



# MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

# **NEWSLETTER**

No. 98  
Summer  
2013

**W**ELCOME to M.V.C.G.'s first 'electronic' *Newsletter*. We're now in colour throughout, and we're not restricted to eight pages. That's especially useful for this edition, because our 'official' photographers have been busy recording many of the activities we're involved with in BS13 and you can see the results on the following pages. Thank you, Beryl and Danny.

As you might expect at this time of year, many of these activities are outdoors. The Manor Woods Valley Working Group have been doing their regular Spring Clean behind Bishopsworth Library (page 2); Hartcliffe Health & Environment Action Group had an Open Day for their allotments and community orchard on a day when the sun actually shone (page 6); and Bristol 99 brought a posse of cyclists to Manor Woods Valley for a mini-bio-blitz (page 10). And there's an outdoor event to look forward to – our Summer Outing will be **this coming Tuesday, 25 June, at 6.30pm**. We'll be visiting the Northern Slopes – see the back page for more information and make a note in your diary now!

A rather different reason for going out is on the evening before, Monday 24 June, when the quarterly meeting of the Neighbourhood Partnership will be held at the Personal Development Centre on the Bridge Learning Campus, Teyfant Road, Hartcliffe. Council meetings aren't everyone's cup of tea, but it's very educational and a good way of learning about what's going on – and what's coming up – in our part of Bristol.

I've had, and still have, reservations about the whole Neighbourhood Partnership system, but their Environmental sub-Group – the 'Pride of Place' Group – has been a very effective way of getting improvements on the ground – always our acid test of the value of a meeting. Why not come and judge for yourself?

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

## IN THIS ISSUE

Manor Woods Spring Clean...	Page 2
Dead-End Road.....	Page 5
A Plum Position.....	Page 6
What Next for this Gem?.....	Page 8
Elm Tree Corner.....	Page 9
A Biking Bio-Blitz.....	Page 10

# MANOR WOODS VALLEY SPRING CLEAN

IT WAS A SUNNY if rather cold morning when Angela, Marie Jo and I met up to tackle clearing the bank at the entrance to Manor Woods Valley. We were delighted to be joined by Martin, who had contacted Marie Jo to find out how he could help. It transpired that he had previously done a lot of litter-picking on his own.

We set about clearing some brambles to give the wild flowers more chance to survive. This also exposed some litter, but happily there wasn't a great deal of it. One plant had settled in rather too successfully and we made a note to tackle it at a later date with more robust tools.



*Above: Angela's artistic hi-vis jacket*



*Left: Hard at it*

We then moved on to the garden of Bishopsworth Library where the main enemy was the brambles. They had really taken hold and were threatening to stifle the plants we had previously put in. We soon filled several bags. It was such a help having an extra pair of hands – thank you, Martin! Around midday I had to leave as I had another commitment but the brave



stalwarts continued. They were rewarded shortly afterwards when the library staff appeared with welcome cups of coffee. They were then able to sit on the logs and view with satisfaction a successful morning's work.

BERYL HEATON

## AN AFTERNOON AT THE ZOO

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**M**ALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP has worked with the Avon Invasive Weeds Forum (A.I.W.F.) for many years, helping with awareness-raising and working on the ground with the eradication of Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed in Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve.

Beryl and Marie Jo were pleased to be invited to attend an Invasive Species Workshop on 3 April hosted by the Avon Invasive Weeds Forum at Bristol Zoo where professional people and volunteers were present. Neil Green, who is the Avon Invasive Weeds Forum Field Officer, explained that he works in collaboration with Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, Defra, the Environment Agency and Bristol Conservation & Science Foundation, who are based at Bristol Zoo.

The lecture by Simon Mackown from Defra highlighted the following points:

- We are dealing with invasive species, plants and animals which are alien, non-native species which have been introduced by human action.
- Why do we care? Destruction of biodiversity on land and in rivers. and ‘monoculture’ of river banks. Negative effects on food webs through reduction of species.

