



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

No. 25
January
1999

Malago Valley Conservation Group had a very good year in 1998. The Bishopsworth & Malago Conservation Area was declared; the planning application to build a travellers' camp on Bedminster Down was refused; and - as an unexpected Christmas present on 23 December - the line of the former Avon Ring Road between the A38 and Cater Road was officially removed from the map.

You can read about these and other developments inside - though, as is often the case with planning and conservation matters, there is seldom a 'final' position with nothing left to achieve. The A.G.M. on 16 February will report in more detail and bring these stories up to date.

Malago Valley Conservation Group itself finished the year stronger than it started in some ways and less so in others. We have formalised the excellent relationships we have with many other bodies in BS13 and co-opted representatives on to our Committee. However, elected committee members from the ranks of our ordinary members are still slightly thin on the ground and there is still no shortage of good projects we could undertake if we had the people-power.

For this reason, we are including with this *Newsletter* a leaflet describing what M.V.C.G. stands for and what we do. Most of our current members will know all this (though a quick browse through might be a useful reminder); we hope you will pass it on to a friend or neighbour - together with the included membership application form - and encourage them to join and to get involved. You will also find enclosed the membership renewal form for existing members.

Happy New Year!

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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A.G.M AND BIRTHDAY PARTY

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Malago Valley Conservation Group will be held on Tuesday 16 February at St Peter's Rooms, Church Road, Bishopsworth, starting at 7.30pm. The Officers and Committee members retire each year but are eligible for re-election. See the back page for the names of the current Committee members and Officers.

New volunteers for the Committee would be very welcome. Nominations for either Officers or Committee members should be made in writing at least 14 days before the A.G.M. They must be supported by a seconder and the consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained. Nominations can be made to the Chairman, André Coutanche at 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 8LB; tel. 964 3106. However, as Committee members can be co-opted at any time, do not be put off by these formal constitutional requirements - if you think you would like to come on to the Committee, just let us know!

There is a vacancy for Hon. Secretary. This job consists essentially of taking the notes of committee meetings, since other secretarial tasks such as writing letters are handled by individual committee members. If you think you could help as Secretary, please contact any Committee member to discuss it.

The format for the meeting will be the same as in previous years. Short reports from a variety of people on our activities during the year will be followed by a break for wine/fruit juice and cheese. Our special guest speaker this year will be Cllr Peter Crispin, local councillor, member of the City Council Planning Committee member, and M.V.C.G. member.

CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

AT LAST YEAR'S A.G.M. we presented the first **M.V.C.G. Environmental Awards** to praise and encourage good new developments in the BS13 area. We would now like ideas for projects which deserve recognition at this A.G.M. Have you noticed any good change in our area during 1998? It can be large or small, a new or revamped building, or 'soft' or 'hard' landscaping.

Please let André have any ideas for changes to our environment which deserve credit on 964 3106 by 2 February.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR 1998

HERE ARE THE 1998 ACCOUNTS which will be presented to the A.G.M. The next *Newsletter* will contain a report of the Group's activities during 1998.

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Membership	312.00	Printing	56.00
Functions	231.92	Function Expenses	115.93
Refreshments	7.80	Refreshments	57.86
Other Income	62.92	Hall Hire	165.75
Grant for book production .	500.00	Postage & Stationery	<u>35.95</u>
Building Society Interest . .	<u>7.06</u>		
Total	1121.70	Total	431.49

Excess of Income over Expenditure 690.21
 Brought forward from 1997 523.54
Balance carried forward to 1999 1213.75

Made up of:

Cash in Hand 0.04
 Building Society Account 1213.71

Detail of Function Income	£	Detail of Function Expenditure	£
1997 Christmas meeting . .	27.00	1997 Christmas meeting	6.03
June Plant Sale	32.80	Speakers fees/donations/ expenses	60.00
Visit to Clevedon	48.00	Clevedon Visit	34.40
October Produce Sale	8.00	Refuse bags	1.95
Coffee Day/Sale	96.12	Bulbs	<u>13.55</u>
1998 Christmas meeting . .	<u>20.00</u>		115.93
	231.92		

Detail of Other Income	£
Donations	6.00
Plant Sale	3.90
Visitors	0.50
Sale of Manor Woods leaflet	0.30
Sale of aluminium cans . .	<u>52.22</u>
	62.92

JOHN TAYLOR

PLANNING NEWS

THE GOOD NEWS, as I'm sure you know, is that the City Council Planning Committee refused the planning application for the proposed **travellers site** at Bedminster Down. The **BAD NEWS**, which you probably also know, is that a second planning application has been made for a travellers camp on the same site. This second application has been made by what in best journalese we might term 'a shadowy group' called **BIGOTS**.

