



# MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

# **NEWSLETTER**

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**W**E'RE TRYING to get this *Newsletter* out in time to remind you of the visit to Arno's Vale on Tuesday, so if you haven't already made a note in your diary from the information in our March edition, turn at once to page 7 for the details.

Another reminder - but only for a very small minority of members - is to renew your subscription to M.V.C.G. for the 2005 calendar year. If there is a form enclosed with this *Newsletter* then we haven't received your renewal. If we don't hear from you before the next *Newsletter* goes out, then we will have to assume that you no longer want to be a member. A big THANK YOU to all the other members who have renewed, most very promptly, and some with a little extra donation. The sentiment is appreciated as much as the cash!

A lot of this edition again concerns Manor Woods, now on its way to being formally designated a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Sally Oldfield, the Council's LNR Officer, asked us to think about what the new LNR should be officially called; we usually said 'Manor Woods' while the Council traditionally called it 'Malago Vale'. And many local people know the area as 'Headley Park Woods' or just 'The Woods'! None of the names really captured the richness and uniqueness of the area, and we have now suggested to Sally, and she has agreed, that it will be called 'Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve'. The addition of 'Valley' reflects the topography that makes it so rich and interesting, and hints (we hope!) that there is more here than just woodland. So we are now all training ourselves to talk about 'Manor Woods **Valley**'. But as Shakespeare almost said, 'ramsons by any other name would smell as sweet', so come and enjoy it, whatever it's called!

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

## IN THIS ISSUE

Jolly Knotweed Bashing . . . .	Page 2
Come and Celebrate! . . . . .	Page 3
Wild BS13 . . . . .	Page 4
Planning Update . . . . .	Page 5
The Programme . . . . .	Page 7
Matties Matters . . . . .	Page 8

## JOLLY KNOTWEED BASHING

**B**Y THE TIME this *Newsletter* goes out, we will have had two-and-a-half Japanese knotweed bashing events. This invasive weed is marching across the countryside at a rate of knots! It creates a rapid, jungle-like growth in one season and suffocates anything in its path.

Nine of us in February and a few less in March attacked one area of it on the 'interceptor path' by the Malago, and two areas alongside the main path through Manor Woods Valley, using loppers, shears and secateurs. It's quite easy - and very satisfying! - to destroy, as it is like brittle bamboo at this time of year. To destroy what's above ground, that is, since it will grow again in full force from the roots. But by clearing these areas, the City Council can now spray the new growth as it comes up and weaken the plant. It will actually take about three years to eradicate it in this way, and the battle is now on all over Bristol to do just this.

Why 'two-and-a-half' sessions? Because when we went back for the third time, we found that the Council had carried on where we left off and cleared these areas! So we had a nice stroll/wildlife walk/mini-garbage raid instead. But the bashing sessions are very enjoyable - join us next year!

ANGELA JAMES



<< *During (we forgot to take a 'before' shot') ...*

*... and after >>*



## CELEBRATE MANOR WOODS VALLEY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE!

**E** NGLISH NATURE are organising a national fortnight to promote Local Nature Reserves called *Wake up to Wildlife*, the theme for which will be *Health and Well-being*. We are planning a celebration event in Manor Woods Valley to be held on Saturday, 16 July, from 2.00pm to 5.00pm.

Activities will include a conducted walk to look at medicinal plants - yoga - meditation - Indian head massage - books, plant and snacks stalls - and lots of exciting things for children to do.

We shall, of course, need help! First of all, we would be grateful for contributions to the plant stall, so please look round your gardens and pot up any seedlings and cuttings, etc. that you can spare. We shall also welcome volunteers to help on the day, to help put up tents and to man stalls etc. If you think you may be able to help, please ring Lola on 964 1116 or Marie Jo on 964 3106.

Entrance will be free of charge and we are hoping that this will be a popular event. We shall just need good weather - so keep your fingers crossed!

