



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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2005

WELL, we're late again, I'm afraid, but with considerable extenuating circumstances, since we can now bring you a report and pictures of the excellent MANOR WOODS VALLEY CELEBRATION held on 16 July (see pages 4-6).

In fact, much of this edition consists of photos which show the range of our events and visits, so it's a good opportunity to say 'Thank you' to our unofficial, official photographer, Beryl Heaton, who has taken most of the pictures.

Speaking of Manor Woods Valley, many people were shocked and saddened when the grass where the bee orchids are was cut prematurely. It turns out that, strictly speaking, the cutting wasn't premature, since this area was scheduled for a spring rather than a summer cut (and the contractors did it early in the 'spring' period). Following discussions at the Bristol Parks Forum and with Julian Cox and Sally Oldfield, we hope this area will be rescheduled for a summer cut so that we can enjoy the wild flowers for as long as possible. But there were plenty of bee orchids - and lots of other good things - to see at The Mounds on Hengrove Park, so do make good use of this marvellous area when you fancy a stroll.

You may have seen in the *Evening Post* the good news about a Zebra Crossing coming to Highridge Road near Lloyds Bank. This arose out of our long-running 'Elm Tree Corner' plan, and we're looking forward to another piece of the jigsaw falling into place.

Finally, some sad news: Norman Rowe of the Brislington Conservation and Historical Society, who was one of the guest speakers at our inaugural meeting, died recently. He enjoyed reading our *Newsletter* and would phone up from time to time for a chat. Happily, contact with the B.C.H.S. will be retained via another member.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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EVENING STROLL ROUND ARNO'S VALE CEMETERY

TO SOME this may sound a macabre prospect, but on the evening of Tuesday 31 May, 17 members of M.V.C.G. did just that, led by Mary Wood of the Arno's Vale Cemetery Trust.

Booked as a 'Wildlife' Walk, it in fact turned out to be much more, encompassing history, geology and architecture as well as our guide's encyclopaedic knowledge of the flora and fauna, from the tiniest of wild flowers to the grandest of mature firs. The providers of the abundant birdsong were all identified by species, and we learnt that 83 wrens had their home in the 40 acres of grounds. (Where do you start?). Still, it was not for us to argue, and we were intrigued to hear of the different species of birds who either are resident there or come at specific times of the year, and of the many wild flowers, sedges and grasses to be found there, some rare and unique to that particular environment.



Rus in urbe - in rure: in the wooded setting of Arno's Vale, the man-made monument celebrates nature, with its lily and butterfly

And indeed the environment itself is nothing if not unique. Following years of neglect, much of the area has reverted to woodland, and at times one could be deep in a forest, but of course everywhere there are graves and memorial stones, some still standing as fresh as when they were first erected, others very much the worse for wear. Wildlife apart, some of the memorials are extremely ornate and are a study in themselves. We were shown the first memorial stone erected in 1839, still in good condition, and were reminded that Arno's Vale is still a 'working' cemetery. Some families have purchased plots on a 99-year lease, so the Trust have an obligation to allow interments as well as the scattering of ashes, and many of the graves, especially in the bottom section,

are obviously still tended regularly. On the whole it was a rather strange and somewhat surreal experience, that mixture of woodland and wall to wall graves, but, helped possibly by the lovely weather, it proved to be an uplifting and relaxing tour, and I am sure that we are all now firmly convinced that the city is all the richer for allowing this site to be more accessible to the general public and to be expertly managed as a natural haven of peace and tranquillity.

TONY INSALL

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD 2004

YOU MAY REMEMBER that at the A.G.M. in February we announced that our 2004 ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD would be going to Mr Alan Cox for the splendid wall he had constructed in the traditional style at his house by Cox's Garage on Highridge Common. At long last, we arranged a date to present the certificate, and official photographer, Beryl, and André were most warmly welcomed by Mr and Mrs Cox.