Exactly what is behind this isn't clear, but the planning issues are straightforward. The first application was refused pretty well on the grounds on which we and others objected: the area is in the Green Belt and is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. Although there are some changes in this second application - the site is excavated 1.2 metres lower and there are rather fewer 'pitches' - the objections to this use of this land remain. M.V.C.G. will formally object again on the same grounds, and I expect that the City Council will reject the application again on the same grounds.

The big difference this time is that **BIGOTS** may appeal against the refusal. In any case, **BIGOTS** do not own the land - the City Council does and nothing can happen there without their consent. We shall have to wait and see what happens, but if you would like to express your views about this second application, you can write to the Director of Planning, Transport and Development Services, Brunel House, St Georges Road, Bristol, BS1 5UY, quoting planning application number 98/03343/F/S.

Another site where things are happening is what we usually call the '**Matties' block** - officially it's 1-4 The Parade, Church Road. A planning application was made last August to restore the block, adding two flats on the side by Chapel Road, bringing the shop fronts forward to the line of the columns and putting on a coated steel pitched roof. We welcomed the redevelopment of a derelict site and pressed for better quality materials and finish. In the mean time, what used to be **Matties** has re-opened as an Indian restaurant.

A revised application has now been made, omitting the pitched roof and treating the area in front differently. M.V.C.G. will be looking at the revised application and writing in; why don't you add your views? You can view the plans at the Planning Office (Brunel House, as above, behind the Council House) - ask to see revised application no. 98/02105/F/S.

The Summer *Newsletter* described the consultation the Council were carrying out on the **road schemes** inherited from Avon. In our area, that meant the (pre-war!) proposal to build from the A38 Bridgwater Road across Highridge

Common, down King Georges Road and across the northern edge of Withywood to the Cater Road roundabout. The engineering consultants' report recommended ABANDONING this proposal; we agreed whole-heartedly.

A paper went to the Planning Committee on 23 December to report on the consultation process. At that meeting the councillors wasted no time in voting to accept the recommendation and thus officially, definitively and finally **REMOVED** the sixty-year old threat to our area.

The line from the A38 to the end of the Long Ashton By-pass is still on the map, but there's no prospect of anything happening for the foreseeable future. We'll keep you posted on this one, perhaps in the next *Newsletter*.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

CHRISTMAS PARTY

MEMBERS AND GUESTS arriving for the Christmas Party were welcomed with the now traditional mulled wine. While sipping this we puzzled over anagrams of things to be seen in Manor Woods (the good and the bad - Beryl Heaton, who compiled the anagrams, is a dedicated garbage raider!).

We then moved on to identifying Sue Walker's photographs of the area, some easy like the Manor House chimney arcade, while others such as the City arms on Bishopsworth Police Station only showed how unobservant some of us are.

For the major event of the evening we were divided into teams, presented with various waste objects (fortunately not collected on a garbage raid) and a few useful aids such as sticky tape, and were asked to make something out of them. Everyone joined in with a will and various ingenious objects were attempted. The winning team produced a delightful model of an ice-cream stall based on an egg-box and converted a plastic milk container into a stunning waste collection lorry, while the runners-up produced a remarkable rocket launcher from their milk containers.

After these exertions, the Wassail Bowl was circulated to the traditional song and we enjoyed the cider cup contents before tucking into a veritable feast of contributions to the American Supper.

An extensive raffle completed the evening and we all went home declaring the event to have exceeded the previous high standard. Congratulations to Beryl Chappell who managed to win practically all the prizes, and very many thanks to organisers Lola, Sue and Beryl for the games and to Marie Jo in the kitchen.

MARY SYKES

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

THE ACCOUNT of the launch of the South Bristol Rivers Initiative in your November 1998 *Newsletter* was most informative but, unfortunately, not entirely fair to the actions of the Bedminster Down and Uplands Society.

For the record, the Society is fully supportive of this exciting initiative and a number of our members have played a very active and positive role in the project.

A small delegation of eight members did, indeed, attend the launch with the intention of representing the views of the 10,000 of Dawn Primarolo's constituents who signed the petition opposing Bristol City Council's plans for a travellers site on Bedminster Down.

The group waited patiently and quietly near the Manor Woods interceptor until the Bristol South M.P. arrived ahead of schedule. I politely invited her to have a brief word with the delegation, to which she readily agreed. Dawn spoke good-naturedly to our members for five or ten minutes before proceeding to her main business of opening the project.