MANOR WOODS VALLEY GROUP

### *More news from Manor Woods Valley ...*

- In April, a dozen volunteers gathered to clear rubbish and bramble from the entrance behind Bishopsworth Library and to plant more wildflowers along the bank. This is a rather exposed position subject to casual vandalism, but we shall go on planting, and the native species will go on spreading.
- Blockages in the Malago in Manor Woods Valley were one of the subjects we raised with Julian Cox, our Community Parks Manager, at the beginning of the year, and he recently kindly invited us to accompany him and the manager from the contractors to inspect the problem. Some of the work is covered by the normal contract, while some would need a separate arrangement. We hope this will happen soon.

## WILD BS13

**W**HILE WE WERE in Manor Woods Valley with Julian Cox to inspect blockages in the stream (see page 3), Julian and the contractor were leaning on the railings above the outfall from the new engineering works on the Malago below the derelict Esso garage site. While they were deep in conversation, a KINGFISHER came whizzing up the stream, didn't like the look of us so close to his domain, and veered off up into the woodland. We hadn't seen a kingfisher before so close to the Library end - have you?

And a stroll one Sunday morning above the quarry area in Manor Woods Valley surprised two JAYS who flew off towards the woodland, but one perched on a dead tree near the Vale Lane entrance and was clearly visible in binoculars for some time.

The WILDFLOWER MEADOW in Manor Woods Valley is looking marvellous, with the yellow of buttercups and bird's foot trefoil, the white of daisies, the purple of clover and the blue of flax. It will soon be time to look for the bee orchids and to check whether the pyramidal orchid we found last year has come back. Unfortunately, there won't be any orchids on Highridge Common this year, or many other wildflowers, because the contractors have recently cut all the long grass which should have been left until late summer. Julian Cox tells us that this was a mistake on their part and he doesn't expect it to happen again.

## FOOD FOR ALL

**T**HE FOOD FOR ALL food co-op, which we have heard about from Rhian Evans in March of last year and from Sue Walker last month, recently held their A.G.M. Several M.V.C.G. members have joined the Co-op and were there for the meeting and the (excellent!) buffet lunch.



The shop is at Unit 4, The Gatehouse Centre (phone 964 7228), and they are open 10.00am to 2.00pm Mondays and Tuesdays; 10.00am to 4.00pm Wednesdays and Thursdays; and 10.00 to noon on Fridays. It's well worth joining (just £2 p.a.) and enjoying the excellent food available.

LOLA HARDINGHAM

## PLANNING UPDATE

**A**S USUAL, there's never a dull moment on the planning applications front. The three big schemes - Morrison's supermarket at Symes Avenue, Hartcliffe Community Campus and the Hengrove Park development - are all due to be considered by the Council's South & East Development Control Committee on 29 June. (Not surprisingly, a date a week later has been reserved for a 'spill-over' meeting if needed!)

M.V.C.G. hasn't formally commented on any of these schemes. We fully support the principle of the Symes Avenue development and, like most local people, we regard it as long overdue. The other two applications are outline, meaning that approval is being sought only for the principles of land use and the road access. Some people have misgivings about the number of houses involved in each case, but we haven't felt able to comment. We will be watching the detailed applications in due course, paying particular attention to the wildlife areas which are so valuable on both sites.

On a smaller scale, but just as significant both for the neighbours and for those of us concerned with all aspects of conservation, are some schemes which have been pending for some time. The application for the 'Marpets' building at 25-27 Highridge Road is still not satisfactory and is unlikely to get any further without revision by the developers. At the Old Vicarage, Bishopsworth, there is a new planning application, but does not represent a new attempt for further development on this site; the developers want to add roof lights to the bungalows which have permission, and, given the history and sensitivity of this site, they have been advised to make this a separate planning application.

A development which is no longer a planning matter (since it has all the necessary permissions) is the former Esso Garage on Bishopsworth Road. Work here has stopped, for reasons which are not clear, though there are issues relating to its impact on Manor Woods Valley and we are liaising with Bristol Parks about this.

