



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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IT SEEMS VERY ODD, but we are having to think about the autumn and dark evenings in preparing this *Newsletter*. The next issue will be in early September, so we need to let you know now about the programmed events and talks which will be happening then to get the dates in your diaries. The Programme, as usual, is on page 7.

Something else happening in September (maybe) will be the decision by Avon County Council on the route of the L.R.T. (Westway) in south Bristol. Their programme has slipped because of the amount of response they had to the public consultation. The decision between the Malago and Parson Street options is still finely balanced. We will be pressing them in favour of Parson Street, and, perhaps more importantly, on changing the way the line enters the Wills factory site so that it doesn't spoil Crox Bottom.

Another project which may (just *may*) emerge back into the light in the autumn is Bristol City Council's response to the report proposing a Bishopsworth and Malago Conservation Area. This report was put together back in 1993 by an *ad hoc* group and led on to the formation of Malago Valley Conservation Group. The officers in the Council's Planning Department are heavily involved at the moment in the Public Inquiry into the Bristol Local Plan and with the schemes for 'Harbourside', so they haven't had time to look at our proposal. The Public Inquiry is expected to finish in the autumn (November, perhaps) and official public consultation on the Conservation Area could start then (but don't hold your breath).

IN THIS ISSUE

Fun for All!	Page 2
Floral Displays	Page 3
Colour a Nymph	Page 3
Our Local Shops	Page 4
Bats in the Belfry	Page 6
The Programme	Page 7
Who's Who	Page 8

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

FUN FOR ALL!

OVER FIFTY PEOPLE joined in the Funday on 27 May in Manor Woods (behind the Crossways Tabernacle) and a good time was had by all. As well as our own M.V.C.G. exhibition, we had a stall of goods from the Wildlife Trust, refreshments, face-painting and guided walks, and a visit from our community policeman, Mike Lippiatt.

Anton Bantock and Sue Walker led two groups of people on a newly-created 'Discover Manor Woods' trail and a leaflet was available for sale (at a modest 20p) for people who would like to do the walk for themselves. The trail and leaflet will be revised slightly over the coming weeks and re-launched later.

The weather was good for most of the afternoon, although a shower made us clear up rather quickly at 5.00pm! We are indebted to the St John Ambulance Brigade who attended the event and helped out on the walks, and to the 266th Bristol (Zion Methodist Bedminster Down) Scout Troop for providing us with the very necessary and useful shelters.

It was encouraging to see so many people, especially young families, coming into the Malago Valley, a lot of them for the first time - we hope this will help to popularise the area. Here's to the next Funday!

CHRIS LILLINGTON

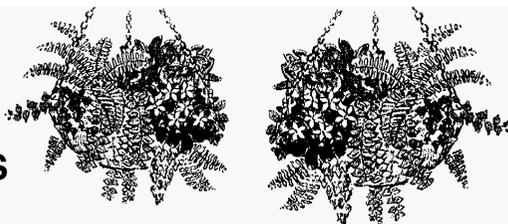
A BETTER FUTURE FOR MANOR WOODS?

JUST BEFORE THE FUNDAY, I got a phone call from Helen Hall, the Conservation Officer at Bristol City Council. She had been contacted by a student at U.W.E. who was on an exchange from Germany and who wanted to do a project connected with landscape management. Knowing of M.V.C.G. and our concern for Manor Woods, Helen was ringing to say that she had suggested to Julia Bolzek, the student, that she should work up a possible management plan for Manor Woods and talk to us about it. Of course, there were the standard warnings that the Council had no money and nothing was guaranteed to happen - but it was a not-to-be-missed offer of some high quality thinking time and a way of getting our ideas into the Council's longer-term planning.

Anton Bantock, Sue Walker and I met Julia on 26 June and subsequently walked through Manor Woods. Julia is now working up her ideas and will come to talk to us on **14 September** (see the Programme on page 7). Don't miss it!

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

FLORAL DISPLAYS



JUDGING OF THE HANGING BASKETS AND TROUGHES in the district will be taking place towards the end of this month. A short list will be made and the prize winners selected by a member of staff of Riverside Garden Centre.

There is still plenty of time to tell us about any good displays in your neighbourhood, so I shall look forward to hearing from you on 964 1116.



LOLA HARDINGHAM

COLOUR A NYMPH

IN CONNECTION WITH THE FUNDAY, all primary schools in the area were circulated with a 'Malago Magic' colouring competition. The drawing appeared in the last *Newsletter*. The legend was part of the home-made musical 'Malago' produced in the 1970s at Bedminster Down School.

