



# MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

# **NEWSLETTER**

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1999

**T**HE CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS have resulted in some changes for M.V.C.G. While we are strictly non-party political, we actively seek close and positive relations with the councillors for the wards in our area.

One of the changes was in the wards themselves. Bishopsworth ward was extended to take in the part of Bedminster ward which ran from Ilchester Crescent down the east side of Bishopsworth Road to the Library. We now have three wards wholly or partly on our patch (the BS13 postal area) - Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe and Whitchurch Park. Bishopsworth elected two new councillors - Richard Eddy and Ron Hodges - and in Whitchurch Park, Paul Smith retired and was replaced by Dave Johnson. Helen Holland, the other Whitchurch Park councillor, and Bernard Chalmers and Mervin Hulin for Hartcliffe were re-elected.

As is our policy, we have invited these six councillors to become co-opted members of the M.V.C.G. committee. Co-opted members don't have a vote, so we can show that we are independent of party. Cllr Peter Crispin (Bedminster) had been a co-opted member *ex officio* and we have invited him to remain co-opted as an individual member and keen supporter of the Group. In fact, three individual M.V.C.G. members who have been active on the committee were elected for each of the three main parties - the perfect political balance!

But a more important co-option happened after the A.G.M. Lis Pibworth, a new member of the Group, responded to our plea for help with taking the committee minutes and is now Acting Minutes Secretary. Welcome, Lis, and thank you. Other volunteers would also be welcome!

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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## SPRING IN THE AIR - A SPRING IN YOUR STEP?

**N**OW IS THE TIME OF YEAR when many of us feel the urge to get out and enjoy the freedom of the outdoors. But we don't need to go far to do this; we are particularly lucky in south Bristol in having many beautiful and interesting open spaces on our doorstep. So why not avoid the stress of long car journeys, beat traffic jams, and visit one (or several) of our local beauty spots?

### **Manor Woods**

In May, the ramsons (wild garlic) are at their best and can certainly compete with 'bluebell woods'. However, why so few bluebells? We wondered if it was the lack of light. The new paths, when they are finished, will make the wood more accessible for everybody to enjoy.

Above the Interceptor, the large expanse of meadow is particularly colourful, with buttercups and dandelions but also several bright patches of red clover and mauve Lady's Smock, the latter not noticed there before. Thanks to the Council's current mowing regime, we can enjoy the succession of wild flowers throughout spring and summer. Do members who have recently joined know that we have rather a rare plant growing there? It's called *Corky-fruited Water Dropwort* (yes, really!)

### **Highridge Common**

The meadow is rich in wild flowers, some quite rare, and is at its best in June and July, when you might find orchids. It's an excellent spot to enjoy views over Bristol and Dundry Hill.

### **Crox Bottom**

If you take the short walk through this quiet, leafy area (entrances off Hartcliffe Way, Whitchurch Lane or Durville Road) you might be surprised to hear a woodpecker or see squirrels in this secluded spot.

### **Dundry Slopes**

Thanks to Barbra Wharton and the Dundry Hill Group (see page 4), some of us have enjoyed leisurely walks on a Friday or Sunday morning. Such a short distance from the suburbs! A kaleidoscope of images and sounds flash through the mind: carpets of primroses along a stream, a deer running through the wood, larks singing, ancient hollow-ways bordered with bluebells, buzzards soaring ...

