



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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THANK YOU to all those who have renewed their membership of M.V.C.G. for 2001. You will either have already received your new membership card or will find it enclosed with this *Newsletter*. If you haven't quite got around yet to sending your subscription, you will find enclosed a renewal slip. We have also had some new members joining recently - a warm welcome to you.

The main item in this edition is a report of the A.G.M. for those who were unable to be there; since we don't produce a formal Annual Report, this fulfils the function of putting on record our activities and letting all our members know what we have been doing.

When reporting last year's activities to the A.G.M., we inevitably stray into bringing the story up to date, and there was progress to report on Elm Tree Corner (the arrival of the new elm tree - see page 6) and on extension of the Bishopsworth & Malago Conservation Area to include Brook Farm (page 2).

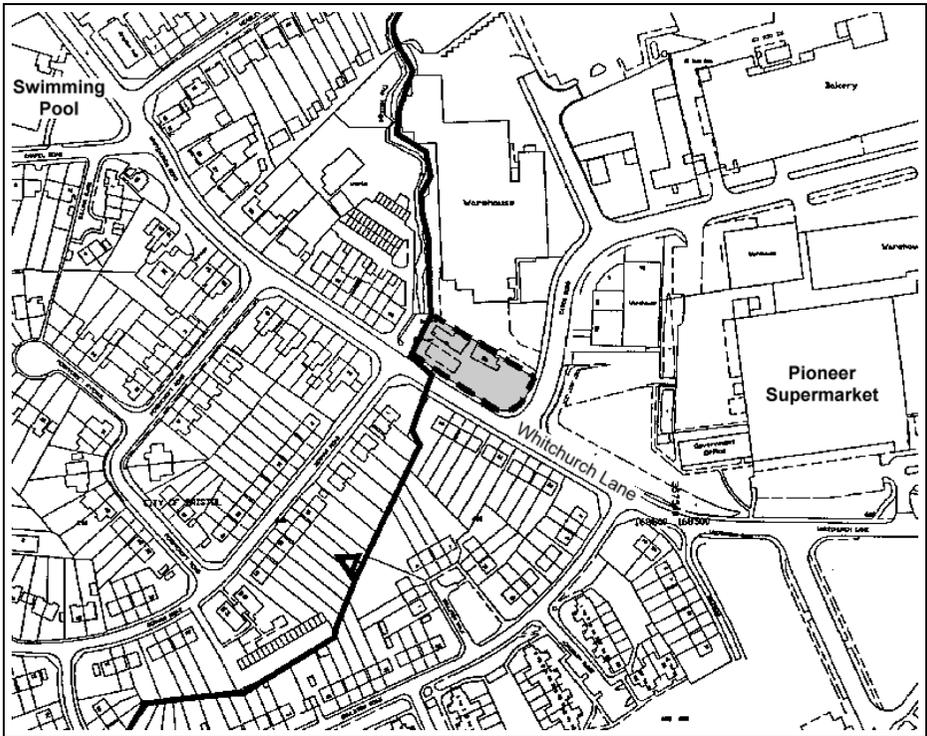
There is also more recent news on the Public Inquiry into the planning application for a major supermarket development at Symes Avenue. The Inquiry was unprecedentedly short - only three days long. This was because - again, an almost unheard-of situation - no-one was actually opposing the scheme; the Inspector, Mr Robert Watson, had a series of people lining up to say variations on 'for goodness sake, give it the planning permission and let's get on with things'. We added our support at an informal evening session at Symes House. The Inspector will waste no time in writing and submitting his report to the Secretary of State (John Prescott). What decision will be made, and when, remains to be seen.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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BROOK FARM



THE MAP shows the extension to the Bishopsworth & Malago Conservation Area which was formally agreed by the Executive Member for Environment, Transport and Leisure (Cllr Helen Holland) at a meeting on 28 February.

The area involved appears small and unprepossessing, but it represents a very gratifying outcome to a 'behind the scenes' activity which M.V.C.G. has been working on since June last year. That was when the 'For Sale' sign went up on the former Esso petrol station which had received planning permission for replacement by a car-wash in August 1999. That permission had included the demolition of the house on the site which used to be Brook Farm, one of the few surviving farmhouses which surrounded pre-war Bishopsworth village. As it became clear that the owners no longer intended to implement the planning permission, we suggested to the planners that the Conservation Area might be

extended to include the farmhouse (which in retrospect should have been in from the start). As the farmhouse is not a listed building, it is only being in a conservation area which gives it some protection from demolition.

Discussions with Kingsley Fulbrook, the Conservation Officer, and other Planning Department officers led to a paper going to Cllr Helen Holland proposing extending this and other conservation areas in the city. After due consultation, the extension has now been officially implemented.

As we know from past years of worry over Chestnut Court, inclusion in a conservation area does not guarantee maintenance, let alone restoration. But this is a good first step and we are grateful to everyone on the City Council for their help.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY ...

AT LEAST you won't spread Foot and Mouth. As walks on Dundry and further afield are curtailed, why not (re)discover the considerable pleasures of a walk in Manor Woods?