We have two examples in Manor Woods Valley: the island created by silting in the middle of the pond was nearly entirely covered with Himalayan Balsam until a group of volunteers, including some M.V.C.G. members, took part in the ‘Big Pull’ organised by A.I.W.F. several years ago. This encouraged native species like purple loosestrife which was growing there as well. And some areas, particularly along the Malago, had become impenetrable with Japanese Knotweed until Bristol Parks started eradicating the weed and is still continuing.

- Economic cost. Some invasive plants like Japanese Knotweed can lead to destruction of land, even buildings, flooding risks and in some cases loss of tourism.
- What are we doing?
  - Using preventive measures, early detection and rapid response.
  - Behaviour change, combining legislation, education and awareness-raising.
  - Long term control, done sustainably – action not just this year but in the future. When a project comes to an end a long-term management plan must be put in place.

There is a role for everybody to play. It can be telling people or taking part in the ‘Big Pull’ in Manor Woods Valley this summer (we’ll circulate the date by e-mail when we know it). It is always fun and a great opportunity to meet people.

MARIE JO COUTANCHE

*Manor Woods Valley Working Group*



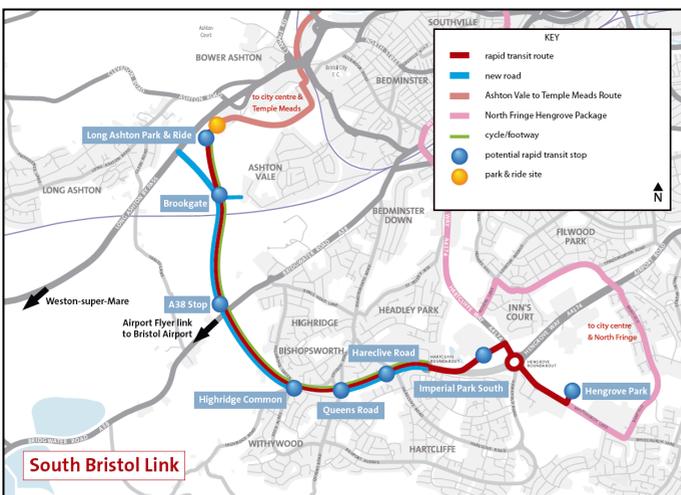
# DEAD-END ROAD

**A**FTER DECADES of anticipation, it now seems there is a serious bid to build a new road from the Long Ashton Bypass to the Cater Road roundabout, called the South Bristol Link. The proponents, mainly North Somerset Council, claim this will ease congestion in South Bristol. Their consultants predict the Annual Average Daily Total for vehicles using the section from the A38 to Queens Road will be 19,200 vehicles. If you take out the ‘early hours’ when very little traffic moves, it’s easy to work out that means around 1,000 cars per hour, an almost unbelievable number for what is a single carriageway road with three sets of traffic lights.

What this will mean for those living in our area is a loss of part of Highridge Common, which will be replaced elsewhere, a loss of Greenbelt and a split community. It will also lead to higher levels of pollution and more traffic attracted to the area as it attempts to access the new road.

Another claim is this road will bring new jobs. However, South Bristol has seen high levels of regeneration without this road and it could be argued that this road will encourage workers to commute in from elsewhere, when jobs created should be for the people of South Bristol.

This road is, it is claimed, part of the new BRT network. However, with just three buses per hour and a route that barely skirts the main estates, it is difficult to take that seriously. Make no mistake, this is a road built on a false premise. It’s difficult to work out who benefits, but you can be sure the main losers will be us!



