



# MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

# **NEWSLETTER**

No. 2  
January  
1995

**H**APPY NEW YEAR to all members of Malago Valley Conservation Group and all readers of this *Newsletter*. This is the second edition of the M.V.C.G. *Newsletter*. I hope you found the first one last November interesting (if you haven't got a copy and would like one, give me a ring on 964 3106).

Since the first edition, we have had our first public meeting and our first outdoor event. The meeting, on 24 November at the new St Peter's Room by St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth, was well attended and interesting. You can read about it and the follow-up walk on page 2. **Our next meeting is on Thursday 19 January - please come and bring some friends.** See the Programme on page 7 for more details. We have also started regular litter collections in the area. Read about them on page 6, and come along to future ones on the last Friday of each month.

We are starting to build up a number of useful contacts in various City Council departments. Malago Valley Conservation Group won't be afraid of making a public fuss if we think it is the best way to achieve what is necessary - but our first choice will always be to work constructively with the relevant people by means of reasoned argument and gentle persuasion.

Anything involving the City or the County Councils will be bedevilled by financial constraints. We recognise this, but will press for south west Bristol to receive (at least) its fair share of what is available to maintain and improve our environment. We are also investigating sources of grants to undertake our own projects.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

---

## IN THIS ISSUE

The Malago Greenway .	Page 2
Planning Applications .	Page 4
Elm Tree Corner . . . .	Page 5
Cleaning Up . . . . .	Page 6
Getting Known . . . . .	Page 6
The Programme . . . . .	Page 7
Who's Who . . . . .	Page 8

## THE MALAGO GREENWAY

**M**ALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP was very fortunate before Christmas to listen to Mandy Long and Jessica Leigh of Bristol City Council speak about noise and smoke pollution and local stream cleaning and the latest developments on the Malago Greenway. We subsequently had a guided walk with Anton Bantock along the Malago through Manor Woods down to Bedminster.

The talk on 24 November was very interesting and well attended and we saw a detailed plan and photographs of the Malago Greenway. We were given details of progress to date and future plans. Local contacts with Wessex Water and the National Rivers Authority have been established and members were advised to report any incidents of pollution of local watercourses through committee members. The meeting ended with group discussion over tea and biscuits.

On Sunday 4 December, 28 members of M.V.C.G. and Hartcliffe Health and Environmental Action Group met at Bishopsworth Library to be led by Anton Bantock on an excursion along the Malago stream and Malago Greenway.

When the group had assembled, Anton gave an introduction to the walk with some historical background on Bishport, Bishopsworth Manor, Headley Farm and Brook Farm. And so we set off, stopping frequently to be informed by Anton and others of the historical and other points of interest along the route.

In Manor Woods, the new picnic tables and seats are placed to attract local family parties, and the wildlife pond has a variety of ducks and moorhen in residence. What a pity certain parts of society think that every open stretch of water is an area to dump their rubbish, when the City has a very adequate rubbish collection service, with large items being collected by arrangement. As M.V.C.G.'s Garbage Chief (*see page 6*), Anton immediately began to make plans and recruit volunteers to remove the worst excesses.

At the concrete interceptor, it was explained that the main flow of the Malago was here diverted underground to the end of the New Cut at the bottom of Rownham Hill. We wondered whether the original course of the stream down to Vale Lane, now culverted, shouldn't be opened up and landscaped.

Heading for the exit from Manor Woods into Vale Lane, we were confronted by a tanker and two excavators clearing the stream bed and removing some recent pollution. We saw at first hand the work the City Council does to maintain our environment and the investigations to overcome pollution.

We continued across Hartcliffe Way into Lynton Road where the Malago re-emerges into the Somermead Open Space. Unfortunately, there was more tipping, although the grass and children's play area were in a good state of repair and looked very colourful. We crossed Marksbury Road into the playing fields and sports ground and came into another pleasant area of green open space, although work is still required along the Malago to prevent tipping.

Crossing St John's Lane and entering the old cemetery, Anton gave us a talk about local flooding, why and when the Malago was split into two and its underground routes to the New Cut. (*Below the cemetery, work has just started on a new section of the Malago Greenway, alongside the industrial estate; this was described by Jessica Leigh in her talk - Ed.*) We then proceeded up Windmill Hill and into Victoria Park where we learned about the Water Pipe down to St Mary Redcliffe and admired the water maze which marks its route.

