



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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2004

OUR STREAMS and their surroundings are a recurrent theme in this edition, and the first thing to bring to your attention is the event organised by CSV Environment on the Pigeonhouse Stream on 5 June (see page 7). With a bit of luck and a following wind, you'll have this *Newsletter* in time.

And the following weekend, on Saturday 12 June, is M.V.C.G.'s own annual extravaganza, the Amphibious Garbage Raid on the Malago in Manor Woods (see page 7). We've brought it forward from our usual autumn date to tie in with Rivers Awareness Fortnight at the request of Kathy Derrick.

Kathy was one of the main organisers of the Malago Trek, which you can read about on page 6. If you were there, you may have come away with a copy of the *Bristol Living Rivers Newsletter*, hot off the presses. It has lots of interesting news and information (including about M.V.C.G. and *My Manor Woods Book*) and the sharp-eyed may have seen a reference on the back page to a 'Manor Woods Conservation Project' on a date to be confirmed. As this *Newsletter* is finalised, this is still not quite tied down, but - fingers crossed - it could mean the restoration of the pathway through the woodland.

If you weren't on the Trek (or if you were, but were helping in Manor Woods or elsewhere and couldn't start from the beginning) don't forget that there's nothing to stop you doing a DIY Trek! The flyer distributed with the last *Newsletter* has a map which shows the route - though if you're in a small family group you could start from the real historic end of the Malago at 'The Ostrich' in Bathurst Basin rather than ASDA carpark.

Enjoy our waterways, and enjoy the summer!

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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GREENING THE GREENWAY

ON A WARM AND BRIGHT Thursday, 20th May, a group of about ten members gathered in the afternoon to start planting wild flowers at the Bishopsworth Library end of the Malago Valley walkway. This activity was organised by our Manor Woods Working Group and nearly everyone brought tools and plants from their gardens. The object of the work was to place natural and wild plants among the ivy and small trees so that they will seed and spread through the undergrowth and enliven the entrance banks.

People had brought primroses, cranesbill, snowdrop bulbs, foxgloves, St John's wort and a variety of native herbs to spread around the Malago Valley. It was hard work hacking into the dry and stony bank, and pushing back ivy, cutting brambles and creating small pockets which could be filled with compost before planting. Some of the team went litter-picking whilst others separated clumps of established plants as the excavations went on. It really was a team effort.

Once as many holes as possible had been created and then planted on the bank behind the Library, the remaining plants and herbs were taken up to where the memorial rowan tree for Jack Price is beginning to establish itself. Here it was much easier to dig, and the soil was moister and looked



more promising, so a semi-circle of anything that was left was set into the hillside. All the newly set plants were watered in, and everyone hopes that they will naturalise and spread, bringing colour and interest to these rather overgrown areas of the Malago Valley. After we left, there was a short shower of rain which will certainly help!

If anyone who has natural types of plants in their gardens could save some seeds at the end of the summer, we will be able to sprinkle these at the proper time next spring, as well as continuing, when time and conditions permit, to add to the flora of this area. Let us hope that Mother Nature assists in the establishing of more bright flowers and interesting plants.

MARIAN GREEN

PLANNING MATTERS

DON'T WORRY if you get a sense of *déjà vu* when you read what follows - there really are a lot of planning issues which are still in the pending tray or are coming around for the second (or more) time ...

The planning application at THE OLD VICARAGE, Bishopsworth, for two bungalows in the grounds has just been revised yet again; the siting of the bungalows has moved relative to Ilex Close. We will probably go along with it so long as there are no further attempts to build in the grounds.

At PENTIRE AVENUE, where an application for six flats was withdrawn, then resubmitted, then refused, then appealed, then the appeal dismissed, a new application has been made for a smaller development with all the parking off-street. The likelihood is that this version will now be acceptable.

The development of the FORMER ESSO PETROL STATION on Bishopsworth Road got the go-ahead at the South & East Development Control Committee on 28 April. Our view - reported to the Committee - was that the improvements to the streetscape of Bishopsworth Road and to the path from Bishopsworth Road into Manor Woods were a reasonable trade-off for the impact on Manor Woods, subject to a satisfactory planting scheme being agreed and implemented. This will now be worked up.

It's a year since planning permission was given for the development of HIGHRIDGE PLAYING FIELDS. Nothing could proceed on site until after two things had happened: a Community Sports Trust was formed, independent of Highridge United Football Club, and a second planning application was made to cover the aspects of the original scheme which were not sufficiently detailed. A further application has now come in, mostly covering changes from the original: the pavilion/changing rooms have moved to the side of the field and are combined with the existing club house; and the main pitch has shifted a little. These changes appear to be all to the good - but it's not clear how this application deals with the outstanding issues, and there's no sign of an independent trust coming into being.

Reliable rumour has it that June will see the submission of two long-expected major planning applications - for Hartcliffe Community Campus, and for Symes Avenue. Perhaps the rumours might even be correct ...