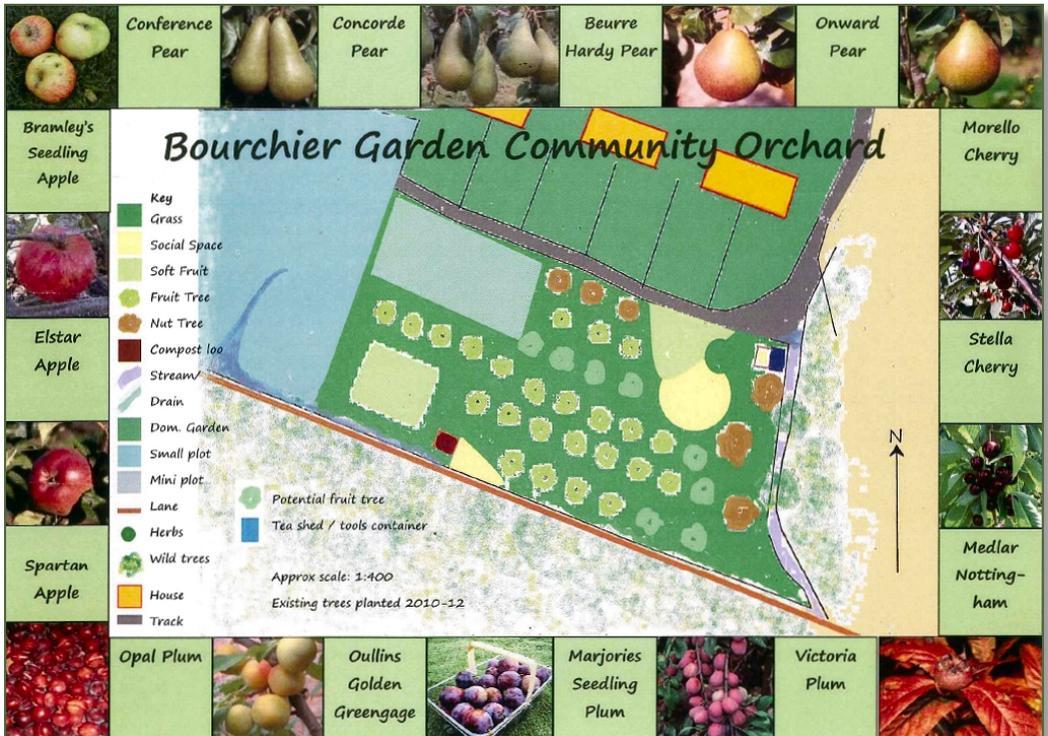
PAUL MIZEN

● Paul has been working hard to keep M.V.C.G. in touch with this issue. A planning application is due soon, but that will be only the start of a new round of opposition to this useless, damaging road. Both M.V.C.G. and Bristol Civic Society will be opposing it.

# A PLUM POSITION

ON A SUNNY SATURDAY 8 JUNE, our old friends HHEAG (Hartcliffe Health & Environment Action Group) held their Garden Open Day at Molesworth Drive Community Allotments and Bouchier Garden Community Orchard. If you're on our e-mail circulation list, you will have received a pretty poster about it a few days before – and if you're not on our e-mail circulation list but are on e-mail, please let me know your address on [andrec@mvcg.org.uk](mailto:andrec@mvcg.org.uk)!

Molesworth Drive Allotments are a very impressive site – they supply food which is used in HHEAG's kitchen and 'Food For All' shop. But the revelation for me was the wonderful Bouchier Garden Community Orchard. It's accessed off Crosscombe Drive and it's right on the Bristol boundary, so it's high enough up Dundry Slopes for the views over the city to be magnificent. On a fine day – and that Saturday *was* a fine day – the panorama ranged from the Forest of Dean to the Cotswold Edge and over to Lansdown.



For nearly three years HHEAG has been slowly developing the land, with the help of some very able volunteers – when they started on the site, the access was completely overgrown with brambles

The site now has a number of allotment holders who can enjoy growing their own produce and rearing a few hens for eggs as well. HHEAG also has a few plots for local people to use for fruit and vegetable growing, but they have been principally concentrating on creating an orchard and a store and shelter for volunteers. On the Open Day, we were shown around the site and ‘introduced’ to the wide range of fruit trees – the attractive map opposite shows what’s there.