### **Victoria Park, Bedminster**

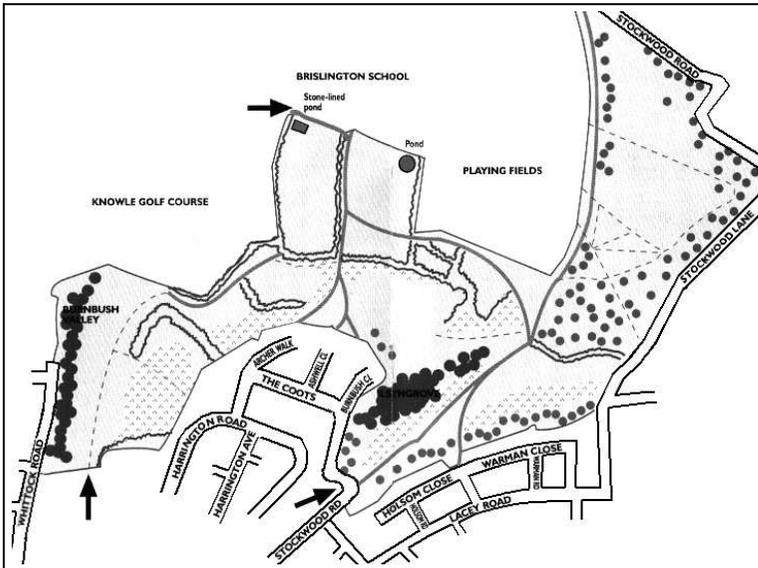
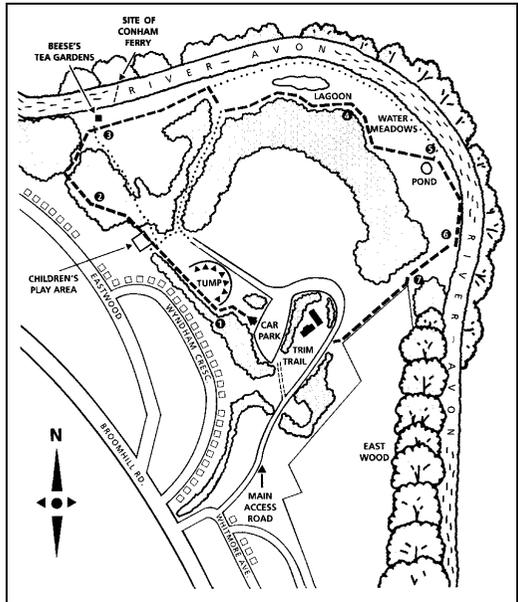
A group of very enthusiastic volunteers have been working there for several years, improving the park for wildlife. Well worth a visit!

## Eastwood Farm

This magical place is a nature reserve and trail in the Avon valley near Brislington. It seems to be a well-kept secret. On a spring day, stroll along the River Avon, look at swans nesting, a heron fishing or passing boats. Why not take a picnic?

## Stockwood Open Space

Some members will remember our outing there in June 1997. It's the ideal place to see ancient hedges and traditional meadows, admire butterflies and listen to birds. You can imagine yourself far from the city.



*Access to Eastwood Farm (above) and Stockwood Open Space (left) from the leaflets published by Bristol City Council*

*Let's share our discoveries!* If you know of any nice places we have forgotten in south Bristol, please let us know. We would also like to hear about anything you have noticed locally or in your garden. Let the *Newsletter* editor know.

MARIE JO COUTANCHE and LOLA HARDINGHAM

## THE DUNDRY HILL GROUP

**T**HE DUNDRY HILL GROUP is a community group dedicated to caring for the Hill and its slopes. The Group wants to reduce fly-tipping, promote the maintenance of rights of way, carry out practical countryside management and promote appropriate enjoyment of the area.

The area covered is roughly Chew Magna to the southern estates of Bristol and from Winford to Norton Malreward.

If you would like to find out more about the Group or any event you can contact me, Barbra Wharton, on (0117) 935 9710. This is also the number to call to get put on the mailing list to receive the programme of events - though D.H.G. events will also appear in this *Newsletter*, deadlines permitting.

### **The Programme**

The spring programme of events has come to an end now. It has had a good response, particularly to the walks.

#### *Walks*

The walks, like all our events, are informal, friendly affairs during which we note problems with rights of way and report them to the relevant local authority. We often see wildlife such as deer and wildflowers on the way as well as other interesting features such as springs that coat twigs and leaves in stone. We have now walked nearly all the rights of way in the North Somerset section of the Dundry Hill area. Planned walks are on 23 May from Felton Lane (opposite the pub) starting at 10.00am; on 11 June from Aldwick Avenue starting at 2.00pm; on 20 June starting at 10.00am at the Carpenters Arms; and on 9 July from Dundry Village car park at 10.00am.