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

WITHIES IN WITHYWOOD

AS REPORTED last time, we started work on helping to improve the playground at St Pius X school at the end of March. The first project was a willow sculpture, built by Mark Renouard (the professional), Don Bartlett (experienced worker) and me (total novice). Here's how the two days evolved ...



<< 1. The empty site



2. The first willow goes in >>



<< 3. Lots of willows in



4. Now the tricky bit >>



<< 5. Weaving away



6. First phase done >>



8. What a lot of willows >>

<< 7. Now a curvy hedge



<< 9. Interesting shapes emerging



10. The first consumer test >>

<< 11. An arch in the hedge



12. Finished! (almost) >>

(The reason the last picture doesn't show the totally finished work is that the photographer skived off before the end).

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

MALAGO TREK 2004

THE SECOND MALAGO TREK on 23 May was just as enjoyable and successful as the first one last year. About the same number of people came (difficult to be sure when people join and leave at different points), and the weather was kind.

A big THANK YOU to all those M.V.C.G. members who gallantly gave up the opportunity to walk from the Cut to the top of Dundry slopes(!) and instead acted as guides and interpreters (and salespeople!) for the trekkers who were unfamiliar with our part of town and our amazing green and watery areas. As last year, remarks were made about what a pleasant discovery many of the walkers had made. A few sales were made of *My Manor Woods Book* and *Walks on Dundry Hill*, but the main purposes, of course, are education and enjoyment - both achieved.



Wills Lake: a pleasant surprise for many



Our exhibition at the Interceptor in Manor Woods

Kathy Derrick (Bristol Living Rivers Project) had organised survey forms so that trekkers who wanted to could help us build up a picture of both the good and the bad things to be seen in and around our waterways. It will be interesting to see the results in due course.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

MORE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES for what we hope will continue to be outdoor weather. The **M** symbol indicates events organised by M.V.C.G.

Saturday 5 June: *Clean-up and Walk* at the Pigeonhouse Stream on Dundry Slopes organised by CSV Environment as part of Rivers Awareness Fortnight. Meet at the end of Bowring Close, Hartcliffe, at 10.30am.

M Saturday 12 June: Our annual *Amphibious Garbage Raid*, brought forward to coincide with Rivers Awareness Fortnight. Meet at Bishopsworth Library at 10.00am in old clothes, and with wellies if you intend to paddle along the Malago. We will be finished by 12 noon at the latest.

M Tuesday 15 June: *Conducted tour of Arnos Vale Cemetery* in conjunction with HHEAG. Meet 10.00am at gates. Charge £1 per head. Numbers are limited so booking is essential on a first come, first served basis. Please let Lola know (0117 964 1116) if you wish to come and if you require/can offer transport by Monday 7 June.

M Monday 28 June: *Garbage Raid* at 3.45pm. Meet at Witherwood Post Office at 3.45pm.

M Tuesday 20 July: *Walk at the wildlife area of The Mounds, Hengrove*, with ANGELA JAMES. Meet at 7.00pm at the right hand side of the Cineworld Cinema.

M Monday 26 July: *Garbage Raid* at 3.45pm. Meet at the top of Crox Bottom (slip road off Hengrove Way) at 3.45pm.

JOIN US
on GLOBAL Environment Day



Saturday 5th June
in
Hartwood Acres & the lower Dundry slopes

To celebrate this day of action CSV Environment are organising two activities

- a mini clean up of the Malago/Pigeonhouse stream on Dundry slopes with the Hartwood Acres Steering Group as part of Rivers Awareness Fortnight*
-
- a walk round the Greenworks fitness trail to check out the views of Bristol and improve your health.*

Meet at the end of Bowring Close at 10.30am.
Bring appropriate clothes and boundless enthusiasm.
All welcome!

Enquiries? Contact Chris, Michelle or Barbra on 9640114.



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Bristol
Living
Rivers
Project

An ACTION EARTH project supported by the Environment Agency.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

ONLY A VERY FEW members haven't quite got round to renewing their membership which was due on 1 January. If there's a renewal form in this edition, then please return it with your subscription, otherwise we shall have to assume that you no longer wish to be a member.

The vast majority who have renewed may or may not have noticed that we haven't issued membership cards this year. The cost and slight hassle of producing them didn't seem to be worth it. They carried some potentially useful phone numbers, but those for M.V.C.G. people are given below, and those for some City Council departments are easily found in the phone book. However, if you miss the card and think dropping them was a mistake, please let André know.

One new phone number which has only just been announced could be very useful. The Council have set up a RAPID CLEAN UP TEAM to deal with dangerous litter in public places (needles etc.) If you see anything which needs to be removed urgently, ring the team on 922 2241.

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, Mavis Palmer

Co-opted Committee Members

Tania Case, Valerie Gay, Paul Mizen, Sue Walker, CSV Environment, Cllrs Mark Brain, Peter Crispin, Richard Eddy, Ron Hodges, Helen Holland, Colin Smith, 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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Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome.

The opinions in this *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of M.V.C.G.