There is still a lot to complete on the site and there will be a need for continued up-keep in the future, to ensure it does not return to the scrub and dumping which HHEAG cleared. So they want to create a ‘**Friends of Bouchier Garden**’ group, whose members will be able to enjoy the pleasures of the site for themselves and their families, whilst also contributing to the development and maintenance of the garden. If you are interested in becoming involved with this group, do contact HHEAG on 946 5285, or write to them at the Gatehouse Centre, Hareclive Road, BS13 9JN, or e-mail [office@hheag.org.uk](mailto:office@hheag.org.uk).

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

- *A bonus of visiting the Community Orchard was this freebie recipe card produced by Bristol Independents, which supports locally owned and operated businesses. **STOP PRESS: we’ve just tried this and it’s delicious!***

**Bristol Independents** recipe card no.14

## Hartcliffe ‘throw-it-together’ self-crusting pie

Serves 2

### Ingredients

2 eggs, beaten  
60g grated tasty cheese  
½ small onion, peeled and chopped  
2 rashers of rindless bacon, chopped  
50g self-raising flour  
120ml skimmed milk  
Sprinkle of dried herbs  
Freshly ground black pepper  
100g of your choice of chopped mushrooms, peppers, cherry tomatoes, courgettes, sweetcorn, peas, beans, grated pumpkin, etc.

*This is one of those seemingly impossibly easy quiche things where you throw it all in together. A great recipe when you’re in a hurry.*

### Method

Preheat oven to 180°C. Spray a medium sized quiche dish (or similar) with non-stick baking spray.

Mix all the ingredients in a bowl. Pour into the prepared dish and bake for 30–35 minutes until set and golden brown.

**Where you could buy the ingredients** Food For All in the Gatehouse Centre sells locally sourced eggs, cheese, meat and vegetables in addition to wholefoods and fairtrade products. Dave John is a local butcher on St Peters Rise. HHEAG runs cooking and nutrition groups in the Gatehouse centre on Hareclive Road – open to anyone who lives or works in BS13 or BS14.

Thanks to HHEAG for this recipe

## WHAT NEXT FOR THIS GEM?

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**Y**OU'VE PROBABLY SEEN that the United Reformed Church on Church Road, Bishopsworth, has been sold. This follows its closure last Christmas after congregations had declined to an unsustainable level.

The building makes a distinguished architectural contribution to the Bishopsworth & Malago Conservation Area, and its art nouveau-inspired façade is unique in the area.

As and when a planning application appears, M.V.C.G. will press hard for retention of the Church Road façade, and we understand there is also good-quality stained glass which deserves preservation.



*Photo from the web, taken by 'ChurchCrawler'*

The building can't be demolished without planning permission since it's in the Conservation Area. It isn't listed, but fortunately there is a new system called 'local listing', which is a way of identifying buildings which are important in their neighbourhoods and which need special consideration. Bishopsworth U.R.C. is in the process of being 'locally listed', and this should be a 'material consideration', as the planning jargon has it, when a planning application is made.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

## **ELM TREE CORNER: WALL, WATER AND WHAM!**

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### **Wall**

WE REPORTED AT THE A.G.M. in February that we were trying to find a way for the City Council to take action to protect the fine wall in front of the Elm Tree. It was overgrown with plants whose roots were breaking up the mortar and forcing out the stones. Of course, it should have been the job of the pub owners, but they didn't recognise their responsibilities to the community or the environment.

After steady, polite pressure from us, a way was found to use Community Payback to clear the weeds, and a very good job they made of it. It was terrific to see the handsome traditional wall emerge from the jungle! Of course, the weeds are already growing again, so we are now working with the Council to get the roots poisoned.