You'll need wellies, of course, but a good circuit to sample the variety of scenery and habitats could be from the Bishopsworth Library entrance to the pond, around to the dam, along the path which we and B.T.C.V. cleared last year to the interceptor, and back along the path through the woods. This woodland path needs more work to be done, and Jon Gething of the Wildlife Trust, Karen Stagg of the City Council and I checked it out recently. Under the auspices of the South Bristol Rivers Initiative, we hope that some more improvement work will be done soon.

Karen has also told us that Wessex Water will be doing some engineering work in May to reduce the risk of contamination of the Malago from surface water run-off in conditions of heavy rainfall. This will involve excavations near the main cycleway below the Petrol Station on Bishopsworth Road.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

M.V.C.G.'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

THE SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Malago Valley Conservation Group was held on 20 February. Here are some edited highlights for those who weren't able to be there ...

Treasurer's Report: Beryl Heaton explained that the excess of expenditure over income of £466.45 is explained by the £500 grant from Bristol City Council in last year's accounts. This has now been spent in producing *My Manor Woods Book*. The hall rental was reduced as we have cut out two indoor meetings in May and September. There was an even greater revenue from the sale of aluminium cans - £78.10. Our grateful thanks to Marie Jo for the work she does in sorting them. Thanks to all those who collect cans and who have run and supported our fund-raising events. This has enabled us to make a good start on the enhancement of Elm Tree Corner.

Programme Report: Lola Hardingham reported that we have again enjoyed a varied and interesting programme of talks. We heard about the work of the park rangers, recycling, the Dundry Spring Project, conservation work at Alvis Brothers (cheese makers), and fossils of Dundry Hill and the surrounding area, which had us all looking for ammonites in our garden walls! During the summer we were given a guided tour of Sherbourne Gardens which unfortunately coincided with an important football match which affected attendance, and a few of the Group went on a guided walk at Eastwood Farm park on a lovely summer's evening. The Group also had an interesting tour of the Council House, which proved popular - not because of the sherry provided of course! Our Christmas meeting was the usual mix of fun and games and included Lesley Hurford showing us how to make attractive decorations with the gleanings from our gardens and hedgerows. Thanks to all those who joined in the fun and who contributed to the splendid American supper. The annual coffee day held in November was another success and again thanks were due to all our faithful helpers and supporters.

Planning Issues: André Coutanche introduced his report by saying that the City Council officers who deal with planning applications on our patch are invariably friendly and helpful, and the co-operative relationship which M.V.C.G. believes in has continued to develop in 2000. During the year, we had looked at planning issues at Symes Avenue, at the former Wills factory site, at Chestnut Court, at the former 'Matties' block of shops by Bishopsworth Swimming Pool, at Brook Farm (the former Esso petrol filling station on

Whitchurch Lane), at Spinney Croft elderly persons' home, at the Severn Vale Bowls Club at Kings Head Park, at the 'Elm Tree' pub, at Hengrove (for the new play park behind the Cinema), at Sandburrows Road/Lakemead Grove for the redevelopment of the heart of the Highridge estate, and for masts for new mobile phone transmitters. And that was just the ones discussed in the Committee; in other cases, we have inspected the plans at the Planning Office and made sure that there is nothing worrying about the proposals.

Chestnut Court and the 'Elm Tree', two prominent buildings in the Bishopsworth and Malago Conservation Area, have been improved out of all recognition during this last year. There was also now hope for Brook Farm [*see report on page 2*].

There had also been discussions during the year about the future of what was called the Gatehouse Open Space, or the Link - the former line of the now defunct ring road from the Queens Head on Queens Road through to the Gatehouse Centre on Hareclive Road.

At Manor Woods, we carried out our annual amphibious garbage raid to remove some of the rubbish from the pond, though not using Norman's (semi-) inflatable dinghy - the silt is now too high to paddle out to the island, and this is something which has already come up in discussions with the City Council. However, the two major developments in Manor Woods have been the re-opening of the path from the Dam to the Interceptor, which we did in co-operation with the City Council and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, and the publication of *My Manor Woods Book*. *My Manor Woods Book* had been a superb team effort, and probably the most time-consuming project we have tackled in our six years so far. The book has attracted much praise. Ideas for distribution were welcome.

Progress with Projects: Lola Hardingham reported that plans have continued with Elm Tree Corner, and considerable progress has been made in this area. A public consultation was held on Valentines Day to obtain the local residents views - most of our suggestions were well received. It was suggested at the meeting that the toilet block be removed and a crossing placed in the Church Road/Highridge Road area. As a direct result of our initiative, Bristol City Council planted a row of hornbeam trees along Highridge Road (to join up with our trees). We received a grant of £500 from the Britain in Bloom organisation which paid for the trees, leafleting and 1500 bulbs which a working party planted in November in front of the 'Elm Tree' pub and across

the road outside the bungalows. A disease-resistant elm tree has now also been planted outside the pub itself. We are continuing with these plans throughout 2001.