Finally, although this has been around for a little while, progress is apparently being made towards a planning application for the former Wills Office Block in Crox Bottom. The developers, Urban Splash, have a good national reputation, as do the architects, Acanthus Ferguson Mann, so we continue to live in hope!

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE



*Spring in Manor Woods Valley: ramsons (wild garlic) in the woodland seen across the Malago and through the fresh foliage. For the colour version, visit our website, and for the full smellovision experience, visit Manor Woods!*

## **THE THIRD MALAGO TREK**

**T**HE TREK on 15 May was as popular as in previous years. Over thirty people gathered in ASDA carpark to walk along our local stream. For quite a few of them, it was the first time. According to the remarks made to M.V.C.G. members on the way, they enjoyed the experience. The perfect weather contributed to the success of the picnic on Dundry Slopes, near the Malago Spring sculpture.

We hope it will have been an occasion to raise the profile of the Malago. In parts of its course the stream is still neglected or abused. Manor Woods Valley seemed to make a good impression on people; several of our members were there before 10 o'clock to pick up litter, and others stood along various parts of the walk to show people the way or to sell them our publications. Finally it was an opportunity to talk to people, some from outside our area, who are also trying to improve their environment.

MARIE JO COUTANCHE

## PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

**S**UMMER TIME (apparently), and we move outdoors for our meetings and visits. Fingers crossed for the weather! The **M** symbol shows our own events, and we are happy to publicise other groups' activities which will interest our members.

**M Tuesday 31 May:** *A Wildlife Walk in Arno's Vale Cemetery* led by MARY WOOD. Meet at 6.30pm at the upper entrance (Cemetery Road) **not** the Bath Road main entrance. There is a charge of £3.00 per head to support the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust. If you need a lift, or can offer one, please phone Lola on 964 1116.

**M Monday 27 June:** *Garbage Raid* at a new location - Wilmott Park. Meet at the top entrance in Kilmersdon Road at 3.45pm (It will also be an opportunity to see the 'Spacemakers' project which we heard about last October!)

**M Saturday 16 July:** *Celebration of Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve*, 2.00pm to 5.00pm. See page 3 for more details.

**M Tuesday 19 July:** SALLY OLDFIELD, the City Council's Local Nature Reserves Officer, will guide us on a *Walk at Royate Hill*, meeting at 7.00pm. This is a walk specially for M.V.C.G. members, and is in addition to the general series of L.N.R. walks which Sally told us about at our A.G.M. Meet at the entrance in Edward Street (off Royate Hill). There are fairly steep steps up, then a level footpath along the embankment. If you need a lift, or can offer one, please phone Lola on 964 1116.

**M Monday 25 July:** *Garbage Raid* at 3.45pm. Location still to be decided - see the next *Newsletter* for details - and let us know if you have ideas for a grot-spot needing our attention!

**M Tuesday 20 September:** *Conducted Tour of the Lifeskills* at the CREATE Centre. Come and see this fascinating layout of roads, homes, railway, farm, builder's yard, shop etc. Meet at 7.00pm in the foyer of the CREATE Centre. If you need a lift, or can offer one, please phone Lola on 964 1116.

## MATTIES MATTERS

*OR, THE PARADE, BISHOPSWORTH*

IN THE AUTUMN *Newsletter*, we told members that we have been working with the Council to ensure that the owner of this site - in the heart of the Bishopsworth & Malago Conservation Area - takes steps to improve the surroundings of the property.

We are speaking to the Council's Planning Enforcement Team, since the planning permission some years ago which led to the conversion of the ground floor to flats also included landscaping which was never implemented.

Progress has been made behind the scenes, and most of the unkempt vegetation and rubbish was cleared in early April.

We are continuing our efforts and we hope that further improvements will happen soon.

MARIE JO COUTANCHE

## Malago Valley Conservation Group

<b>Chairman</b>	André Coutanche	964 3106
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Lola Hardingham	964 1116
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	Lis Pibworth	987 0825
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	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, Royston Griffey, 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.