



**T**HIS *NEWSLETTER* covers pretty well the full range of M.V.C.G. activities. From our favourite green space – Manor Woods Valley, of course! – there are reports of our ‘remedial’ work – invasive weed removal and litter picking – and of an M.V.C.G. initiative to improve things for everyone (p. 2); there’s advance news of what might be happening to two well-known buildings in our area (p. 6); there’s recognition of good work done by others (p. 5); and there’s the ‘social’ side of M.V.C.G. – the summer outing (p. 8) and forthcoming events (p. 10).

But the first thing to report is something which doesn’t happen very often – a proposed new road. In our last edition, Paul Mizen described the South Bristol Link as ‘a road built on a false premise’. Since then, formal planning applications have been made to Bristol City Council and to North Somerset Council, since the route passes through the areas of the two local authorities.

We recognise that opinion in our area is divided. There are people who honestly believe that the road will benefit South Bristol, despite the self-evident environmental damage it will cause, both to the Green Belt and to residential areas. I can’t help feeling that many of these people are still hankering after a ‘Keynsham bypass’ – the sort of free-flow dual-carriageway which hasn’t been built in this country for decades and isn’t on offer now.

Our view remains what it always has been: it’s the wrong road, in the wrong place, being built for the wrong reasons. More than one elected councillor has claimed that the road should go ahead simply because government money is available to build it – it’s difficult to believe that such a stupid view could be held by people in responsible positions.

We have written to both councils to oppose the South Bristol Link, and you can read our letter on our website at [www.mvcg.org.uk/SBL-13-03108-F.pdf](http://www.mvcg.org.uk/SBL-13-03108-F.pdf).

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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## NEWS FROM MANOR WOODS VALLEY L.N.R.

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**T**HE WARM AND SUNNY WEATHER has brought a lot of pleasure after such a dreary spring. Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve has been enjoyed by local people and visitors.

The Manor Woods Valley working group has also taken advantage of the sunshine to walk through the woodland and along the stream. We were pleased to see that the contractors, Quadron Services, have nicely widened the River Path from the interceptor to the dam which makes it much more welcoming. Unfortunately our River Path and Woodland Path finger post which was partly financed by M.V.C.G. a few years ago was uprooted twice and thrown into the stream. The second time, only the two fingers were found at quite a distance and the main post has disappeared. We hope to work with the Council to get the finger post reinstated.

In the summer *Newsletter* we told you about Invasive Weeds and the lecture some of us attended at Bristol Zoo. Thanks to Neil Green, the Avon Invasive Weeds Field Officer, there were two Himalayan balsam 'Big Pull' sessions attended by a group of employees from Lloyds, Canons



Marsh, and M.V.C.G. members. We worked hard and removed most of the weeds but we also enjoyed ourselves. Those who have taken part in the past few years can see the difference we have made. Also this summer the Japanese knotweed was treated by specialists and hopefully will be kept under control.

Earlier this year Angela, a member of our group, suggested that there should be a bench at the top of the flower meadow. These days a lot of people walk from the Valley Road entrance through the small woodland on the left and along the

top of the meadow. After doing some research and with the agreement of our committee it was decided in June that Malago Valley Conservation Group would finance the bench. In the middle of June we sent the payment to the Parks Department. We understood that the order could not be put through until our cheque was cleared. A long wait ensued with a few e-mails backwards and forwards and a lot of time spent trying to resolve the problem. The Finance Department had installed a new system and was unable to clear our cheque. However, a couple of more pointed e-mails got the desired result, and the bench was installed on 9 September.



*Left: First, the holes ...*



*Right: ... then the cement ...*



*Left: ... then the testing!*

Very appropriately, Angela and her Airedale, Nell, were the first users and we know there will be many more. Angela tells us that she has already met several other dog-walkers at the bench who really appreciate it and will help us keep an eye on it. Go and try it! We are thinking about having a plaque engraved to say the bench was donated by M.V.C.G.



Just before this *Newsletter* was produced we had another Litter Pick in Manor Woods Valley, concentrating on the woodland near the Valley Road entrance. A successful and enjoyable couple of hours resulted in several bags of rubbish which we had arranged for Quadron to take away.



