



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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CHRISTMAS IS HERE! I don't just mean that it's closer than you think and you still haven't written the cards/bought the presents/worked out how to get out of going to ... well, never mind. No, so far as M.V.C.G. is concerned, it's right on top of us - the CHRISTMAS PARTY is this Tuesday at 7.30pm. Those who have been before will know what (silly) fun it is and those who haven't been before are very welcome. As it includes our usual 'American Supper', please bring a small contribution to the feast.

Lots to fit in, so, as before, I'll use this space for a planning update. The outline application for Hartcliffe Community Campus was passed, so we now await the detailed design. You can read on page 4 about the dramatic planning application for the former Wills office block in Crox Bottom. If it goes ahead, it could have a dramatic and positive effect, and not just in its immediate location. Please let me know what you think of the scheme before we write to the planners with our comments. A *much* less welcome new application is for - believe it or not - the Old Vicarage at Bishopsworth, where the developers want a *further* two bungalows in the grounds. We shall, of course, oppose this, since the site has been developed as much as it can be - a point which both we and local residents made at the time of the last application, and which the planners are well aware of.

As the year comes to a close, it's time to reflect on what good things have happened in our local environment - both buildings and green spaces - and to consider what new developments deserve an M.V.C.G. Environmental Award for 2005. Please let me have any ideas.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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MAKING SPACE FOR DAFFODILS

OUR ANNUAL daffodil bulb planting was in Wilmott Park this year, near to the 'Spacemakers' project which Mark Rooney told us about just over a year ago. Mark came along to help and to tell us where the existing daffs were, so we could complement what was there without inadvertently digging them up! He also gave us a most interesting tour and update of the Spacemakers site.



Above: Looking north across Kilmersdon Road



Right: Welcome tea from Mark's local contact!

More bulbs!

Julian Cox has contacted us to say that there are some 'spare' daffodil bulbs which the Council haven't got the labour to plant. So we've volunteered to plant some along Highridge Road between the Hornbeam trees. If you'd like to help, please come along at **11.30am** on **Thursday 8 December**.

Anton has always favoured the direct approach, so when the litter bin in the middle of Withywood Park was the centre of an impromptu bonfire, he cleared away all the mess and then set to and repainted the bin a nice shiny black. Must make a change from water colours.



REPORT FROM MANOR WOODS VALLEY GROUP

THOSE of you who regularly go to Manor Woods Valley will have noticed that recently the Council contractors have cleared the stream of branches near the pond. The main channel had been blocked for quite a few months and we had put pressure on the Council to clear it.



The mud will disappear - the stream is now clear!

A month ago, several members of our group went for a walk with Julian Cox, the Community Parks Manager, Helen Hall, one of the Council's Conservation Officers, and Sally Oldfield, the Local Nature Reserve Officer. We had asked for this meeting to discuss the mowing regime. We felt that it would be helpful to reassess the reasons why some areas were left to grow and to consider what time of the year they should be cut. Some areas, like the slopes before the quarry, are very rich in wildflowers, other less so. It is a matter of establishing a balance between wildlife and recreational activities. We felt that the meeting was productive and we will keep liaising with the appropriate Council people.

Finally, some of you may have noticed that the crop of apples and pears in the quarry was excellent this year. And the fruit was delicious. We are still trying to find out when these trees were planted and what varieties they are, so please get in touch if you have any ideas.

MARIE JO COUTANCHE



STOP PRESS!

