



# MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

# **NEWSLETTER**

No. 95  
Autumn  
2012

**M**ALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP has published a regular *Newsletter* ever since we started in 1994. Originally it was produced every other month, then it became quarterly because of the pressure of work and limitations on the number of voluntary hours available. The pressures are still there; there still only 24 hours in a day and seven days in a week; and one person can't be expected to go on doing the same job indefinitely. Not only is it bad for the individual, it's bad for the organisation, since without new ideas and new ways of doing things the only outcome is stasis and decline.

This is *Newsletter* no. 95. The present editor has produced every one of them and has no personal ambition to reach no. 100. We need someone new to put the *Newsletter* together. That doesn't necessarily mean that a new person has to do everything I have been doing; apart from anything else, I will continue to write the planning news and reports from the 'Pride of Place' group of the Neighbourhood Partnership. And a new editor doesn't necessarily have to do the technical layout and printing - there are other ways of achieving that.

We have some good writers - if it was entirely a one-person operation, it would have stopped long ago. But we need someone to take over responsibility for setting deadlines; for seeing that articles are written in time; for deciding what goes in, in what order; for choosing photos and other illustrations. If you'd like to know more, or have a chat about it, please contact me - details on the back page. Anyone taking on the role wouldn't be left unsupported - there would be a lead-in and hand-over period while you learned the ropes.

Please help. Even if you don't see yourself as editor, please let us have your ideas. Let us know what's good in the *Newsletter* and what's not so good. And if you think M.V.C.G. doesn't need a *Newsletter* at all, we need to know that too.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

## IN THIS ISSUE

Manor Woods Valley News .	Page 2
Hengrove Mounds . . . . .	Page 3
Cash for Cans . . . . .	Page 4
Highridge Highlights . . . . .	Page 5
The Programme . . . . .	Page 7

## **NEWS FROM MANOR WOODS VALLEY L.N.R.**

**Old Quarries Area** (*go via Vale Lane entrance - it's about 100 metres on your right, behind warehouses*)

Shortly after the publication of the last *Newsletter* we heard that the proposed designation for Industry and Warehousing had been removed. This was excellent news. We now have to look at the future for the area. It needs to be moved from the Council Property Services to the Parks Department for maintenance and incorporated into the Local Nature Reserve. In the meantime, we are investigating the possibility of having the apple and pear trees surveyed so as to find out the names of the different varieties of fruit trees which must have grown there or were planted after the clay quarry closed down more than forty years ago. Does anybody know some of the history of this area? To make the area more accessible we have asked Justin Smith, our Woodland and Wildlife officer, to clear paths again so that people can enjoy the area which has always been a 'secret' part of Manor Woods Valley.

### **Valley Road entrance**

The area has been generally more tidy, thanks to the Council contractors, Quadron Services. However we have to report that the bin has not been installed and the wall on the left of entrance has not been repaired. We will continue to report this to our Area Environment Officer.

### **Invasive weeds**

- *Himalayan balsam*

The Environment Agency had one 'pulling-out session' and are reporting that the effort made in the past few years has paid off.

- *Japanese Knotweed*

We are aware that the weather has been a problem as eradication of this weed requires spraying. At the time of writing we are not clear when or if any spraying will happen this year. We do not seem to be given any clear answer.

### **Entrance behind the Bishopsworth Library**

This entrance is used a lot by the public and we have monitored rubbish and full bins there. We have let Quadron Services know.

You may have noticed a slight element of frustration in this article. We feel that the recent reorganisation of the Parks Department has so far not brought us the improvement which was promised. As a Parks Group we find that

instead of collaborating with a Community Parks Officer to improve our green space, we are now working with an Area Environment Officer who is overworked and has little time to work with Park Groups.

On a more positive note, enjoy autumn in Manor Woods Valley. Our group has ‘discovered’ more fruit there this year: blackberries, sloes and elderberries but also plums, without forgetting apples and pears in the Quarries area.

MARIE JO COUTANCHE AND THE  
MANOR WOODS VALLEY WORKING GROUP

- The process whereby the Quarries area will be confirmed to be removed from development has started, as described above, but it will take a while. The ‘Site Allocations and Development Management Preferred Approach Document’ was consulted on earlier this year. Comments submitted in response (including ours supporting the removal of the Quarries from development) will feed in to the next stage, the Publication document, which will go to Full Council early in 2013. Formal public representations will then be sought on the Publication document before the Council submits the Plan to the Secretary of State for examination. There may then be a Public Inquiry, so it could be 2014-2015 before the future of the Quarries is written in stone (which would have been a pun if they hadn’t been extracting clay). But, as Marie Jo says, we will prepare for this valuable habitat to be formally incorporated into Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve.