*Above: Garbage to go*



*Left: Marie Jo, Angela and Martin have a well-earned sit-down on a handy bench ...*

As you can see, there is never a dull moment! We would welcome new members joining our small group as we often feel it would be lovely to be able to share tasks.

MARIE JO COUTANCHE  
*Manor Woods Valley Working Group*

### **HEADLEY PARKERS**

We're delighted to report that a new group has started up to help improve and maintain Headley Lane Park. They've already arranged events in the park and have more coming up – see their attractive website at <http://headleyparkers.btck.co.uk> (also linked from our website at [www.mvcg.org.uk](http://www.mvcg.org.uk)).

## CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

**Y**OU MAY REMEMBER the unfortunate accident at Zion Bristol a few months back when the some stones from the gable end wall which fronts on to Bishopsworth Road fell in – fortunately with no injuries, even though the building was being used at the time.

It was a big challenge for Jess Wright who runs this super community arts space, but with support from many people and with some grant money via the Neighbourhood Partnership, a terrific repair was done, making the appearance of the building even better than before.

Richard Eddy, who is one of the councillors for our patch who regularly comes to our committee meetings, suggested that M.V.C.G. should recognise this with an Environmental Award.

We used to invite suggestions for Environmental Awards every year, but when it became difficult to get a reasonable number of nominations, we put the scheme into abeyance. We didn't abandon it, though, and we're always very pleased to make a one-off award like the one to Zion.



Paul Mizen regularly attends events at Zion and he presented the certificate to Jess on behalf of M.V.C.G.

## CHANGING CHURCHES

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**W**E ASKED in the last *Newsletter* what the future might be for the United Reformed Church building on Church Road, Bishopsworth after it had been sold. We now have a better idea, since the new owner has done the right thing in these circumstances and started what is called a PRE-APP. CONSULTATION. This is talking to local interested parties, such as M.V.C.G., before a planning application is submitted. When done properly, as in this case, there is an advantage for both the local group and the developer: we can press for the sort of development we would like to see, and the developer can avoid potentially expensive conflicts if he goes ahead with a planning application which then attracts opposition.



In the case of the U.R.C., I met the developer at the church building recently and we had a long talk and a walk around the site. Not surprisingly, the intention is to use the site for housing, with the church building being converted internally into four flats on two floors, and blocks of new two-bedroom flats being built behind on the site of the church hall, which would be demolished.

We don't have a problem with the principle of that, and I was pleased to discover that the developer appreciates both the *art nouveau* style of the building and the stained glass, which he wants to retain. We were much less enamoured of the appearance of the proposed new flats, but we were looking at initial drawings, we made our point, and that's the whole purpose of pre-app. consultation.

Developments in residential areas like this nearly always come down to questions of access and parking. This one is no exception, with a lane from Fernsted Road leading to the new flats and nearly all the parking. The developer still has some options to consider here, so we will wait and see what he comes up with when he next contacts us.



Access and parking are even more problematical with the other pre-app. consultation we've been involved with – for the former Zion church hall on Bishopsworth Road (not to be confused, of course, with the church building itself, which is now the splendid Zion Bristol art space – see page 5!).

Diana Porter, for the Bedminster Down and Uplands Society, and I for M.V.C.G. recently met the architect for this project over a cup of coffee at Zion. Again, the intention is flats, which is fine, and the proposal would respect the internal structure of the building, with the flats lined up with the existing windows. But there is virtually no room



for parking on-site, and even crossing the pavement into the site with a car wouldn't be allowed because it's on the zig-zags from the adjacent pedestrian crossing. We had a good brain-storming session over that! But it may be that this will be one of those developments, of which there have been a few in Bristol, where buyers are told: there's a showcase bus route outside and we're not making any provision for cars. We shall see!

