



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

No. 91
Autumn
2011

NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME, I'm going to run through some planning updates on this front page, to complement the 'natural environment' stories inside this edition of the *Newsletter*.

The SOUTH BRISTOL LINK (aka the Ring Road) is in the 'pending' tray at the moment. The 'Best and Final Bid' has been submitted by the West of England Partnership to the Department for Transport, and we expect their response in the coming months. M.V.C.G. is against the road, because of its cost and its adverse effect both on the Green Belt and the residential areas it would pass through (it's not a 'Ring Road' at all) - especially King George's Road. Even if the government agree to fund it, nothing is certain. There will have to be further applications, almost certainly a Public Inquiry, and there will be the additional legal complication of land having to be provided to compensate for the proposed loss of part of Highridge Common.

The AREA GREEN SPACE PLANS are also in some uncertainty. At City level, talks are continuing between the political parties about the proposed selling off of green space; locally, the working meetings called by the Neighbourhood Partnership to allocate priorities seem to have run into the sand, since everyone has - rightly - been fighting for their patch and no-one is willing or able to judge priorities across the whole three-ward area. Apropos the Neighbourhood Partnership, Melanie Monaghan, who came to talk to our last AGM about their work, will be leaving soon, so we may or may not be getting someone new in her place.

We will be taking part in the annual TROLLEY SURVEY soon, having a stroll along the Malago and Pigeonhouse streams and noting where trollies - and other junk - have been dumped and reporting back to the City Council. Let's hope it keeps fine!

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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MANOR WOODS MEMORIES - PAST AND FUTURE

MY NEPHEW and I had a lovely couple of hours in the Woods on 18 August. We did a walk around the Malago and through it! Despite the weather we didn't get wet at all. We saw some squirrels, heard lots of birds and he climbed a few trees. He climbed what he was convinced was a mountain up to the top path and loved sitting down and sliding through the mud back down again.

*Malago memories
in the making*



The funniest thing was that he thought that he was miles away from his home and it was going to take him hours to get back. He only lives in Hengrove.

It was great for me to relive my childhood and to help Zakk create new memories for his.

HEATHER WILLIAMS

NEWS FROM MANOR WOODS VALLEY L.N.R.

IF YOU HAVE WALKED through Manor Woods Valley this summer, with your family, friends, dog or on your own, we hope you have enjoyed it - Heather and Zakk obviously did! Our group is very aware there is still a lot to do to improve our Local Nature Reserve. Lack of picnic tables and of bins, pieces of glass or shredded cans found in the grass, litter, graffiti, path occasionally in need of clearing etc. We could make the list longer.

However a negative attitude will not achieve much. Looking at what has been achieved (the list is long there too!), then facing the problems and taking action will be more productive. This summer our group has reported various problems to Julian Cox, our Community Park Officer, and to our contractors, Quadron Services.

We have carried on removing ash saplings along the path in the woodland, tidied up the bank behind Bishopsworth Library, cleaned the interpretation boards a few times, and discussed the situation of the quarry area which is not included in the L.N.R.

In conjunction with the Environment Agency the Himalayan Balsam has been cleared again. The treatment of the Japanese Knotweed was halted for a while but Julian Cox tells us it has started again.

MARIE JO COUTANCHE AND THE
MANOR WOODS VALLEY WORKING GROUP

TREE-MENDOUS

OUR IDEAS for improving 'Elm Tree Corner' - the area around the junction of Church Road, Queens Road and Highridge Road, Bishopsworth - have been around for a *long* time! And they've become accepted by the local councillors and other groups, such as Highridge Forum, as the way forward - as and when money permits.

As always, we're not counting any chickens! But there has been promising progress on two fronts very recently. It looks as though we may be able to complete the avenue of hornbeams down to the 'Elm Tree' this winter, including planting on the site of the former toilet block. And ways of improving parking arrangements are being pursued in the context of the Neighbourhood Partnership, by combining money from the two wards concerned - Bishopsworth and Hartcliffe - and by carrying forward some cash into the next financial year. Fingers crossed!