## HENGROVE MOUNDS NATURE RESERVE

Our visit to Hengrove Mounds on 18 June (see the article in the last *Newsletter*) was *extremely* interesting and was greatly enjoyed by the people who came for the guided walk led by Jim O’Shaughnessy. Jim explained the varied habitats and the flora and fauna which are thriving unnoticed in the middle of south Bristol; he also introduced some of the ideas for improving the area for wildlife and invited comments and ideas from anyone. It’s a shame not more people came on this fascinating visit!



## MORE CASH FOR CANS!

**S**OME OF OUR REGULAR CAN COLLECTORS aren't M.V.C.G. members, but they're happy to support our work by letting us have cans they've collected for recycling - which also generate cash for our funds. One of our 'can irregulars' is Stuart Gascoigne, who works for W.H. Smith in Swindon. Not only has he trained his colleagues to contribute cans, but his employers are keen that their employees support charitable and community groups, and they recently recognised his efforts with a donation of £20 to M.V.C.G. So it's a very big THANK YOU to W.H. Smith, and especially to Stuart for his past - and future! - contributions.



*A neat pile of used cans on Stuart's desk, left for him by his colleagues when he was away from work for a while!*

Our Can Collector-in-Chief is happy to receive more empty drinks cans for recycling provided they are clean and are aluminium (steel cans can be recycled, but they don't generate money - just put them in your black box). Please contact Marie Jo on 964 3106 or [mariejo.coutanche@googlemail.com](mailto:mariejo.coutanche@googlemail.com) before you deliver so that cans don't stay on the doorstep if we're away.

## MORE NEWS FROM CROX BOTTOM

**I**N ADDITION to the benches, picnic tables and notice boards - reported with photos in the last *Newsletter* - we're looking forward to a more inviting top entrance to Crox Bottom - the access from Hengrove Way, by the slip road into Imperial Park. The plan is to plant some good-sized trees - there seems to be room for half a dozen or so - and this will 'ease' the transition from the urban feel of Hengrove Way into the hidden, wild, valley beyond. And the nearly-final version of the Management Plan is now available at [http://bristolpartnership.org/images/stories/NP\\_pdfs/dundry\\_view/crox\\_bottom\\_v2.pdf](http://bristolpartnership.org/images/stories/NP_pdfs/dundry_view/crox_bottom_v2.pdf) (3.75MB).

## HIGHRIDGE HIGHLIGHTS

**T**HERE HAVE BEEN a number of positive developments in Highridge and Bishopsworth Village recently. I felt it would be good to record them, in rough chronological order:

On 25 April, the KING'S HEAD PARK GROUP was formally established, with John Collins as the inaugural chairman and Lis Pibworth as Honorary Secretary. The group has already secured extra litter-bins for the park and have held discussions about enhancing the boundary fencing, providing additional seating, procuring new signage and the pathway already earmarked from Greylands Road. A report on the proposed new investment is due to be considered by the Dundry View Neighbourhood Partnership 'Pride of Place' Group.

The SEVERN VALE BOWLING CLUB (which is an integral part of the new Park Group) has obtained a Wellbeing Grant towards the £5,000 cost of replacing its Vicarage Road car-park fencing with hedges this autumn. It is also planning to re-surface the car-park surface and improve drainage locally and extend its lease with the City Council.

The condition and future use of the GARLAND'S BUNGALOW (at 104 Highridge Green) has been a long-standing issue. A planning consent for demolition and replacement with residential dwellings was renewed in autumn 2011. In spring 2012, I held a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Above & Beyond Trust (which is leading on the redevelopment side) and agreed a number of additional security measures. An outstanding legal dispute with the City Council (which was holding up redevelopment) has recently been resolved and I am hopeful of redevelopment proceeding ahead shortly.

HIGHRIDGE UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB has formally changed their name and aspirations behind their scheme for Highridge Playing Field to the Highridge Sports and Social Club. They have also secured a grant of over £66,000 from Sport England towards improving the condition of the field, including drainage. Discussions are continuing with the City Council and Wessex Water regarding their plans and they hope to let us know more by autumn.

On 9 July, the 7.5 tonne WEIGHT RESTRICTION which operates on King's Head Lane and all roads to the north in Bishopsworth was extended down to Highridge Road and Church Road. For those of us who campaigned over 20 years for the original lorry ban, which was imposed five years ago, this a welcome victory.

Readers will know that over a decade ago M.V.C.G. drew up the 'ELM TREE CORNER REPORT' after widespread consultation with local residents and businesses. This recommended various environmental improvements, more secure and safer car-parking and enhanced pedestrian walkways. This was updated last year with a (slightly confusingly named) Highridge Road Parking Review. Recently, a submission was made to the Council's Local Sustainable Transport Grant Fund for £60,000 to proceed with these ideas (which will be subject to future consultation) and we should know the outcome by mid-autumn.