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

## WILD BS13

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**I**T'S BEEN A WHILE since we had a 'Wild BS13' slot, but observations of how nature and the city co-exist are always welcome. This one was prompted by the Balloon Fiesta, where the noise of aerobatics from Ashton Court by an RAF Typhoon made me look up to see, not an aircraft, but a BUZZARD cruising silently over our garden. And just a day or so ago, a SPARROWHAWK was sitting quietly in our apple tree. Not a first, by any means, but a reminder – as with the buzzard – that there's more around than you might think. Keep your eyes open – as Angela and Tony were doing when they saw a KINGFISHER on the Malago in Manor Woods Valley.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

## SUMMER OUTING: JUNE 2013

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**A**FTER SO MUCH inclement weather we did wonder how we would fare for our 'summer outing', an evening visit to the Northern Slopes. However, our fears were ungrounded as Paul came up trumps with picking 25 June which was warm and sunny and ideal for our expedition.

We were met by Julia Tutton from the Northern Slopes Initiative. This is a group which cares for the slopes as M.V.C.G. does for Malago Valley L.N.R. Julia warned us we would be crossing rough terrain and scrub and then produced a pair of secateurs to press home her point. Our walk began by going to look at 'our patch'. We crossed to some steps and from here we had a good high viewpoint where we could see Manor Woods Valley and its relationship to other green corridors. I for one have never been able to visualise how it integrated with other nature reserves.



*A new angle on the meadow in Manor Woods Valley*

Having lingered for a while we branched off into the undergrowth with Julia valiantly leading the way and where the secateurs came into play. Although we were passing through an area of waist high grass and brambles there was a negotiable narrow path through it. We stopped again for another look at the view. This time we could see across to Clifton and beyond and it was fun pointing out the various landmarks. Further on, Julia explained the reason for some derelict buildings of comparatively recent construction. They were



flats which had suffered subsidence due to the unstable nature of the ground and the steep slope. Some other flats had already been demolished and preparations were under way to develop the site. Although the conservation group was happy about this they wanted to preserve some adjacent meadow land but were fearful that this might also be developed.



We returned by way of woodland. Here Marie Jo was delighted to spot some quaking grass to which she then guided us to see for ourselves. Next to it was another exciting find – some pretty pink alliums. Further on there were more views, with Paul being convinced he could see the Cotswolds. The rest of us weren't so sure!

*Quaking grass, or perhaps Jiggle-joggles, or Shaking-grass, or – as we were once told on Highridge Common – Wiggy-waggers. What do **you** call it?*

Julia deposited us back at our starting point with perfect timing. We had a quick chat about future events and thanked her for such a great evening. It was good to be led by someone so knowledgeable and enthusiastic.

Thanks to Paul for organising such a good event and to the Northern Slopes Initiative for their help in providing such a good leader.

BERYL HEATON

- If you're on our e-mail circulation, you will know about the monthly Wildlife Walks N.S.I. have been running on Saturday mornings. If you're not on e-mail but

have internet access elsewhere, have a look at their website at [www.northern-slopes-initiative.co.uk](http://www.northern-slopes-initiative.co.uk) (also linked from our website at [www.mvcg.org.uk](http://www.mvcg.org.uk)).



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**T**HE POPULAR and perennial **BISHOPSWORTH QUIZ** will be coming around again soon. The winners last year were the Malago Society, so they have to arrange it and set the questions for this year. Owing to the – er – special relationship between the Malago Society and M.V.C.G. we can announce here that the 2013 Bishopsworth Quiz will be on **Monday 18 November**, at the usual venue of the Royal British Legion, Manor Road, Bishopsworth – prompt start at 7.45pm.



It's a fun evening, either to take part in or to watch, and M.V.C.G. will be entering one or two teams, as usual. The Royal British Legion do need to be notified in advance of the names of those attending, so if you'd like to come along, either as a team member or a supporter, please contact André by phone or e-mail – details in the box below.

And **Tuesday 17 December** will be the date for the **M.V.C.G. CHRISTMAS PARTY** at 7.30pm. Make a note now, and expect the unexpected on the night!

### Malago Valley Conservation Group

<b>Chairman</b>	Peter Crispin	907 0623
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Mary Sykes	964 3712
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	André Coutanche	964 3106
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Beryl Heaton	964 5780

#### Committee Members

Anton Bantock, Heather Leeson, Paul Mizen, Lis Pibworth

#### Co-opted Committee Members

Diana Porter, Don Smith, Sue Walker, CSV Environment, Cllrs Mark Brain, Richard Eddy, Helen Holland, Tim Kent, Derek Pickup, Kevin Quartley (*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.