Paul Mizen has taken on the job of inviting guest authors to write occasional pieces for the Newsletter. Thanks, Paul! Here's the first one, from our local M.P.

IT'S NOT ALL BLACK AND WHITE ...

I WAS DELIGHTED to be asked to write a guest article for this edition of the Malago Valley Conservation Group *Newsletter*. A topical issue I thought might be of interest to M.V.C.G. members is the very real prospect of a badger cull now that the Government has set out its plans for controlling TB in cattle.

There is no disputing that bovine TB is a terrible disease which needs to be addressed. In England last year 25,000 cattle were slaughtered and unfortunately the South West is a hotspot area for the disease. In July the Government published its Bovine TB Eradication Programme, containing proposals for free shooting of badgers in two pilot areas with the potential for more widespread culling afterwards.

A number of local residents have contacted me to express concern about the introduction of badger culling and I share these concerns. Extensive badger culling trials which looked into the effects of culling badgers, protecting cattle and reducing the transmission of bovine TB took place between 1998 and 2007. The conclusion of the trials was that badger culling was unlikely to be effective in controlling bovine TB and I am therefore very worried that this option is now being actively pursued. The proposed free shooting method is untested and I know wildlife organisations are concerned that a badger cull could actually spread bovine TB as badgers move out of culling areas.

On the basis of current scientific evidence I believe vaccination offers the best hope of effectively tackling bovine TB in the long term, not badger culling. I will continue to raise my concerns - and those of local residents - about this important wildlife issue with Ministers.

If you have any comments on this matter, or if I can be of help with any other issue, please do not hesitate to contact me on (0117) 909 0063, dawn.primarolo.mp@parliament.uk or write to me at PO Box 1992, Bristol, BS99 1WH.

DAWN PRIMAROLO

MANOR WOODS MEADOW MEANDER

ON A FINE if breezy morning in late June, I met Marie Jo at the entrance to Manor Woods Valley as we had arranged to do a recce. We were mainly looking for bee orchids, but although there were very few orchids we were rewarded with some very pleasing experiences as we walked along. We actually found only six orchids, but it was quite late in the season and perhaps there were more, earlier in the month.

As we approached the meadow we saw a stand of ox-eye daisies near Valley Heights. It was good to see that the Council mowing regime had allowed these flowers to survive. Further on, there were some magnificent mullein.



The photographer photographed!

Marie Jo made a note to contact the arboricultural staff about this as we wouldn't like them to be mowed when the grass is cut.

We decided to explore the quarry area before returning. The teasels were plentiful, and there was much activity from marbled white butterflies, and burnet moths. The fruit trees were looking healthy and there was a promise of blackberries to come as there were lots of small fruits. As we left the quarry we spotted a solitary bee orchid. All in all a very enjoyable morning in this lovely valley.

BERYL HEATON

OUT AND ABOUT

IN JULY we made a visit to Knowle West Media Centre. Now I must admit to being surprised when I first heard there was a media centre in Knowle West, but as this was a follow-up visit after an informative talk from their Communications and Marketing Co-ordinator, Rachel Clarke, I knew I was off to see something special.

What would other areas of Bristol give for a facility like this!

We were greeted by Michaela and Steve who showed us around the building, proudly explaining all its environmental features and literally giving us an insight into its straw walls. However, the most exciting part was what was on offer for the community. There was a chance to make your own music, music production - 'a bit of rappin' or 'spitting' as it's known locally - and they have even got their own record label, 4NINE Records. There is an art studio with a chance to do street art, performing arts, film making, photography, and a chance for people of all ages to become computer literate. And this description only scratches the surface and does not do justice to everything that is on offer.

Every area should have a Knowle West Media Centre; its community would be greatly enriched. More information at www.kwmc.org.uk.