The monthly garbage raids have continued, concentrating on some of the worst black spots - an hours work certainly makes a difference! Our efforts at Symes Avenue were featured in the Bishopsworth video and were also the subject of an item in Action Line on Radio Bristol a few weeks ago. We have also been interviewed on two other occasions on Radio Bristol: by Jenny Lacey when *My Manor Woods Book* was published, and by John Turner on the general aims and activities of the Group. We were also mentioned regularly in the *South Bristol Observer* and *Evening Post*. Six bi-monthly Newsletters have been published and our website has been kept up-to-date.



The 'Elm Tree' elm tree

Announcement of 2001 Environment Awards: Awards were given to the 'Elm Tree' pub renovation works, the Chestnut Court renovation works and the Dundry Hill Spring Project.

After the formal business, our guest speaker, Ben Barker told us about the work of VOSCUR and we finished with refreshments to celebrate M.V.C.G.'s birthday.

LIS PIBWORTH

MALAGO SPRING PROJECT

THE PRESENTATION of the Environment Award Certificate to the Dundry Hill Group for their Malago Spring Project was a very happy occasion. D.H.G. had a talk on the evening following our A.G.M. at which Phil Quinn was speaking on 'Springs and Wells of Dundry Hill'. Not surprisingly, Deborah Jones, the artist who created the Spring Project, was there to hear the talk, so we were able to present the certificate jointly to her and Barbra Wharton before the talk began. Other leading D.H.G. members present were also very appreciative of the recognition of the Project. (Incidentally, the talk was fascinating, and our Programme Group won't be letting Phil escape ...)

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

THERE'S A CHANGE for the last of our 'winter' meetings at St Peter's Rooms. Instead of Tuesday 17 April, the date will be **Wednesday 25 April** - partly to avoid the Easter Week, and partly because that's when our speaker was available! As usual, the **M** symbol indicates an event organised by M.V.C.G.

Sunday 22 April: Hartcliffe Health and Environment Action Group (HHEAG) have organised a *Leisurely Spring Saunter on the Dundry Slopes*, starting at 2.00pm from Strawberry Lane. RISK OF CANCELLATION BECAUSE OF FOOT AND MOUTH RESTRICTIONS - CHECK WITH HHEAG ON 946 5285 NEARER THE TIME.

M Wednesday 25 April: CHRIS McFARLING, good friend of M.V.C.G. and well known to many of our members, will give us his thoughts on *The State of the Planet* following his round-the-world travels in environmentally sensitive areas in many different countries. St Peter's Rooms (side of St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth), starting at 7.30pm.

M Monday 30 April: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at 3.45pm at the 'Elm Tree'.

M Tuesday 15 May: *Walk at Ashton Court*, led by PHIL RENDLE (Senior Park Ranger). This event is organised jointly with HHEAG, who have a minibus leaving the Gatehouse Centre at 6.45pm. Please ring Lola Hardingham on 964 1116 if you intend to come, whether in your own transport or on the minibus. If you can offer or need a lift, please contact Lola. As this walk may have to be rearranged because of the Foot and Mouth restrictions, we need to know in advance who is intending to come.

M Monday 28 May: *Garbage Raid*. A special visit to a delightful area - Crox Bottom. Meet at 3.45pm by the slip road into the old Wills Factory site, Hengrove Way.

M Tuesday 10 July: *Guided Walk at Eastwood Farm*, led by a City Council Park Ranger. This event is organised jointly with HHEAG, and the arrangements are the same as for the walk on 15 May. Please ring Lola on 964 1116.

ABANDONED VEHICLES

Too late to get onto this year's M.V.C.G. membership cards, the City Council have announced a new 'hot-line' phone number to report abandoned vehicles - 945 5419. If you have internet access, you can also use www.bristol-city.gov.uk/vehicles.

GIVE A BLACK SPOT THE BLACK SPOT

OUR REGULAR MONTHLY GARBAGE RAIDS have made us experts in knowing some of the major black spots for litter in the BS13 area, especially in the parks and green spaces.

However, there are many more local areas which attract rubbish and which have an M.V.C.G. member living or working nearby, or passing through regularly. Why not 'adopt' your own personal black spot?

Many people already carry out their own personal garbage raids, and it does make a difference. If you like, you can collect drinks cans separately and pass them to Marie Jo and André for recycling, but the important thing is to attack - little and often - your own personal 'black spot' and do your bit to help.

ANTON BANTOCK

Malago Valley Conservation Group

Chairman	André Coutanche	964 3106
Vice-Chairman	Lola Hardingham	964 1116
Hon. Secretary	Lis Pibworth	987 0825
Hon. Treasurer	Beryl Heaton	964 5780

Committee Members

Anton Bantock, Don Bartlett, Brenda Docherty, Royston Griffey, Mavis Palmer

Co-opted Committee Members

Tania Case, Eleanor Davis, Valerie Gay, Peter Hall, Audrey Milton, Ben Rosedale, Ted Thomas, Sue Walker, Barbra Wharton, Cllrs Bernard Chalmers, Peter Crispin, Richard Eddy, Ron Hodges, Dave Johnson, 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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