#### *Surveys*

We have been hunting for the biggest trees in the Dundry Hill area. So far a 4.55m Ash tree is the largest. This survey will continue in the autumn so if you know of any big trees near you, or if you would like to help, please contact me.

During this programme we will be surveying wildflowers and butterflies in the area. If you are at all interested please do come along. Again it will be quite informal and no previous experience is needed. On 2 June and on 14 July we set off from the end of Aldwick Avenue at 2.00pm; on 16 June and 21 July we meet at 10.00am at Dundry Village carpark.



### *Practical Events*

During the spring programme we held hedge laying training events, dry stone walling, hedge planting and litter raids. Over the next four months we will be holding wet and dry stone walling events where you can receive training from the experts for FREE. If you're not sure what it involves, come along to the launch at Dundry Village hall on 24 June at 7.00pm.

Litter raids will take place at Middleway Lane at 3.00pm on 6 July and along the Pigeon House stream behind Bowring Close on 27 July at 3.00pm. Your support would really be appreciated!

### *Special Events*

The Egg rolling on 1 April went really well with over 45 children dyeing and racing eggs on the slopes behind Aldwick Avenue. There were, of course, chocolate eggs all round as well.

There will be a treasure hunt on 11 July - meet at Dundry Village carpark at 2.30pm. And on 31 July there is an organic farm open day from 10.30am to 4.00pm at Hill House Farm, Castle Lane, where you can find out how the farm works, go on guided walks and join in the activities taking place.

I hope that I will meet you at some of the events. There is no charge for any of the events and there should be at least one event which will be taking place close to you.

BARBRA WHARTON

## ALL SORTS

**N**OT THE LICORICE ONES, just a mixture of assorted bits of news which don't fit together under a common theme, so we won't pretend that they do.

**Getting Netted:** a reminder that we're on the Internet, and linked to Digital City Bristol which you can access through the public terminals at Bishopsworth Library, the Gatehouse Centre and other public buildings. Our web address has changed (though the link is automatic through Digital City Bristol) to [www.telinco.co.uk/malago/mvcg](http://www.telinco.co.uk/malago/mvcg).

**M.V.C.G. International:** we were delighted to hear recently from Julia Bolzek, who produced the brilliant report on Manor Woods which we continue to use as our guide and inspiration. She has moved flat in Hannover and hopes perhaps to visit Bristol again. We have sent her a pile of newsletters to let her know what's been going on since she left.

**Pointing Ahead:** our efforts to de-rust the fingerpost at the junction of Grange Road and Church Road so that the broken arm could be taken off and mended had reached the end of the road (sorry), since no amount of penetrating oil could cope with decades of solid rust. However, Lee Pibworth likes a challenge and is working on ideas on how to repair it *in situ*.

**A New Recipe:** the planning application to renovate the 'Matties' block, including the building of additional flats on the Chapel Road side, has now been approved after further revisions. We look forward to an overdue improvement to the heart of the Conservation Area.

**It's from you-hoo:** the M.V.C.G. membership cards issued to members when you pay your annual subscription have a list of handy phone numbers on the back. Don't be slow to use them if you see something that needs sorting out. In particular, the Council's wonderful 'Litter Man', Steve Sparks, will always help with dealing with illegally tipped rubbish on 922 4730, and the Environment Agency has a hotline number for pollution incidents on 0800 807060.

**Did you forget?** a few people haven't got this year's membership card yet, because they haven't quite got round to paying their subs. Could it be you? Just check whether your conscience is nagging you about something and, if so, slip John Taylor £4 at 74 Kings Head Lane, Bishopsworth, BS13 7DD. Ta very much.

## PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

**T**HE **M** symbol means an event organised by M.V.C.G. Members are also very welcome at events organised by Dundry Hill Group (DHG - phone 935 9710 and see also pages 4 and 5).

**M Saturday 22 May:** *Working Party* to help clear around the pond at the Millennium Green at the Hartcliffe Community Campus. Meet at Teyfant School at 2.00pm and wear old clothes and wellies. We will provide gloves. Bring secateurs/shears/saws if possible.

