



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

No. 61
January
2005

HERE'S SOME EXCELLENT NEWS to start the new year: Manor Woods is due to be designated an official LOCAL NATURE RESERVE. The City Council's L.N.R. Officer, Sally Oldfield, informed us just before Christmas that the decision had been agreed at 'political' level, by Cllr Richard Pyle, Executive Councillor for Environment, Transport and Leisure.

Sally is now working with English Nature and the lawyers to get the official process of designation under way (newspaper advertisements, invitations to comment etc.). Sally will be our special guest speaker at our A.G.M. on 15 February and will tell us what L.N.R. status will mean and how it has worked elsewhere in Bristol. Don't miss it!

M.V.C.G.'s Manor Woods Working Group recently held a meeting with our Community Parks Manager, Julian Cox (who, you may remember, was our guest speaker at our 2004 A.G.M.). We have agreed priority areas for the coming year and learned from Julian how longer-term projects (such as silt removal from the pond) may be tackled. Sally Oldfield was at the meeting, too, and we will continue to work with both of them to conserve and improve Manor Woods.

One area of recent improvement is the provision of litter bins and the renewal of doggy bins in Manor Woods; Julian consulted us on where these were needed - thank you! We have also agreed with him that we will help the Council tackle the dreaded Japanese Knotweed - see the Programme on page 7 for the 'knotweed-bashing' date! And, as you can read on the back page, we have made a modest addition to the trees in Manor Woods.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND BIRTHDAY PARTY

THE TENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Malago Valley Conservation Group will be held on Tuesday 15 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 names of the current Officers and Committee members appear on the back page.

According to the M.V.C.G. constitution, nominations for either Officers or Committee members should be made in writing at least 14 days before the A.G.M. They must be supported by a seconder and the consent of the nominee must first have been obtained. Nominations can be made to the Hon. Secretary, Lis Pibworth, at 9 Cowler Walk, Withywood, BS13 9AY or to the Chairman, André Coutanche, at 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth, BS13 8LB (phone numbers on back page).

However, anyone thinking of volunteering to join the Committee should not be put off by these formal requirements. If you think you may be interested, please contact any existing Committee member for an informal chat. New members are always welcome!

The formal A.G.M. business will include a report-back to members on the year's events, and this will be followed by our Guest Speaker, who this year is SALLY OLDFIELD, Bristol City Council's Local Nature Reserve Officer. Sally will tell us about Local Nature Reserve Status for Manor Woods, what it means, and how it has worked in other green spaces elsewhere in Bristol.



As usual, we will finish with wine/orange juice and cheese/other nibbles to celebrate our birthday. All members and friends of M.V.C.G. are invited to come to our birthday party.

LIS PIBWORTH
Hon. Secretary

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2004

HERE ARE THE ACCOUNTS which will be presented to the A.G.M. on 15 February. If you have any queries or comments on the accounts and cannot be at the A.G.M., please contact me on 964 5780 or e-mail *berylm.heaton@btopenworld.com*.

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Membership	300.00	Postage & Stationery	21.00
Function Income	162.03	Refreshments at A.G.M.	17.47
Other Income	272.50	Hall Hire	140.00
		Printing	72.50
		Speakers fees/donations/expenses	45.00
		Christmas Meeting	43.00
		Bulbs and Plants	122.00
		<i>My Manor Woods Book Covers</i> .	376.00
		Insurance	100.00
Total	734.53	Total	936.97

	£
Excess of expenditure over income	202.44
Brought forward from 2003	1164.14
Balance carried forward to 2005	961.70

Made up of: Cash in hand	4.13
Bank account	957.57

Detail of function income	£	Detail of Other Income	£
Christmas at Home	128.83	Donations	30.00
Christmas Party Raffle	21.00	Sale of aluminium cans	69.50
Refreshments	<u>12.20</u>	<i>My Manor Woods Book sales</i> .	<u>173.00</u>
	<u>162.03</u>		<u>272.50</u>

BERYL HEATON
Hon. Treasurer

WILD BS13

On the fourth day of January I went to Manor Woods. I saw ...



Seven pretty goldfinches

Six mallard swimming

Five noisy jays

Four teal on the pond

Three squirrels in the trees

Two glorious green woodpeckers in the grass

And a kingfisher posing on a branch.



I came home with spirits uplifted, and, unfortunately, spirits downloaded - yes, a bag of drinks cans. Never mind, they'll soon be daffodils!

ANGELA JAMES

The slightly better known version of Angela's song ends with a partridge. We haven't had any reports of partridges in our area - but a PHEASANT was spotted wandering through a Bishopsworth garden recently! TAWNY OWLS have been heard in Petercole Drive, Bishopsworth, probably hunting in St Peter's churchyard. SPARROWHAWKS seem to be well on the way to being regular garden birds - three sightings in Bishopsworth gardens since the new year. SONG THRUSHES have also been seen, and on the 'Trolley Walk' (see opposite), a KINGFISHER was seen several times on the Pigeonhouse stream in Crox Bottom, and a female TUFTED DUCK was on Wills lake.

- And speaking of Crox Bottom, work has now started on the widening of the path. As we reported last time, we regret the widening, but look forward to discussions on an interpretation scheme for this wonderful 'secret valley'. It has always had its fans (many of them having four legs and a waggy tail), but it is getting better known and appreciated as a rich and valuable habitat strategically placed between 'The Mounds' on Hengrove Park and the Malago Valley and Manor Woods.

PLANNING UPDATE

WE'VE JUST BEEN INFORMED that the planning application to build two bungalows in the grounds of the Old Vicarage, Bishopsworth, has been formally granted. It had been agreed by the Development Control Committee, subject to agreement on landscaping. This has now been finalised. This should be the end of development on this site.