PAUL MIZEN



OUR VISIT in June to Lakeshore, the Urban Splash development at the former Wills Tobacco Factory office, was a great success. Lots of people came, and we were taken all over the development. We saw a finished apartment, with its superb views, and we heard about the environmental standards that Urban Splash are working to. Underfloor heating will come from a combination of a ground-source heat pump and a wood-chip fuelled boiler. The impressive central atrium provides natural air circulation. You can discover more about this key regeneration project at www.urbansplash.co.uk/residential/lakeshore.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE



PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

WE'RE GOING TO TRY AN EXPERIMENT with the programme. For the meetings in the new year, we will meet on the third Monday of the month, at 2.00pm the afternoon instead of the evening, and at the new community centre at the former Zion Methodist Church, Bedminster Down, instead of St Peter's Rooms, Bishopsworth. We're still at St Peter's for the October and December meetings. *Please let us know what you think of the change.*

Find out more about Zion and what happens there at www.zionbristol.co.uk.

Our 'indoor' meetings up until the new year are on the third Tuesday of the month, starting at 7.30pm, meeting at St Peter's Rooms, by the side of St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth. The **M** symbol means our own meetings, to which everyone is very welcome, M.V.C.G. member or not.

Saturday 24 September: *Dundry View Harvest Festival*, a new community event with an environmental theme. M.V.C.G. will be there, along with the Avon Wildlife Trust and information about bee-keeping, recycling, allotments, and bike safety. And for entertainment there will be dance displays and the wonderful 'Kooky Ukes' local ukulele band. It's all happening at Hartcliffe Millennium Green, Bishport Avenue, between 12 noon and 4.00pm.

* **Monday 26 September:** DUNDRY VIEW NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP, 7.00-9.00pm, at the @Symes building, Peterson Avenue, Hartcliffe (opposite Morrisons).

M Saturday 22 October: We will do some more of our traditional *Daffodil planting*, extending the area covered below Bishopsworth Police Station. MEET AT 10.00AM AND, IF POSSIBLE, BRING A TROWEL OR A SPADE. We probably won't be more than an hour, and it's good fun! Wear 'gardening' clothes and footwear, of course.

M Tuesday 18 October: A talk by RICHARD BEVAN, recently appointed as the City Council manager in charge of Heritage Estates, Cemeteries and Crematoriums. Not only does Richard live locally, but many of his areas of responsibility are well known to us, not least Ashton Court estate. Some members may remember Richard's previous talk when he was in charge of pest control and will recall how fascinating and amusing it was!

continued over the page ...

Tuesday 15 November: We expect this to be the date of the *Bishopsworth Quiz*, where M.V.C.G. usually enters two teams and members are invited to come along to support them. This replaces our ‘normal’ November meeting. If you’d like to be there, either in a team or to support, please contact André (details below).

🕒 **Wednesday 7 December:** M.V.C.G.’s *Christmas Party*. Please note the switch from our normal Tuesday. As usual, the planned events are a closely guarded secret, but there will be a prize for the best headwear! We will have our traditional American supper, so, if you can, please bring a small contribution for the feast.

* **Tuesday 20 December:** DUNDRY VIEW NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP, 7.00-9.00pm, at a venue to be confirmed.

🕒 **Monday 16 January:** Our first afternoon meeting at Zion, starting at 2.00pm. PETER WEEKS will speak on *Ashton Court Mansion*. Since 2005 Peter has represented the Bristol Civic Society on the City Council project for restoration and reopening of perhaps Bristol’s greatest hidden treasure. Peter will tell us the fascinating story of the house and the restoration project.

🕒 **Monday 20 February:** Our *Annual General Meeting* at Zion, at 2.00pm. More information in the next *Newsletter*.

* *For more information about the Neighbourhood Partnership meetings, call Heather Williams at Hartcliffe & Withywood Community Partnership on (0117) 903 8044.*

Malago Valley Conservation Group

Chairman	Peter Crispin	907 0623
Vice-Chairman	Mavis Palmer	964 2344
Hon. Secretary	André Coutanche	964 3106
Hon. Treasurer	Beryl Heaton	964 5780

Committee Members

Anton Bantock, Heather Leeson, Paul Mizen, Lis Pibworth, Mary Sykes

Co-opted Committee Members

Valerie Gay, Diana Porter, Sue Walker, CSV Environment, Cllrs Mark Brain, Richard Eddy, Helen Holland, Tim Kent, Derek Pickup, Kevin Quartley (*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.