It is true that some elements of the media chose to focus on our lobbying of Dawn Primarolo rather than the South Bristol Rivers Initiative itself. However, to misrepresent this encounter as some form of bolshy confrontation is grossly unfair and falls below the high standards of commentary normally associated with the *Newsletter*.

Yours sincerely

RICHARD EDDY

Chairman, Bedminster Down and Uplands Society

Editor's note: for those M.V.C.G. members who do not have the last *Newsletter* immediately to hand, this is what we said:

'Unfortunately, the launch didn't get the coverage it deserved in the press, who chose to concentrate on the group from the Bedminster Down and Uplands Society demonstrating to Dawn Primarolo on the travellers camp issue. There can be no objection to lobbying an M.P. at a public event in a public place - but it would have been better if they had had the good manners to wait until after she had finished what she was there to do and not draw the media's attention away from the purpose of the event.'

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

PLEASE make a special effort to come to the A.G.M. on 16 February. We try to make it a celebratory event with wine/fruit juice and refreshments, so come along and bring anyone who might be interested.

🕒 **Monday 25 January:** *Garbage Raid*. Meet at Bishopsworth Library at 3.30pm.

Sunday 31 January: Dundry Hill Group *Informal Walk* to survey rights of way. Meet at 10.00am at Dundry Village Hall (return at 11.30am).

Thursday 4 February: *Dundry Hill Group Extraordinary General Meeting*. Dundry Village Hall at 7.30pm.

🕒 **Wednesday 10 February:** *Owl Prowl* led by CHRIS SPERRING. As a follow-up to his talk last March, Chris will guide us through Manor Woods to look for signs of owl activity. Meet at Bishopsworth Library at 7.30pm in appropriate clothes and footwear and bring a torch. (This is a re-arrangement of the November event which was rained off - keep your fingers crossed for good weather this time and ring Lola on 964 1116 if in doubt on the day).

Friday 12 February: Dundry Hill Group *Informal Walk* to survey rights of way. Meet at 10.00am at Winford Church gate (return at 11.30am).

🕒 **Tuesday 16 February:** Malago Valley Conservation Group *Annual General Meeting* and Birthday Party (see page 2). After the main business, our good friend, Cllr PETER CRISPIN will talk about how community groups like ours can make a difference.

🕒 **Monday 22 February:** *Garbage Raid*. Meet at Witherwood Post Office, Four Acres, at 3.30pm.

Sunday 28 February: Dundry Hill Group *Informal Walk* to survey rights of way. Meet at 10.00am at Alderwick Avenue, Hartcliffe (return at 11.30am).

🕒 **Tuesday 16 March:** TONY TARGETT, the well-known local weather-man, will talk to us about *Meteorology*. St Peter's Rooms, 7.30pm.

🕒 **Monday 22 March:** *Garbage Raid*. Meet at the 'Elm Tree' at 3.30pm.

🕒 **Tuesday 20 April:** CHRIS McFARLING, safely back (we hope) from his EarthWatch expedition, will give us some *Tales from the Jungles of Brazil*.

🕒 **Sunday 25 April** (probably - see next *Newsletter*): our annual *amphibious Garbage Raid* in Manor Woods, as part of the National Spring Clean and in conjunction with the South Bristol Rivers Initiative.

PLANTING IDEAS

IF YOU LOOK CAREFULLY at certain grassy patches bordering Church Road and Highridge Road, you will see literally the green shoots of our latest scheme to improve the local environment. We have planted daffodil and crocus bulbs in four areas where we hope they will be seen and appreciated by many local people and passers-by.

This year's effort is intended as only a start; if all goes well, we intend to plant more bulbs in future years until the whole area is full of spring colour.

Thanks are due to all who helped, but particularly Mike Lillington for his professional advice and for wielding his spade in the Bishopsworth clay. Thanks also to Bristol City Council in the guise of Karen Stagg of Leisure Services for agreement and co-operation.

MARY SYKES

Malago Valley Conservation Group Committee Members

Chairman	André Coutanche	964 3106
Vice-Chairman	Lola Hardingham	964 1116
Treasurer	John Taylor	964 2913

Other Members

Anton Bantock, Brenda Docherty, Royston Griffey, Beryl Heaton, Mary Sykes.

Co-opted Members

Geoff Clarke, Tessa Coombes, Tania Ford, Peter Hall, Chris McFarling, Sue Walker, Barbra Wharton, Cllr Bernard Chalmers, Cllr Terry Cleverley, Cllr Peter Crispin, Cllr Paul Walker, Cllr Claire Warren (*All the City councillors for Bedminster, 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@telinco.co.uk. **Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome.** The opinions expressed in this *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of Malago Valley Conservation Group.