Over forty children entered the competition and the winners were presented with certificates and prizes when I visited two of the schools the following week. The winners were:

- 5-7 years: 1st prize - Nicholas Watson, Highridge Infants
- 2nd prize - Kirsty Lloyd, Highridge Infants
- 3rd prize - Carley Godwin, Fouracres Primary
- 8-9 years: 1st prize - Sarah Wyatt, Fouracres Primary
- 2nd prize - Alexandra Coles, Fouracres Primary
- 3rd prize - Kayleigh Baker, Fouracres Primary

Thanks to all those who took part and to the judges, Lotte Bristow of Bishopsworth Manor House and Val Lawrence, librarian at Bishopsworth Library.

CHRIS LILLINGTON

OUR LOCAL SHOPS

IT CAME AS A BIT OF A SHOCK when I was walking along Church Road, Bishopsworth, and found that the whole rank of shops opposite St Peter's Church had closed down due to lack of support. The business from these shops has probably transferred to other retail outlets in the area, but some has also been lost to the supermarkets.

Retail stockists have altered out of all recognition over the past fifty years, with the coming of the motor car making people more mobile, and the introduction of 'throw-away' technology making many items easier to replace than to repair. It was further altered with the introduction of mini-markets and now the large supermarkets, giving people with cars access to nearly all of their needs under one roof.

Our local retail shops have had to cope with this increasing competition whilst still giving us, the customers, a friendly local service. To continue to attract customers, retailers have had to diversify by stocking a larger variety of goods in smaller quantities. For example, the local butcher, in addition to his variety of fresh meat, will probably sell cooked meats, groceries, vegetables, wet fish and bread to meet the requirements of his local customers. The greengrocer will probably stock tinned vegetables, flowers, bedding plants and potted plants in addition to its range of fresh vegetables and fruits.

In the M.V.C.G. area (Bristol 13), we are fortunate to have fourteen groups of retail shopping outlets which are the equivalent of the old village stores where local people walked to pick up their family's provisions, sell their wares and catch up on the local gossip.

If we are to retain our local shops, we the locals must continue to support them to make them viable business concerns. Regular small purchases made at our local shops will ensure that they continue to thrive and are still operating when the time comes for us to stop driving and our only lifeline within walking distance is our local retail shop, newsagent or post office.

Many small local retail shopkeepers are now saying, 'USE US OR LOSE US'. But where else would we meet our neighbours and exchange the local gossip? Even though we live in the suburbs of a large city, we can still conserve some of our ancient village life.

JOHN TAYLOR

Where they are ...

- Bishopsworth Road by Ilchester Road 
- Bishopsworth Road opposite Banwell Close
- Donald Road, junction with Langford Road 
- Kings Head Lane by Highridge Green
- St Peter's Rise opposite the *MayTree*
- St Peter's Rise by Bishopsworth Road 
- Highridge Road/Church Road by Queens Road 
- Queens Road by Gatehouse Avenue
- Fouracres by Sherrin Way 
- Church Road by Whitchurch Road 
- Gatcombe Road by Fulford Road 
- Fulford Road by Fulford School
- Symes Avenue  
- Teyfant Road by Lampton Road

 Post Office

 Toilet

*The Committee, at its last meeting, discussed the empty rank of shops on Church Road which inspired John to write this piece. We wondered whether this is a site where shops will ever be successful. Perhaps a well-designed housing development might be better. What do **you** think?*

We have contacted the agents for this site and they are interested to hear the views of the Group. Please let us have your ideas - address and phone numbers are on the back page.

BATS IN THE BELFRY

NO, WE DIDN'T ACTUALLY CLIMB any church towers to find bats on the evening of 27 June - we didn't need to as there were plenty to be seen in Eastville Park. Members of our Group joined with Hartcliffe Health and Environment Action Group and 22 of us, including a number of children, met Jim Jayne, the Bat Officer for the county of Avon, on a perfect summer evening for a most successful and enjoyable bat walk.



First of all, Mr Jayne gave us a short talk and told us that bats are a protected species and we are particularly lucky in Avon as twelve of the fifteen species in the British Isles are to be found in the county. He explained how bats like to set up their maternity homes and nurseries in the gables of houses but that they do no structural damage and leave once the babies are weaned. We also learned that the saying 'blind as a bat' is wrong as bats can see quite well. He told us that we would be likely to see some noctule bats, the largest found in this country, as there is a large colony nearby, and also some pipistrelles, which are, of course, the smallest and commonest.



