



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

No. 114
Summer
2017

WE'VE GOT the typical mixture of news about our green spaces and our built environment this time. There's also the announcement of our SUMMER OUTING, so turn to page 5 first and book as soon as you can!

There's been so much activity in Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve in recent weeks and months that we've got three pages of progress to report, starting on page 2. The increased activity is thanks to Martin Grant who is leading on the coppicing which is restoring the woodland habitat in Manor Woods Valley and organising a group of new volunteers to do practical work outside the 'coppicing season'. Martin has now taken over from Marie Jo the co-ordinating of our Manor Woods Valley working group. More new members of the group and volunteers are always welcome!

Marie Jo is still working hard for M.V.C.G. She is leading for the Manor Woods Valley working group on invasive weeds (Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam), liaising with Neil Green of the Avon Invasive Weeds Forum. And she takes the minutes of the – now bi-monthly – committee meetings.

As we've said before, 'fresh blood' would be very welcome on the M.V.C.G. committee. We now meet every other month, for two hours on the evening of the third Tuesday of the month. Anyone is very welcome to come along to 'observe' the meetings, to see whether you think you would like to get involved – no pressure!

Whether you're an active member or one of our much appreciated 'background' supporters, thank you for caring about our BS13 environment.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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NEWS FROM MANOR WOODS VALLEY L.N.R.

Old Quarry: Manor Woods Valley working group, volunteers and Avon Wildlife Trust have been beavering away in the Old Quarry throughout the spring, cutting back new bramble growth, raking up the dead bramble material into piles, scarifying the soil and sowing grass and wildflower seeds. The aim is to restore it to the open area it was 15 years or so ago, with varied grasses and wild flowers and with open access to the old apple and pear trees. We've had terrific support from Becky Belfin, the Council's parks development officer, and



Bird's-foot trefoil – aka 'Eggs and Bacon' or 'Hen and Chickens'

Earth Day Celebrations: 22 April was international Earth Day and we celebrated with an all-day event for local families. Avon Wildlife Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds helped us organise stream dipping, bug hunting and a picnic in the Old Quarry. The sun shone, the quarry robin watched out for crumbs and a swan stopped by to say hello. Look out for the rag-tree on your next visit to the area.

Bug hunting





*Above:
Enjoying the
picnic*



*Left: The
resident Old
Quarry robin*



*Right: The
visiting swan*

The Coppiced Glades: We've been looking out for what plants might appear in the areas coppiced in the winter. So far it has been mostly wild garlic – watch this space!



Litter Picking: Some local people are regularly picking up litter on their walks through Manor Woods Valley, making our local nature reserve even more enjoyable to be in. Dog fouling remains a problem – so spread the slogan ‘always carry a bag’.

Routine Maintenance: We can rely on the Council parks team to respond quickly to emergencies (like the incident with the burning car in the river in early May), but we occasionally need to help with more routine maintenance issues. For example, we mended the step in the woodland walk and removed a fallen branch that was blocking the path. Let us know if you see anything that needs to be fixed; if we cannot deal with it ourselves, we will ask for help from the Council.



Left: Problem ...

Right: ...solved



Left: Problem ...

Right: ...solved



MARTIN GRANT *on behalf of the
Manor Woods Valley Working Group*

Correction: The A.G.M. Report on page 7 of the last *Newsletter* said that the Forest of Avon coppicing training was funded by Bristol City Council. In fact, the funders were OVO Energy. Thank you to Anna – who did the training for the Forest of Avon Trust – for pointing that out.

SUMMER OUTING



OUR SUMMER OUTING, like the Christmas Party, is always a pleasant opportunity for members to spend time together in a relaxed atmosphere. A visit to the University Botanic Garden has been suggested by one of our members and we've now made the arrangements. We will have a guided tour on the evening of **Wednesday 12 July at 6.30pm**. As with all our events, non-members are welcome, so please bring along one or more friends if they would like to come.

The visitors' entrance is on Stoke Park Road, Stoke Bishop, BS9 1JG, opposite the Churchill Hall. There is a small car-park and this has three designated spaces for Blue Badge holders. The garden is accessible to wheelchair-users. If you need – or can offer – a lift, please let us know when you register to come (see below).

The tour lasts about an hour and a half, including the glasshouses. There are benches around the garden if you want to sit down.

The cost is £7.00 per person (this includes the normal £5.50 adult entrance fee). If the cost is a problem, please let us know. We would like you to register as soon as possible so that we can let the Botanic Garden know how many people to expect. Please send us an e-mail to info@mvcg.org.uk or give us a ring on (0117) 964 3106. We would be grateful if you sent your payment prior to the event by cheque or cash. Cheques should be made out to 'Malago Valley Conservation Group' and posted or dropped into 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 8LB.



UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL
BOTANIC GARDEN

If you would like to read more about the Botanic Garden, their website is at www.bristol.ac.uk/botanic-garden.

We hope to see you there. In the meantime, enjoy your summer!

MARIE JO COUTANCHE

WHAT'S NEW IN KINGS HEAD PARK

THINGS HAVE BEEN CHANGING FOR THE BETTER in Kings Head Park over the last few years. A Park Group was set up about six years ago, meeting at the Severn Vale Bowling Club. The Group has been in close contact with the Council and Councillor Richard Eddy.



There are two wild flower areas in the park now; one by the children's play area and the other is the old play area which has been broken up and soil brought into the park by Alun Griffiths contractors as part of the South Bristol Link Road agreement. This area has been sown with wild flower seeds and will bring a 'wild' element to this corner of the park.

Summer photo of the wild flower bed

Trees were planted in conjunction with St Peter's Primary School and the Tree Bristol Project. Recently tree surgeons carried out some much-needed maintenance on the some of the larger trees in the park and removed damaged trees.

Last year a path was put in from the Greylands Road entrance to the Kings Head Lane entrance – this has proved very useful and is enjoyed by all.

The new path

Unfortunately one of the two owl boxes fell out of its tree in recent high winds (during the night). The box had become rotten over time, but there were signs that it had been used, which was encouraging.

The Bowling Club has applied for and received grants for a disabled toilet/changing rooms which is proving to be popular. The Club has also successfully managed to resurface the car park, putting in a French drain at the back for water drainage from the park.





The resurfaced car park

The most recent addition to the park is the new entrance on Vicarage Road, yet another improvement to the park.

There is still work to be done in the Park but I feel confident in saying that the Group will keep an eye on the Park and stay involved with its maintenance.

LIS PIBWORTH

PLANNING MATTERS

WE REPORTED AT OUR A.G.M. on 21 February that: ‘the over-intensive scheme for new houses at 131 Bridgwater Road – which we had opposed – had been granted permission. As is often the case with “fill-in” sites, the address is misleading – this is effectively an extension of Kings Walk. The developers have behaved disgracefully and built more than the permission allowed – they have made the houses too high and added unauthorised dormer windows. Planning Enforcement have looked into this and have allowed the developers to submit a retrospective planning application for what has actually been built. We regret this – our view is that developers who cynically ignore the rules should immediately be told to stop and put right what they have done wrong. This new application is currently in the works, and both we and Highridge Forum will be strongly opposing it when it becomes available for comment.’

Unbelievably, that retrospective planning application has only recently become available. The developers have delayed, they have submitted invalid details, and – yet again, and incomprehensibly – the City Council planners have tolerated this. We and many, many others are asking for this application to be refused – not just on planning grounds, but out of a sense of natural justice. Why should a commercial developer be allowed to cynically break the law in the expectation that any fine will be dwarfed by profits from enhanced sales?

This one will run and run – we’ll keep you posted.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



TWO EVENTS to tell you about – one at Zion Community Space on Bishopsworth Road and the other our own Summer Outing.

Saturday 1 July/Sunday 2 July: HERITAGE WEEKEND at Zion. A celebration of local history and skills for all the family. Lots of different events: traditional craft demonstrations and community stalls (including one from M.V.C.G.), a 1950s cinema experience, High Tea with local poetry, a visiting owl, and even rides on a traditional green Bristol bus! For full details of activities, timetable and prices, see www.facebook.com/ZionBristol/posts/1667578106615863 and www.facebook.com/events/277098029417377.

Wednesday 12 July: Malago Valley Conservation Group SUMMER OUTING. A visit to the University Botanic Garden, with guided tour, meeting there at 6.30pm. BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL. For all the details of cost and booking, please see page 5 of this *Newsletter*.

MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

Chairman	André Coutanche	964 3106
Vice-Chairman	Mary Sykes	964 3712
Hon. Secretary	Peter Crispin	939 0256
Hon. Treasurer	Beryl Heaton	964 5780

Committee Members

Marie Jo Coutanche, Martin Grant, Lis Pibworth

Co-opted Committee Members

Richard Bevan (Highridge Forum), Diana Porter (Bedminster Down & Uplands Society), Sue Walker (HHEAG), Ken Kennedy (Volunteering Matters), Cllrs Mark Brain, Richard Eddy, Paul Goggin, Helen Holland, Kevin Quartley
(All the City councillors for Bishopsworth ward and for Withywood and Hartcliffe ward 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.