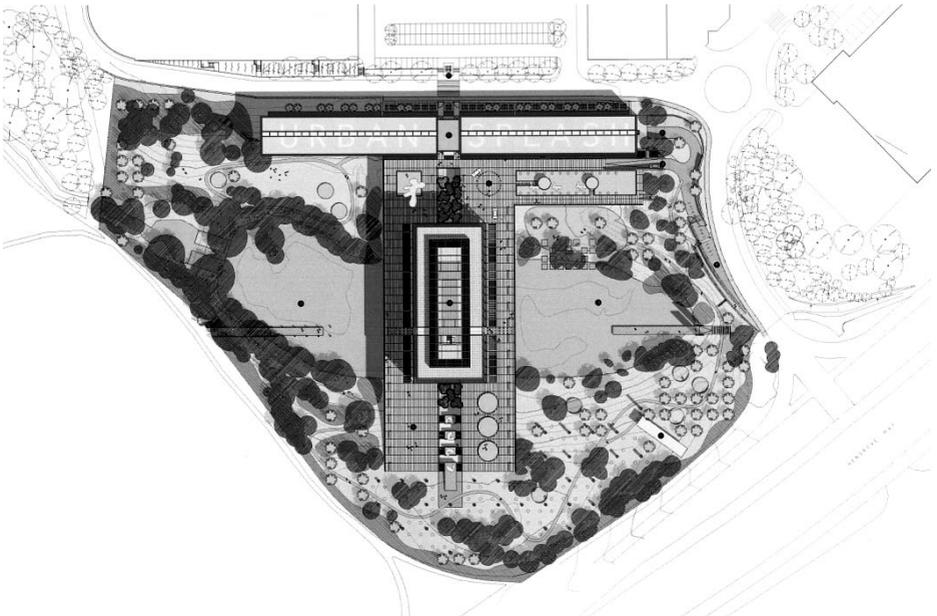
The latest news as this Newsletter is being finalised is this car which found its way from the lane behind St Peter's Rise into the Malago. Thanks to Tony James for reporting it, to Julian Cox and the Council contractors for removing it without delay, and to Angela James for the photos on this page.

MAKING A SPLASH

THE TALK by Julie Seaton (née Tritton) in November was very much appreciated, both for what she explained to us about the work of the Development Control (planning applications) team in South Bristol, and for the exciting information she gave us about the proposed development in Crox Bottom to restore the former Wills office block.

The developer making the application is URBAN SPLASH, who have gained a good reputation in their 12-year existence for high quality renovation of large and difficult-to-develop buildings. Their scheme for the Wills office block includes a new block at right angles to the existing podium which will act as a screen against the commercial development at Imperial Park (the former factory site). The former office block will have an ‘atrium’ all the way down to the lake. There will be 358 apartments, including some ‘live-work’ units, and some office space.

The grounds will be extensively landscaped and the lake will be dredged out and restocked with fish - the developers want to continue the fishing by local people. However, the intention is for access to be controlled, with fishing club members only being able to get to the proposed pontoon. The company contacted us and invited our comments, and we asked them to consider some means of continued public viewing of the lake. The reduced drawing below can’t do justice to the scheme, but you can view a model at the Planning Office in Brunel House.



FOUR-WHEELED SAGA

'We had a new smaller trolley in addition to our "old faithful", but the story behind that will have to wait until the next edition. Suffice to say that it has now gone back to Sainsbury's!' That's what we said last time in our report of the Garbage Raid. LIS PIBWORTH now reveals all!

HAVE YOU HEARD the one about the shopping trolley ... ? A shortened version of this saga (and I mean *saga!*) is to do with the Malago, Vicarage Road and a certain large supermarket in Ashton.

One autumn morning I glanced beyond my net curtains towards the Manor House and spied a shopping trolley outside No. 21. It was a Sainsbury's trolley, and I happen to work there two nights a week, so naturally I thought, 'I must do something about that ...'. 24 hours later I went on the Amphibious Garbage Raid, and as I walked past No. 21 there was no sign of the trolley. I felt quite content that it had been returned to its rightful place in the car park - so imagine my surprise as I met the rest of the group by the Library Entrance and there was the trolley!

André filled me in with the saga which had already taken place with Freddie and Sainsbury's employees. He had telephoned on several occasions and each time was promised that someone would come and collect it in their car. I'm sure this isn't Sainsbury's policy, and, upon checking, no-one at the store is aware of any policy! Freddie had even visited the store in person, explained that he had found the trolley in Manor Woods Valley and wanted to return it (it was too big for his car).

I tried to defend my employers, really I did, and explained that most people work part-time and there is no continuity on the customer service desk - I also mentioned that trolleys cost in excess of £200!

The following Wednesday I returned the trolley to the store, explained to the desk that it would need cleaning (in depth) - do you think they were interested? After my shift I went to see if it was behind the scenes being spruced up, but strangely enough it wasn't there - it had been put back into the car park!

Since this occasion I have been spotted in Kings Head Lane park and given a trolley to return, and again I went through the same process - with the same results! Can I remind you of Jamie Oliver's new slogan 'Try Something Different'? Maybe the staff could take heed and start listening!

LIS PIBWORTH

THE BIG WALK

ON 27 October, Danny and I joined 'The Big Walk' (as advertised in the *Autumn Newsletter*). This event was run by WALKING FOR HEALTH. We met at the Gatehouse Centre, a group of eleven of varying ages.

