashes. The first time it was totally impossible to tell what it might be and we entertained wishful thoughts of water voles or even otters (though I suppose rats were always the most likely - though it didn't seem ratty behaviour). On the second visit, things were clearer - we again saw a back breaking the surface, but we also saw a fin. The fin was well back and didn't appear every time, hence the mammalian guesses on the first visit. The only fish we could identify which is large enough and has a dorsal fin set well back is a PIKE - and talking to a fisherman there on a subsequent occasion confirmed that there are pike in the lake, along with BREAM, ROACH and PERCH.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

DON'T FORGET ...

... that we still have copies of *My Manor Woods Book* available (though a sales effort in recent weeks has reduced the stock most gratifyingly).

They're only £1.50 each and full of information and ideas for things to do for younger members of the family. You can buy your copy at Bishopsworth Library, or give Marie Jo a ring on 964 3106 and we will deliver to you.



PLANTING IDEAS

THE 'SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP' between Malago Valley Conservation Group and Highridge Infant School marked another happy milestone on 3 June, when a 'gardening party' made up of eight M.V.C.G. members assembled at Highridge Infant School to plant shrubs in a long neglected border. The idea was to brighten up the playground and involve the children in caring for their environment. We were fortunate to have a professional to guide us in our endeavours, namely Mike Lillington. We all doffed our gardening caps when he told us that he had first planted the borders at the School almost fifty years ago!



The ground did not yield easily to forks and spades but half an hour later, with the help of several bags of compost, we had achieved a reasonable tilth where our new plants should happily grow.

As we were working, the children came out in groups to see what we were doing and to ask questions. We were also joined by a couple of cheeky blackbirds looking for worms in the newly turned soil.

BERYL HEATON and MARIE JO COUTANCHE

Above: Cooking with compost
*Bottom left: **How** big?*



Bottom right: refreshment for the plants ...

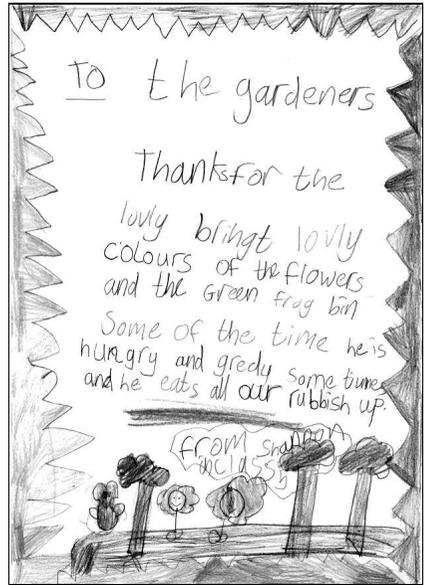




... and for the planter



Left: Job done!



Above: A colourful 'Thank you'

Photos by Digital Danny & Co.

*** LATE NEWS ***

WE'VE JUST HEARD as this *Newsletter* is being finalised that the developers who appealed against the City Council's decision to turn down their planning application to build six new houses in the grounds of the Old Vicarage, Bishopsworth, have had their appeal DISMISSED.

This is good news - and not unexpected, since the proposed development was clearly too intensive. The announcement has followed very quickly on the site visit by the Planning Inspector, which took place on 24 June. We will now have to see whether the developers will come back with a revised (smaller) application.

MALAGO TREK

THE LAST *Newsletter* announced the forthcoming MALAGO TREK on Sunday 17 August. This is a stroll from the lower end of the course of the Malago near the cut (actually ASDA carpark) up to the source (one of the sources) on Dundry slopes. The event has been organised by 'Sustainable Southville', M.V.C.G., HHEAG, Walking the Way to Health Bristol and the Bristol Living Rivers Project, in co-operation with other bodies.



The intention is first and foremost to attract as many people as possible on a good day out - but, of course, we have ulterior motives as well. We want to make people aware of the Malago and Pigeonhouse streams - how good they are (in parts), and how they need to be kept that way, and how bad they (in other parts) and what should be done about it. A new network of groups, including M.V.C.G., has been formed to take this forward, with the splendidly silly acronym MaPhIA - the Malago and Pigeonhouse Improvement Alliance!

The leaflet enclosed with this *Newsletter* tells you more, so come along on Sunday the 17th. You can join in anywhere you like along the route, and the leaflet shows guesstimated timings. Don't forget to bring a picnic to enjoy at the Malago Spring overlooking Bristol.

We need volunteers to help on the day. All you have to do is to wait at a particular spot for an hour or so while the main crowd comes through, and keep them going on the right route. (Bending their ears about the streams and M.V.C.G., and selling them copies of *My Manor Woods Book*, are optional!) You can then join in the rest of the walk when the rush is over. *Please help if you can* - ring André on 964 3106 or e-mail him on andrec@onetel.net.uk. Thank you.

LOLA HARDINGHAM

CAN IT FOR NOW

THANK YOU to all those who continue to collect cans for us to recycle into money (and then daffodils). As the Can-Sorter in Chief will be on her hols soon, please don't deliver to 14 Queens Road until 12 August. If you have cans in your way at the moment, ring us on 964 3106 and we will try to collect. Thank you.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

MORE WALKS AND OUTINGS, not forgetting the perennial garbage raids. The very enjoyable walks organised by Greenworks are shown as (GW), and M.V.C.G.'s own events are marked with a **M**.

Saturday 26 July: *WHAM Summer Festival* from 12 noon to 6.00pm at the Hartcliffe Community Campus, Bishport Avenue.

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: *Malago Trek*. See opposite page and the enclosed leaflet.

Saturday 23 August: *Withywood Park Fun Day*.

M Sunday 31 August: *Amphibious Garbage Raid*. Our annual effort to remove the large eyesores which mindless people let accumulate in the Malago in Manor Woods. Meet at the entrance behind Bishopsworth Library at 10.00am. Old clothes essential - wellies optional for paddling along the stream bed.

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

M Tuesday 16 September: *Guided Tour of the Millennium Green, Hartcliffe Community Campus*. Meet AT 7.00PM (*note the earlier time*) at the Millennium Green (Bishport Avenue, near the 'River of Life' church).

M Monday 29 September: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at 3.45pm at Withywood Post Office.

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

M Tuesday 21 October: The winter programme restarts with KATHY DERRICK telling us about *Our Streams and the Bristol Living Rivers Project* at 7.30pm at St Peter's Rooms, Bishopsworth.

JACK PRICE

The news of Jack's death affected more people than this gentle, modest man might have expected. There was some comfort in the ending of the suffering for him and those around him, but the universal reaction among M.V.C.G. members was sadness at a good friend lost, and frustration that his enjoyment of all his new activities was ended.

Jack didn't speak without having something to say. He wasn't one of those people who assume that what interests them (usually themselves) must automatically interest everyone else. So, while we learned fairly soon of his life-long interest in the history of Dundry, it was a while before we realised just how much solid and original research he had done. His delight in cooking which he learned late in life at the 'Food for All' classes became apparent only if someone else raised the subject.

The sometimes jargonistic and 'political' world of a pressure group like M.V.C.G. was new to him, and he started to take an active role only recently and with typical modesty. Of course, his contributions were thoughtful, positive and practical. We shall miss him for that, but mostly for the pleasure of his company.

APC

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

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.