



# MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

# NEWSLETTER

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**T**HE LAST *NEWSLETTER* reported a new co-opted member on our committee – recently-elected councillor Naomi Rylatt. We also have another new co-opted committee member – Richard Bevan, the new Chair of Highridge Forum.

M.V.C.G. and Highridge Forum have been co-operating for years, not least over our plans for Elm Tree Corner. The previous Chair, Don Smith, was also a co-opted committee member but didn't come to our meetings. We're always quite relaxed about that – the important thing is that we send co-opted people our committee papers and our *Newsletter*, so we stay in touch and know what each other is working on.

Highridge Forum has had a bit of a 're-launch', and Richard Bevan, who lives locally and recently retired from Bristol City Council, is able to be very active and is now attending our committee meetings – welcome, Richard! Many of you will have heard Richard speak to M.V.C.G. wearing one of his previous City Council hats, and he's also involved in the plans to re-use the former Bishopsworth Swimming Pool, which he told us about at our last A.G.M.

Speaking of Elm Tree Corner, we are delighted to report that the Dundry View Neighbourhood Partnership agreed at its last meeting that the traffic engineering works for Elm Tree Corner would be the main scheme for our area for the next couple of years. So after 17 years, we should be making progress on the 'hard landscaping' which will improve this important area for car-bourne shoppers and for pedestrians. We can expect formal consultation by the Council Highways people to start before long.

Another long-running (but not quite 17 years!) planning issue has now been decided. The revised plans for flats at the former Methodist church hall on Bishopsworth Road have received planning permission.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

## IN THIS ISSUE

Manor Woods Valley News....	Page 2
White Elephant Alert!.....	Page 4
White Elephant Update.....	Page 5
Summer Outing.....	Page 7
Dates for your Diary.....	Page 8

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

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**A**FTER A SUNNY AND WARM SUMMER autumn has arrived. In early August people started picking blackberries. Had the crop ripened earlier than usual or has making jams and jellies come back into fashion? People have their favourite patch for blackberries or golden gages.

*Documentary  
evidence of  
scrumping*



In the old quarry part of Manor Woods Valley apples and pears are ripening. Joe McSorley from the Avon Wildlife Trust and his volunteers cleared the paths in early summer so that the access to trees is easier. We are very grateful for their help.

At the end of July Joe asked us if we could gather seeds from the wild flower meadow, which we did. This September the Wildlife Trust is creating a wild meadow in Crox Bottom and the idea of sharing Manor Woods Valley seeds with Crox Bottom is very appealing. We have not forgotten the enthusiasm we all felt the first year when the Parks Department let the grass grow on the slope where the meadow blossoms every year.



*Manor Woods  
Valley wild flower  
meadow in a bag  
at the start of its  
journey to Crox  
Bottom*

In late June some of our members joined other volunteers to take part in the Himalayan Balsam Big Pull. Thank you to Neil Green for organising it. It has been a rewarding activity every year as we have made a difference. Some plants grew later in the summer and some of us could not resist stepping down the bank of the stream to pull them out. I have not heard that anybody fell into the mud!

The area around the interceptor is still causing us concern. We were hoping that after concreting the remaining slabs, the rest of the wall would be made to look better. In spite of many e-mails to the Parks Department this has not happened yet.

Also, the grid at the interceptor seems to be constantly covered with debris, mainly branches (*right*). Lack of regular clearance is partly the problem. However, where have all these branches come from in the past couple of years? We have noticed that there are more and more islands in the stream and the silted pond is



a great concern to us. Could this lack of maintenance have serious consequences, particularly if we have more very wet winters? And where are the herons, kingfishers etc. we used to see? Has their habitat or food vanished or grown scarce?

Individual employees in the Parks Department, some of whom we have worked with since M.V.C.G. began, have always been helpful, as have Quadron Services, the current contractors, but our work as a group is becoming harder. We hear about cuts in budgets, people who have left and huge changes in the management of parks. You probably know that from February 2015 the maintenance of parks will be 'brought in-house', which means that the Council will not employ contractors like Quadron in our area – the staff will be direct employees of Bristol City Council.

However, M.V.C.G. has always been very resourceful and we hope we will be able to find some solutions.

MARIE JO COUTANCHE  
*Manor Woods Valley Working Group*

## WHITE ELEPHANT ALERT!

**R**ETHINK METROBUS is a new organisation set up by environmental, allotment and transport groups from many parts of the city to lobby the Council into finding an alternative to BRT/Metrobus, the 'White Elephant'.

Their main thrust is that the possible £200 million outlay is not value for money, and even if this money is not available for other schemes, the millions that our Council has to provide would be better spent on a lesser scheme, but one that would bring more benefit and not have such a destructive effect on our green spaces, wildlife, and allotments.



The group uses a White Elephant as a symbol of the waste of money Metrobus is certain to be, and several demonstrations recently took place along the various routes where White Elephants were


placed to alert the public as to how their money was about to be wasted. Some members of M.V.C.G. attended at Highridge Common (*above*) and we think this new group deserves our support. We shall continue our campaigning until a transport alternative that has more prospects of succeeding and more public support is put in place!

PAUL MIZEN









## WHITE ELEPHANT UPDATE





M.V.C.G. has consistently opposed the South Bristol Link (SBL) because it will do nothing for better transport but it will destroy Green Belt and a large swathe of Highridge Common. There are two other major schemes which together with SBL make up what is now called 'MetroBus' – the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads route (BRT2) and the North Fringe to Hengrove route (BRT3).