We then strolled along to the Lake and enjoyed watching the ducks and coots while waiting for dusk to fall and were lucky enough to see a heron fly over. Eventually our patience was rewarded when the first of the noctules appeared, and a little later some pipistrelles came on the scene. Mr Jayne had brought a 'bat detector', an amplifier which picks up the echo-sounding squeaks made by the bats and from which the type of bat can often be identified according to the frequency. The adults were unable to hear the sounds unaided, but the children were delighted that they could hear the squeaks with their young ears without artificial assistance.



Eventually most folk drifted off to bed and the half a dozen remaining made a last circuit of the Lake in the darkness and were able to glimpse in the beam of a torch some Daubenton's bats swooping low over the water under the trees. Altogether a most fascinating outing for which our thanks are due to Jim Jayne, and to Sue Walker for her organisation.

LOLA HARDINGHAM

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

WE'VE GOT ONE SUMMER ACTIVITY, followed by a very important start to the autumn programme on 14 September. See page 2 for background information and do please put the date in your diary now. Come along and bring your friends and neighbours for this magnificent opportunity to make a positive contribution to the future development of our most important open space and environmental asset.

Monday 31 July: *Garbage Raid* - meet at Bishopsworth Library at 7.00pm.

Wednesday 16 August: *Guided Tour of Blagdon Pumping Station*. Meet at 7.00pm at Blagdon Pumping Station, where KEN BURRELL, the Estates Manager will meet us for a tour lasting 1½ - 2 hours. If you are interested and you could either offer a lift to someone or you need a lift, please contact Brenda on 983 9901 the week before with your phone number, address and possible pick-up point. *A coach tour from a point in the Mendips to Barrow Tanks has been provisionally arranged with Bristol Water for sometime next year.*

Monday 4 September: *Garbage Raid* - meet at Bishopsworth Library at 7.00pm. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE FROM THE LAST MONDAY OF THE MONTH to avoid the August Bank Holiday.

Thursday 14 September: St Peter's Room, Bishopsworth at 7.30pm. *Public Open Spaces as Nature Reserves* with HELEN HALL, Bristol's Conservation Officer and JULIA BOLZEK, a student who is working on a project for a management plan for Manor Woods.

Monday 2 October: *Garbage Raid* - meet at Bishopsworth Library at 7.00pm. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE FROM THE LAST MONDAY OF THE MONTH.

Sunday 15 October: Possibly a Sunday afternoon *Guided Walk* around FOLLY FARM (details to be finalised). This may be arranged for a weekday evening if preferred. Please contact Brenda if you have an opinion.

Thursday 16 November: St Peter's Room, Bishopsworth at 7.30pm. Either a talk on Historic Gardens, or a Wildflower Photographic Slide presentation. Again, details to be finalised; see the next *Newsletter*.

Thursday 14 December: *A Christmas Theme Evening* in St Peter's Rooms at 7.30pm. A 'hands-on' approach to floral/table decorations for members to take part in and show how artistic they are! Some carol singers will entertain us. Seasonal refreshments (but not too many for drivers!).

ALL'S WALL THAT ENDS WALL

LITERALLY THE DAY BEFORE this *Newsletter* is printed, we notice that the wall in front of the main entrance to the *Elm Tree*, Bishopsworth, has been repaired. A hole appeared in this historic part of old Bishopsworth village some months ago. We weren't sure whose responsibility it was, since the grass in front of the wall is common land. We asked the City Council if they were involved. Unfortunately, owing to staff illness, there was a delay before the Council replied, telling us that it was the brewery's responsibility and that they had spoken to the landlord of the pub.

Whether it was our pressure on the Council or their pressure on the owners, the result - although much delayed - is as it should be. Let's hope proper maintenance in future will prevent any reoccurrence.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

Malago Valley Conservation Group Committee Members

Chairman	André Coutanche	964 3106
Secretary	Chris Lillington	964 7578
Treasurer	John Taylor	964 2913
Programme Co-ordinator	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

Richard Eddy, Cllr Bernard Chalmers, Cllr Terry Cleverley, Cllr Peter Crispin, Cllr Paul Walker (*All the recently elected councillors for Bedminster, Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe and Whitchurch Park 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.