Brian was to lead us and Kate to bring up the rear in case of stragglers. We set off at a steady pace along Whitchurch Lane before turning off at the entrance to Crox Bottom. The trees were looking magnificent with their leaves just turning colour. The sun shone and everyone agreed it was a perfect day for a walk. We stopped for a while on the path in Crox Bottom as Peter Milner, who has been commissioned by the



City Council to do a feasibility study, asked our views on how we thought the area should be managed and improved.

As we walked we were pleased to see that it was mainly free of rubbish, although around the interceptor there was a real problem with debris. Near the exit to Hartcliffe Way the smell from the water was very bad and the three young lads felt it necessary to hold their noses and rush to the gate. Then we were on to Hartcliffe Way and wondering how long it would take us to cross this busy road. Kate must have had a commanding presence (or was it her yellow safety jacket?) as lorries pulled up to let us cross. Her authority did the trick again as we crossed back over at the entrance to Manor Woods Valley at Vale Lane.

As we walked along the path here, two of the boys realised that this was where they had come for 'Booted up Bristol' (as reported by Marian in the last *Newsletter*). They were so pleased to show their mothers the places where the various activities had taken place. Danny and I felt particularly gratified as we had helped on Booted up Bristol and it was good to know the impression it had made on the youngsters. Soon we were at the exit at Headley Park, where Danny and I left the majority of the group to return to the Gatehouse Centre as we headed up Kings Head Lane for home. All in all the walk was a very enjoyable, healthy experience.

BERYL HEATON

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

CHRISTMAS already, and then the New Year, with a string of interesting meetings coming up at St Peter's Rooms (by the side of St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth, opposite the Swimming Pool); our regular meeting time is 7.30pm. All are welcome, whether M.V.C.G. members or not. The **M** symbol shows our own events, and we are always happy to include other activities which will interest our members.

M Tuesday 6 December: Our inimitable and unpredictable (especially for the organisers) *Christmas Party*. Please bring a little something for the American Supper if you can.

M Thursday 8 December: *Bulb Planting* on Highridge Road, up from the 'Elm Tree'. Meet at 11.30am, and bring a spade if you can.

M Monday 2 January: *Garbage Raid*, meeting at the 'Elm Tree' at 3.45pm.

M Tuesday 17 January: *A Talk on Local Geology* by ANDREW MATHIESON. Our local environment is literally based on the geology and is shaped by it in all sorts of ways. Come and learn about our foundations!

M Monday 30 January: *Garbage Raid*, meeting at 3.45pm at the entrance to Manor Woods Valley (behind Bishopsworth Library).

M Tuesday 21 February: Our *A.G.M. and Birthday Party*. More details in the January *Newsletter*.

M Monday 27 February: *Garbage Raid in Wilmott Park*, meeting at the junction of Kilmersdon Road and Moxham Drive at 3.45pm.



Dundry Hill Group is no more. M.V.C.G. members who were also on the D.H.G. mailing list will have received a letter a month ago announcing a Special General Meeting to wind up the Group, after it had been in limbo for some time for lack of volunteers for the committee. The meeting - 24 people from both up the Hill and the 'lowlands' - was lively and positive and agreed to wind up D.H.G. and transfer the bulk of its funds to M.V.C.G. We have undertaken to maintain the Malago Spring artwork and to support projects which reflect D.H.G.'s objectives.

CHRISTMAS 'AT HOME'

HAS OUR EVENT become a local tradition by now? The organisers would like to think so! We hope all our supporters thought it was an enjoyable occasion, where people came as much to meet friends and neighbours over a cup of tea as to help raise money. However, this was very successful too! We raised £300 to share between M.V.C.G. and the University of Withywood. 'Food for All' from the Gatehouse Centre - who came to our event for the first time - were pleased with the £100 which they took.

I would like to say 'thank you' to so many people who brought us goods to sell, who baked cakes or made preserves. Thank you also to those who made Christmas gifts or cards or brought plants or toys. It gave colour and variety to our display which was appreciated and enjoyed by all. The Christmas cake whose weight people were invited to guess weighed 3lb 15oz, and was won by Linda Quick from Headley Park whose estimate was within 1 ounce!

Finally, it would be impossible to organise such an event without all our helpers on the day and before the event. Thank you to all of you!

MARIE JO COUTANCHE

Malago Valley Conservation Group

Chairman	André Coutanche	964 3106
Vice-Chairman	Lola Hardingham	964 1116
Hon. Secretary	Lis Pibworth	939 0698
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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.