BRT2 is outside our area, but BRT3 has implications for green space on the edge of Hartcliffe Way. We haven't actively opposed it, mostly because of lack of resources. However, BRT3 has now received planning permission – just, by 6 votes to 4, with a large amount of criticism from councillors for lack of clarity in the scheme papers.





Although all three schemes now have planning permission, it's by no means a foregone conclusion that this wasteful and ineffective scheme will be built. Opposition to it – which we support – is moving to a 'political' level.





The Green Capital Partnership objected to MetroBus, and even the *Bristol Post* – who have taken some views in the past which M.V.C.G. has been very opposed to – said this:




*Metrobus is a vanity project for local politicians, an embarrassing white elephant that will do nothing to improve public transport in this city.*



*We would be better turning down the money from central government and re-thinking our entire local transport structure.*



M.V.C.G. is now part of the alliance of groups who are trying to achieve exactly that.



## HIGHLIGHTING WASTED URBAN SPACES

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*M.V.C.G. is a member of C.P.R.E. – the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Our part of outer Bristol gains tremendously from its closeness to superb countryside but is also potentially a threat to that countryside, as demands for new houses and other developments increase the pressure to build outside the city boundary. Here's an edited extract from the C.P.R.E.'s latest mailing ...*

**A**S PART OF our campaign for stronger 'brownfield first' policies, C.P.R.E. have launched an interactive campaign called WASTE OF SPACE. The idea is to raise public awareness of the existence of previously developed sites which could accommodate new homes. This will relieve the pressure to build on Green Belts, open countryside and land on the edge of the town.

C.P.R.E. President, Sir Andrew Motion, proposed that local volunteers should 'identify the brownfield sites that are most suitable for regeneration, and then help prioritise their development'.

Readers are called on to put your local knowledge to use by nominating brownfield sites which are derelict, abandoned or vacant, together with sites which are badly designed and make inefficient use of the space they occupy.

You can enter details of your nominations on the online map at [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk), or nominate sites via social media by tweeting photos to @CPRE with the hashtag #WasteOfSpace, or by posting photos at [facebook.com/WasteOfSpace](https://facebook.com/WasteOfSpace). Or you can e-mail photos of local brownfield sites to [wasteofspace@cpre.org.uk](mailto:wasteofspace@cpre.org.uk).

Whatever method you use to get in touch, please try to include:

- the location of the site, preferably a postcode or address
- a title for the site (e.g. road name, 'disused factory' etc.)
- description of the site, and former use, if applicable – 100 words max.
- contact details, including e-mail.

The result of this research will be published in the winter, but, until then, the WASTE OF SPACE initiative will allow C.P.R.E. to identify specific sites which are ripe for regeneration, starting a debate in local communities and influencing national policy. To take part and to follow the progress of the campaign, visit [www.cpre.org.uk/wasteofspace](http://www.cpre.org.uk/wasteofspace).

## A SPRING IN SUMMER

FOR OUR 'SUMMER OUTING' this year, we visited the Malago Spring Art Work on Dundry Hill. On 4 August around 20 people and two dogs met in Morrisons car park to set out on our walk. We were joined by a Police Officer and a P.C.S.O. who keep a regular eye on illicit motorbikes on Dundry Slopes.

We followed the green fingers and were soon climbing the grassy slopes to Dundry. It was fairly steep so we stopped at intervals to get our breath and to admire the wonderful view of Bristol as it presented itself in the evening sun. After a while we reached woodland and then we turned a corner to find we were at the spring. Here we waited until everyone was assembled and André gave a very interesting talk about the project to make a feature here.



The idea was conceived by the late Dundry Hill Group who employed a local artist, and although it is perceived as the source of The Malago, this is just one of them. Flooding and the ravages of time had caused damage to the structure. This concerned M.V.C.G. and we worked with CSV to repair the structure using our funds to finance the project. It was good to see the excellent renovation which



had recently been carried out. The dry stone waller who had been employed was also an experienced hedge layer and he had laid a hedge to form an attractive boundary behind the wall. We were all delighted with the result of his skills.

After everyone had had a good look round and the dogs had had a frolic we enjoyed our picnic. Then we made our way back down the hill after a delightful evening.

BERYL HEATON

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



IT MAY SEEM a little premature, but we're looking ahead in this edition to events in November and December.

**Monday 17 November:** The annual BISHOPSWORTH QUIZ, a fun and sociable evening held at the Royal British Legion, Bishopsworth. M.V.C.G. traditionally enters two teams who do pretty well but not well enough to win so that they have to organise the event the following year!

If you'd like to take part, or to come along to support our teams, you'll need to let André have your name for forwarding to the Legion before the event (contact details below).

**Tuesday 2 December:** An early date for our CHRISTMAS PARTY, but at least it shouldn't clash with other demands on your time for mince-pie munching. The only certainties about our Christmas Parties are that they are unpredictable – and that there will be an American Supper, so please bring a little something for the refreshment table if you can.

We meet this year in a different hall at St Peter's Rooms, at the 'car park' end, but it will be signposted from the usual entrance when you get there. St Peter's Rooms are at the side of St Peter's Church, Church Road, Bishopsworth. Meet at 7.30pm.

### 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

Richard Bevan, Diana Porter, Sue Walker, CSV Environment, Cllrs Mark Brain, Richard Eddy, Helen Holland, Tim Kent, Kevin Quartley, Naomi Rylatt  
*(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.