Walking back through the Park, we passed the Primary School from which vantage point a panorama of historic Bristol opens up, taking in the Suspension Bridge and Redcliffe and other church spires. Then it was the home straight, under the railway lines, past Windmill Hill City Farm to East Street, where ASDA kindly provided a cup of tea and a mince pie.

The party then split up, some returning home to Sunday lunch, others continuing the walk with Anton to the confluence of the Malago and the Cut and then the return journey via Dean Lane and North Street.

On behalf of the party as a whole, we thank Anton for his guidance through this urban adventure, highlighted by his graphical historical episodes along the way. If these functions continue to be supported, they could become regular events.

JOHN TAYLOR

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

**T**WO MAJOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS continue to concern M.V.C.G. The first one, for seventeen houses on the site of 312 Bishopsworth Road, has not developed any further since we reported on it in the last *Newsletter*. The additional reports the City Planning Committee asked for are still awaited so, strictly speaking, the matter is still pending. However, we understand that the City are expecting the applicants to submit a revised planning application shortly. This may be for a reduced number of houses and/or may retain more of the mature trees on the site. We are awaiting developments with interest.

The second planning application really is the most important one to affect our district for a very long time. The Hanson organisation have put in an outline application for the redevelopment of the Wills (Imperial) factory site. The intention is to retain the offices for use by South Bristol College (thereby bringing all their activities together onto one site) and to demolish the factory and replace it with retail (non-food) and leisure development. The road access from the Ring Road (Hengrove Way) would be retained, and the present minor access to Hartcliffe Way would become a major junction with a roundabout. The Planning Department are consulting widely on these proposals and have had exhibitions in Bishopsworth and Hartcliffe libraries.

It is important to realise that an *outline* planning application like this one is not concerned with what individual buildings would appear on the site or what they would look like. All the applicants are asking for is approval for (a) the **land uses** on the site and (b) the **road access**. A further, *full* planning application would then be needed for the details.

The M.V.C.G. Committee meeting on 5 January discussed these matters at some length. We are writing to the planners making these points:

- We are not against the use of the offices by South Bristol College
- We would like as much as possible *appropriate* industrial use on the site (perhaps like the Hawkfield development) so as to provide a range of job opportunities
- We would like the leisure use to be appropriate for people who live in the area and not be designed to attract people from all over Bristol, with all the implications for traffic

- We would like a range of retail outlets which complement existing shops in the district. Food retailing should certainly be excluded, except for possibly a small convenience store for people working on the site
- There should be good access for public transport, cycles and pedestrians, including upgrading the Malago Greenway. Road development on Hartcliffe Way should not interfere with any future Light Rail Transit proposals
- We shall comment in detail on the full planning application as and when it appears, but we emphasise the need for a high quality development.

If you have any thoughts on this hugely important topic, please let us know, and feel free to write as an individual to the Director of Planning and Development Services, Brunel House, St George's Road, Bristol, BS1 5UY.

## **ELM TREE CORNER**

**M**ANY OF YOU will have seen the new ramp and bollards outside Lloyds Bank (Highridge Road). As we reported in the last *Newsletter*, we had a meeting with Lloyds in November to discuss this (then, future) development. We were concerned that what was proposed didn't adversely affect our longer-term ideas for improving the area.

Lloyds were most friendly and helpful and we were reassured. Certainly, the ramp and bollards as they now appear can only improve things, not least by stopping cars from approaching so close to the Bank that pedestrians are in danger or, at best, have no space to walk. How about extending the line of bollards along in front of the other two shops in this rank?

And speaking of bollards, we understand that the Council intend to erect bollards on the tarmac island in front of the shops in Church Road. This is to prevent the continual illegal parking which goes on. Malago Valley Conservation Group is not convinced that this is a good idea - not because we are in favour of illegal parking, but because we would like to see a more integrated approach which reshapes and reduces the tarmac island so as to provide more *safe* parking. As with the area in front of Lloyds Bank, the challenge is to provide for both cars and pedestrians with each having properly defined spaces. And some good, robust planting of trees and shrubs would greatly enhance the appearance of the whole neighbourhood.

## CLEANING UP

**T**HE LITTER COLLECTIONS organised by Anton Bantock in November and December were well supported. We concentrated on Manor Woods, where the Council's street litter removal service doesn't seem to operate. The weather was kind and the events were, notwithstanding a modicum of hard work, quite social occasions. Not only did they provide an opportunity for getting to know other Group members and for chatting to passers-by, but those who lasted the course were rewarded by Anton with tea and crumpets at the University of Withywood.