**Sunday 23 May:** Dundry Hill Group *Short Walk*. Meet at 10.00am in Felton Lane (opposite the pub). Return by 11.30am. (DHG)

**M Monday 24 May:** *Garbage Raid*. Meet at Symes Avenue at **3.45pm**. (Not the last Monday because of the Spring Bank Holiday).

**M Sunday 30 May:** A second *Working Party* at the Millennium Green at the Hartcliffe Community Campus. Meet at Teyfant School at 10.30am and wear old clothes and wellies. Gloves provided. Bring secateurs/shears/saws if possible.

**Monday 7 June:** Dundry Hill Group meeting at 7.30pm at Dundry Village Hall.

**Sunday 13 June:** BRING A PLANT DAY at the Millennium Green, Teyfant School. At any time between 11.00am and 3.00pm you can take along a donation of plants or shrubs and plant them in the garden. If you would like to help but don't have access to plants, some will be on sale at the event. The day starts with a Church Service at 10.00am.

**M Tuesday 15 June:** Our usual meeting day, but not the usual time nor place. Meet at Bishopsworth Library at **9.00pm** for a BAT WALK in Manor Woods. We will be guided by members of the Bat Group.

**M Monday 28 June:** *Garbage Raid*. Meet at **3.45pm** at the 'Elm Tree'.

**M Thursday 8 July:** A visit in conjunction with HHEAG to the UNIVERSITY BOTANIC GARDEN. Meet at the Garden, North Road, Leigh Woods, at **7.00pm**. There will be a charge for admission and the guided tour of £3.00 per person. Transport may be possible; more information at meetings or ring Lola (964 1116) nearer the time.

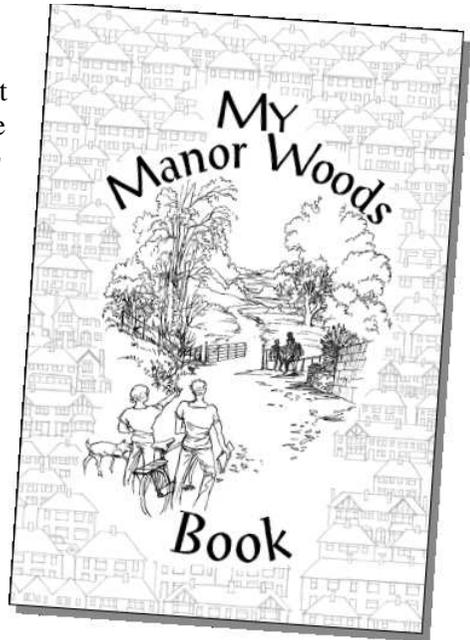
**Sunday 11 July:** Dundry Hill Group TREASURE HUNT. Meet at Dundry Village carpark at 2.30pm (DHG).

**M Monday 26 July:** *Garbage Raid*. Meet at **3.45pm** at Withywood Post Office.

## GOOD NEWS!

**B**RISTOL WATER have most kindly offered to help with the printing of *My Manor Woods Book*. Coupled with the grant already received from Bristol City Council, this will enable us to produce a good number of copies, with good use of colour, and sell them at a very modest price through schools etc.

We are very grateful to Bristol Water and the sub-group working on the book is pressing ahead with finalising the draft and producing page layouts.



### Malago Valley Conservation Group Committee Members

<b>Chairman</b>	André Coutanche	964 3106
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Lola Hardingham	964 1116
<b>Treasurer</b>	John Taylor	964 2913

#### Other Members

Anton Bantock, Brenda Docherty, Royston Griffey, Beryl Heaton,

#### Co-opted Members

Geoff Clarke, Tania Ford, Peter Hall, Anne King, Chris McFarling, Lis Pibworth, Sue Walker, Barbra Wharton, Cllr Bernard Chalmers, Cllr Tessa Coombes, Cllr Peter Crispin, Cllr Richard Eddy, Cllr Mary Sykes (*All the City councillors for Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe and Whitchurch Park wards are invited to become co-opted Committee members*).

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