The Wall - a terrific enhancement to this old corner of Highridge/ Bishopsworth

A privileged view of the other side of the wall and the beautiful garden



CELEBRATION!

ARE YOU SURE all the poles are here? Is this meant to go at the back or side? Is the ground here flat enough? These were questions overheard in Manor Woods Valley on the morning of 16 July as several of us grappled with erecting tents and gazebos. These were to be used for our 'Celebration of Manor Woods Valley', the celebration resulting from the proposed designation as a Local Nature Reserve.

The event began at 2.00pm with various stalls open for business. These included plants, Food for All, the Malago Society and the University of Withywood. During the afternoon there were many activities taking place - yoga, seated exercises, face-painting and river water sampling, together with herbal walks by our own Marian Green.

The weather was glorious and attracted a good number of people. We felt that the afternoon had been a success, particularly in heightening people's awareness of the valuable local amenity in their midst.

BERYL HEATON

- *And many thanks to Beryl and to Sally Oldfield who took lots of splendid photographs, a selection of which we show here ...*



*Many hands ...
The first of the tents goes up on the Saturday morning*



*The
colourful
entrance
tent by
Sally and
Angela's
splendid
heron!*



*Face-painting - just one of the
activities in the HHEAG Saturday
Club tent*



*Tanya Darch of the City Council
and a young environmentalist taking a
water sample from the Malago*



Marian leads the way on a walk to investigate medicinal plants in Manor Woods Valley



One of the many photogenic poses struck by the adventurous souls who tried the Yoga

Finally, a big THANK YOU to all who helped, both on the day and in organising the event, especially to Bristol Water who gave us a grant and to Sally Oldfield, City Council Local Nature Reserves Officer, who arranged grants which mean that our costs for the event have been covered.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

SUMMER is still here, but the Programme is looking ahead to the coming of autumn. As usual, the **M** symbol shows our own events, and we include other groups' activities which will interest our members.

Saturday 20 August: *A Guided Walk at Troopers Hill* especially for members of groups (like M.V.C.G.) who are concerned with Local Nature Reserves. The walk is from 10.00 to noon and is followed by a barbecue. All welcome, but you need to book with Sally Oldfield on 922 4429 or sally_oldfield@bristol-city.gov.uk.

M Monday 22 August: *Garbage Raid*, meeting at the bottom of Fernsted Road (by St Peter's Church), Bishopsworth, at 3.45pm.

Saturday 3 September: *Open Afternoon at Bishopsworth Manor House* organised by the Malago Society to start their new season. Gates open at 2.30pm. Further information at www.malago.cjb.net.

M Saturday 17 September: Our annual *Amphibious Garbage Raid* to remove what we can from the Malago in Manor Woods Valley. Meet at 10.00am at the entrance behind Bishopsworth Library in old clothes - and wellies if you fancy paddling along the stream bed.

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.

This cheerful bunch squinting into the warm evening sun were shown around Royate Hill Local Nature Reserve by Sally Oldfield on 19 July. An inspiring story and a memorable visit (especially the goats)



PLANNING UPDATE

IN THE LAST *Newsletter* we reported that three major planning applications were about to go to the City Council's South & East Development Control Committee for decision. In the event, the application for the HARTCLIFFE COMMUNITY CAMPUS was held over and it still hasn't been decided.

The other two applications were approved. The MORRISON'S SUPERMARKET at Symes Avenue was a full (detailed) application and it now has no further *planning* hurdles to clear. But there's a complicated tangle of land ownerships and compulsory purchases on this site, so work won't be starting for a while yet - more's the pity.

The scheme for HENGROVE PARK was an outline application, so its approval means that further detailed plans will be submitted in due course. Our main concern here is for 'The Mounds', but it looks as though objections to earlier insensitive plans have borne fruit and the importance of this outstanding wildlife area is now recognised.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

Malago Valley Conservation Group

Chairman	André Coutanche	964 3106
Vice-Chairman	Lola Hardingham	964 1116
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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, 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.