### **Water**

WE ALSO REPORTED AT THE A.G.M. that Wessex Water had been talking to us about engineering works near the junction of Highridge Road and Bishops Cove which are necessary to avoid sewers overflowing. Bristol Parks had ill-advisedly and without consultation suggested removal of the hedge on the boundary between the proposed works and the Elm Tree car-park. We had reluctantly informed Wessex that we would oppose a planning application which included removal of the hedge, though we had no objection, of course, to the works, and we appreciated their co-operation with us. The application was made including temporary removal and then reinstatement of the hedge. We e-mailed Wessex to thank them; permission was granted; and work is expected to start in September. Since the work is on a part of Highridge Common, that requires an additional permission which Wessex have now applied for.

### **Wham!**

YOU'LL HAVE SEEN on the front page of the last edition of *Wham!* that the Mayor, George Ferguson, made a tour around our Dundry View Neighbourhood Partnership area in March. Although it didn't say so in *Wham!*, one of his stops was at Elm Tree Corner where I gave him a briefing on our plans for the area and a run-through on what had been achieved so far. He left with a copy of our Elm Tree Corner report for reference and a copy of our latest *Newsletter*. I wonder if he had time to read them?!

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

## A BIKING BIO-BLITZ

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**M**ANOR WOODS VALLEY MEADOW is at its best now, so it's not surprising that it was one of the sites chosen by Bristol 99. Bristol 99 is a project run by the Bristol Natural History Consortium to celebrate the 99 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest in the city – all of Manor Woods Valley is an S.N.C.I. and all of it except the Quarries is a Local Nature Reserve.

Two events have happened in Manor Woods Valley: on 20 May Headley Park Primary School linked up with Wild City to examine local habitats and interdependence, using new technology, and on 10 June a group from Life Cycle UK rode up the Malago Greenway to do a mini-bio-blitz.



*Pedalling to the petals – the cyclists arrive at the meadow*

The cyclists were met by a team from Bristol 99 led by Ed Drewitt, the well-known local naturalist. Some M.V.C.G. members were there as well, to welcome them to ‘our’ patch and to describe the rich mix of habitats in Manor Woods Valley L.N.R.



The purpose of Bristol 99 isn’t just to get people out to enjoy our wildlife sites; an important part of it is to do some useful ‘citizen science’ – sample the species which are present and make sure records are forwarded to BRERC, the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre. So Ed demonstrated how to ‘sweep’ the meadow to catch invertebrates and how to shake some of the nearby trees and shrubs and catch what ever fell off an an upturned ‘umbrella’.



A good time was had by all, with samples being collected, identified and recorded, including a black-and-white bee which no-one had seen before. And the M.V.C.G. contingent did their party piece, and introduced people – in chorus – to Corky-fruited Water-dropwort.

*Postscript: We had to explain to people that because of the late summer, the Bee orchids weren’t out yet – but they are now! Go and have a look ...*

## A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

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**W**HEN THE REGULAR MEETINGS FINISHED because of low attendance, we promised a summer outing. This will be next **TUESDAY, 25 JUNE**. We will have a guided tour of part of the **NORTHERN SLOPES**. This is a fascinating area, just across Hartcliffe Way from 'our' Manor Woods Valley and Crox Bottom. Our good friends and neighbours the **NORTHERN SLOPES INITIATIVE** help to monitor, maintain and improve the area, the way we do for Manor Woods Valley, and they will be our guides.



If you're on our e-mail circulation, you will have heard about the monthly Wildlife Walks N.S.I. have been running on Saturday mornings. Several M.V.C.G. members have taken part and enjoyed them enormously. This walk just for us will be a bit closer to home, meeting at the **KNOWLE WEST HEALTH PARK AT 6.30PM**. This is off Downton Road, and there is parking available.

Please come and support our summer outing – the wildlife, the habitats and the views are all terrific!

### 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*).

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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.