Finally, long-standing plans to upgrade the CROSSING FACILITIES IN CHURCH ROAD (near the Post Office) should be started in mid-September 2012.

CLLR RICHARD EDDY  
Bristol City Councillor, Bishopsworth Ward

- *Thank you, Richard, for those updates. We always welcome contributions for the Newsletter from all our readers, and if any of our other councillors would like to provide news from their patches which would interest M.V.C.G. members, you know where to find us!*

## **WHO SAYS MVCG MEMBERS DON'T GO LITTER PICKING ANYMORE?**

**I**T MAY BE quite a while since our trusty trolley and its attendants circulated on a regular basis in the streets and open spaces of BS13, but that doesn't mean that M.V.C.G. doesn't care about litter in public spaces anymore. It *does* mean that, by and large, things are better than they used to be ten or fifteen years ago. For this, the work done by the City Council and its contractors needs to be acknowledged. And it must never be forgotten that, however well the Council and contractor systems work or don't work, it isn't them who drop the litter - it is, most regrettably, our fellow citizens.

But we still keep an eye open, and two of our members spent the best part of an hour picking empty cans and other rubbish along the footpath between Banwell Close and Brockley Walk on Bedminster Down. We will let our local councillors know that this spot may need extra attention in future.

If you know of any spot which needs tidying up in our area why not organise a clearing session?

## PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

**T**HE WINTER PROGRAMME starts here - with meetings normally being held on the third Tuesday of the month and usually starting at 7.30pm. We meet at St Peter's Rooms, by the side of St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth. The **M** symbol means our own meetings, to which anyone is very welcome, member or not. We are always happy to include information about other meetings which may interest our members.

**Saturday 15 September:** *Fun Day* at Hartcliffe Millennium Green from 12 noon until 4.00pm. Lots of events for all the family. Hartcliffe Millennium Green is on Bishport Avenue, across the road from the Groves tower blocks, and next to the 'River of Life' Christian Centre.

**M Tuesday 18 September:** '*A Year in the Making: recording nature's changes through the seasons*', a video presentation by BOB GILES, including scenes shot in Manor Woods Valley and Crox Bottom. THIS WILL BE OUR FIRST WINTER MEETING BACK AT ST PETER'S ROOMS, AND WILL START AT 7.30PM.

\* **Monday 24 September:** DUNDRY VIEW NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP, 7.00-9.00pm, at Blenheim Scouts Activity Centre, Banwell Close, Bedminster Down.

**Sunday 30 September:** The Dundry Playground Group are celebrating their first birthday with an event at Dundry Village Hall, Crabtree Lane from 12 noon-4.00pm. Refreshments and birthday cake! Bench-making workshop - help create a bench for Dundry. Help plant trees/shrubs - bring gardening tools if you can.

**M Tuesday 16 October:** *Safe Land for Bees*. SAMI CHUGG and HILARY ALLEN will tell us about this local group who campaign for better habitats for our vital pollinators. See <http://safelandforbees.blogspot.co.uk>. Meet at St Peter's Rooms at 7.30pm.

**Tuesday 13 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.

**M Tuesday 18 December:** M.V.C.G.'s *Christmas Party*. More information in the next *Newsletter*.

\* *For more information about Neighbourhood Partnership meetings, call Heather Williams at the Hartcliffe & Withywood Community Partnership on 903 8044 or Keith Houghton, the Area Co-ordinator, on 922 2135.*

## CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND

**M**ALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP joined the Campaign to Protect Rural England in 2009 after we had had an excellent talk by Georgie Bigg about their work. Some of their concerns don't really affect us, such as transport in rural areas, but their magazine is always interesting and useful. It covers such things as changes in government planning policy, including the Green Belt, and the confused concept of 'localism' which the government is bringing to planning. CPRE also campaign on issues such as light pollution, which we think is very important, both in an urban and a rural context.



The main CPRE website is at [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk), and you can keep in touch with our local branch at [www.cpreavonside.org.uk](http://www.cpreavonside.org.uk). Follow the link to their downloadable newsletter.

**Campaign to Protect Rural England**  
Standing up for your countryside

### Malago Valley Conservation Group

<b>Chairman</b>	Peter Crispin	907 0623
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Mary Sykes	964 3712
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	André Coutanche	964 3106
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Beryl Heaton	964 5780

#### Committee Members

Anton Bantock, Heather Leeson, Paul Mizen, Lis Pibworth

#### Co-opted Committee Members

Diana Porter, Don Smith, 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*).

---

**Newsletter** edited by André Coutanche, 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 8LB; telephone 964 3106; e-mail [andrec@mvcg.org.uk](mailto:andrec@mvcg.org.uk); website [www.mvcg.org.uk](http://www.mvcg.org.uk).

**Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome.**

The opinions in this *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of M.V.C.G.