Two more garbage raids have been organised, also on the last Fridays of the month. So please assemble in appropriate clothes and *with gloves* at 2.30 pm on **Friday 27 January** and **Friday 24 February**. The starting point this time will not be the Library but **outside the 'Elm Tree'** at the junction of Queens Road, Church Road and Highridge Road.

We hope to enhance the publicity value of the litter collections by acquiring some tabards for members to wear which will carry the name of Malago Valley Conservation Group. This will enable passers-by to realise that we are not just a random bunch of nutcases and will help to get the Group's name better known locally. We are investigating one possible source, but if you have any contacts which could help, please give Chris Lillington a ring on 964 7578.

## GETTING KNOWN

**A**ND FOLLOWING ON from that last point, we are keen to ensure that M.V.C.G. is as widely-known as possible throughout the BS13 area. We would like more members, not just from a financial point of view, but because more members increases the strength of our representations to councils and developers.

Thanks to John Taylor, our exhibition, which had been in Bishopsworth Library, moved to Hartcliffe Library at the end of November. If anyone can suggest more places where we can put out our display (local offices? community centres? special events?), please let John know on 964 2913.

## PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

**W**E ARE CONTINUING with the programme of meetings and events for members which was announced in the last *Newsletter*. Evening meetings will be held in **St Peter's Room** - by the side of St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth. These meetings will start at **7.30pm**. Non-members of Malago Valley Conservation Group are welcome. A 50p visitor's fee will be charged unless they join at the meeting.

**Thursday 19 January 1995:** REBECCA NEWMAN, Assistant Community Forest Officer will talk about the *Community Forest*, especially as it affects us around Withywood and Hartcliffe. There are also consultations being planned at present by Avon County Council specifically about Dundry Slopes, so this is good opportunity to make your views known and help shape the future of our neighbouring countryside.

**Sunday 19 February:** in conjunction with Hartcliffe Health and Environmental Action Group - *Dundry from west to east* led by ANTON BANTOCK. Walk beginning at Withywood Post Office at 1.30pm, proceeding via Strawberry Lane, Dundry village, East Dundry Lane and down to Hartcliffe Community Farm for tea and tree-planting.

**Tuesday 21 March:** *Litter and what can be done to improve our environment.* STEVE SPARKS (our local 'litter man'), followed by PETER MILNER, landscape designer and artist, who has worked on improving many areas including shops in Bedminster Parade and the water maze in Victoria Park. He will talk on how streets and paths etc can be transformed with a little artistic flair and hard work.

**Saturday 1 April:** (*as part of National Spring Clean Week*). Groups will be organised to pick up litter from different points in BS13, converging on The Gatehouse Centre, Hareclive Road, for refreshments. (Watch the press for further details).

**Sunday 21 May:** in conjunction with Hartcliffe Health and Environmental Action Group - *Along the Wansdyke*. Walk beginning at Hartcliffe Community Farm at 10.30pm, via Dundry Hill to Yanley Lane and Failand, finishing at golf course car park in Ashton Court, where transport will be arranged to bring walkers back.

*/More overleaf ...*

**Sunday 28 May:** (*as part of BT Environment Week*). Sponsored clean-up of the Malago from Crossways Tabernacle to Hartcliffe Way - further details in the next *Newsletter*.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**N**O-ONE HAS WRITTEN IN, either to say they whole-heartedly agree with what the Group is doing, or to tell us that we're completely misguided and wasting our time. (Either would be welcome, especially if they said *why* the writer thought what they did). Is no news good news? Perhaps the *Newsletter* should have more and more outrageous suggestions in it until a response is provoked.

Please let us know what you think. Alternatively, write with some outrageous ideas that will get others writing. Address below.

### **Malago Valley Conservation Group Committee Members**

<b>Chairman</b>	André Coutanche	964 3106
<b>Secretary</b>	Chris Lillington	964 7578
<b>Treasurer</b>	John Taylor	964 2913
<b>Programme Co-ordinator</b>	Brenda Docherty	983 9901

#### **Other Members**

Freddie Alliston, Anton Bantock, Denis Bristow, Peter Hall, Lola Hardingham, Martin Powell, Ted Thomas, Sue Walker

#### **Co-opted Members**

Cllr Bernard Chalmers, Cllr Peter Crispin, Cllr Richard Eddy, Cllr Claire Warren (*All City and County Councillors for Bishopsworth, Bedminster and Hartcliffe wards have been invited to become co-opted Committee members*).

---

**Newsletter** edited by André Coutanche, 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 8LB; telephone 964 3106. **Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome.** The opinions expressed in this *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of Malago Valley Conservation Group.