TROLLEY WALK

BRISTOL LIVING RIVERS contacted us late last year to ask us to help with a survey of shopping trolleys abandoned in watercourses. There is a lot of concern about this, both city-wide and nationally, and we were pleased to agree - in any case, it was a good excuse for a stroll along our favourite streams!

Chris Francis of Living Rivers sent us some rather nice, detailed maps to plot our findings on, and armed with these and suitable footwear, Beryl Heaton and I set off on the morning of Saturday 15 January from Bishport Avenue, Hartcliffe, where the Pigeonhouse Stream comes out of what is usually called Red Hart field.

We started by venturing upstream and got a couple of hundred metres before the jungle became a bit too much. The first trolley was at the culvert where the Pigeonhouse disappears before reaching Bishport Avenue. There was a matching one at the other end of the culvert, in the green space between Bishport Avenue and Hareclive Road, and they then appeared depressingly regularly all along the Pigeonhouse down to the interceptor in Crox Bottom.



We carried on down Hartcliffe Way, with the Pigeonhouse invisible in the fields to the right (wouldn't it be wonderful to have a footpath following the stream here!). The water became visible again at the SITA depot, and was trolley-free as far as the confluence of the Pigeonhouse with the Malago. We turned up the Malago, through Manor Woods, and saw *no trolleys* all the way to Bishopsworth Library.

In some ways, a depressing walk - but with many compensations. It's always a pleasure to walk along the waterside, and the wildlife, especially in Crox Bottom (see opposite page), was a delight. We're reporting our findings to Living Rivers and look forward to hearing about the overall results.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

CHRISTMAS PARTY 2004

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY was a great success as usual. I wonder how Lola thinks up the ideas for something different and fun every year. Our 'Round the Wall' game this time was 'How Green are You?' - we had clues to various shades of green. I was fortunate enough to know that an alligator pear was avocado but there were a couple that kept me guessing. A perfect score of 10 was gained by the Wilmshurst family, whilst André came a close second and won a cabbage, the booby prize being a sprout.



We then had to be a bit more energetic and forceful as we looked for matching pairs of cards on the table. Fortunately no one was injured in the fray and the winner had a magnificent collection of 13 pairs. Inevitably there were those who counted single cards instead of pairs but we found the genuine winner in the end.

Next came the star turn. We had each been asked to bring a flower pot and now all was revealed. Lesley Hurford demonstrated how we could make natural Christmas decorations using our flower pots as a base. Lesley came with an amazing collection of materials, most of which she had collected in her garden and from the countryside. Due to her careful preparation and good tuition we all managed to produce some pretty good results. Then Lesley and her husband David judged the creations, Beryl Chappell being the winner, whilst Tony James was runner-up. Anton also won a prize for his minimalist effort (or was he just being lazy?!).



Then it was time for the traditional Wassail bowl before tucking in to the lovely spread and a chance to socialise. Our thanks as always to Lola for her ingenuity in thinking up the programme for the evening, and to her band of helpers, Lis and Angela, who assisted with the games, Marie Jo and Jo who made the delicious mulled wine to start our evening, not forgetting the equally good Wassail bowl concoction.

BERYL HEATON

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

OUR evening meetings on the third Tuesday of the month are at 7.30pm at St Peter's Rooms (by the side of St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth). The **M** symbol shows our own events, and we are happy to include other relevant activities that we are told about.

M Monday 31 January: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at Symes Avenue at 3.45pm.

M Tuesday 15 February: Our *A.G.M. and Birthday Party*. Our special guest speaker will be SALLY OLDFIELD, who will tell us about Local Nature Reserve status for Manor Woods. See also page 2.

M Thursday 17 February: *Knotweed Bashing* in Manor Woods! Wear old clothes and 'sensible' shoes (or wellies) and meet at 2.30pm at the Bishopsworth Library entrance. Gloves will be provided.

M Monday 28 February: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at the top of Crox Bottom (Hengrove Way) at 3.45pm.

M Tuesday 15 March: We are delighted that LES DAVIES who wasn't able to come in November will be with us to talk about his work as *Warden of the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*.

M Monday 4 April: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at the lower entrance to Kings Head Park (Vicarage Road) at 3.45pm (rearranged from 28 March to avoid Easter Monday).

M Tuesday 19 April: *Plot to Plate*. SUE WALKER of Hartcliffe Health & Environment Action Group will tell us about the innovative 'Plot to Plate' project which supports food growing and consuming locally.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN. Membership of Malago Valley Conservation Group runs on a calendar year basis, so it's time to fill in the membership form enclosed with this *Newsletter* and return it, along with your subscription, to either Beryl Heaton at 3 Kings Walk or André Coutanche at 14 Queens Road. If there *isn't* a membership form enclosed, it's either because you're already paid up for next year (if you joined in the last four months) or you are receiving a complementary copy of the *Newsletter*. THANK YOU!

TREES, PLEASE!

THIS was the busy sight that greeted four M.V.C.G. members on Saturday 29 January at Highridge Infant School. The school had won 50 trees in a competition and we went along to help parents (and children) and staff to plant them. From field to forest in a morning - well, almost. As you



can see in the photo, the trees are already several metres tall. There is a range of species and they will transform and enrich this site in the heart of the Conservation Area.

On a more modest scale, we have also planted three (very much smaller!) trees, two in Manor Woods and one on Highridge Common. They were the result of a promotion run as part of the can-recycling which we do anyway. The field maple on Highridge Common replaces a tree which had died, and a prunus near the Interceptor and an oak in the woodland will add to the tree life in Manor Woods.

All photos in this edition by Heaton Holographics

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, Sue Walker, CSV Environment, Cllrs Mark Brain, Peter Crispin, Richard Eddy, Ron Hodges, Helen Holland, 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.