



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP **NEWSLETTER**

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THIS NEWSLETTER is going out a month later than it should have. Don't blame our ultra-efficient distributor; I sometimes think John gets them through people's letterboxes while the toner is still hot. Put it down to holidays, both ours and those of other people, French mostly, who have been visiting us.

We had two lots of French visitors, both of whom were roped in to help on M.V.C.G. business. Anne, Michel and the two girls, Aude and Solenn, were inveigled on to a garbage raid, while Didier and Margot helped distribute some of the Conservation Area leaflets (see page 3). *Merci beaucoup!*

Sometimes producing the *Newsletter* does seem to be a bit of a struggle. Do we need to have six per year? Could we drop the summer one? Did you even miss the July *Newsletter*? (I know one person did - thank you, Norman). Do please let the Committee know what you think. If members and others contribute material, I shall have no problem about putting it together so please help to make our *Newsletter* a two-way channel of communication.

It won't have escaped your notice that there are one or two green stickers in windows and on cars in the district. The protest against the proposed residential site for travellers at Bedminster Down has aroused considerable passion. M.V.C.G. has looked at the issue as we would any proposal to build on a site which is in the Green Belt and is a site of nature conservation interest. We are against it, for these straightforward planning reasons, and we have written to the City Council to say so. One good thing to come out of the proposal is the formation of the Bedminster Down and Uplands Society, which has said that it won't be a single-issue pressure group but will act in the long term on behalf of the people in those parts. M.V.C.G. is hoping for a positive relationship with the new group.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

DUNDRY HILL PROJECT

SOME OF YOU will already have met me, Barbra Wharton, the new Dundry Hill Project Officer. I started working at the beginning of July and have since been finding out about the many different and exciting projects that are happening in and around South Bristol.

I have previously worked on a variety of environmental and community projects in the Mendip District, for Mendip District Council's Local Agenda 21 programme and on the Isle of Wight, for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Although I am still very much getting to know the area, I have already discovered many lovely places and people and am looking forward to my three years working in the Dundry area. I am currently investigating the possibilities of establishing a voluntary ranger service and have met with the Cotswolds and Mendip Hill ranger co-ordinators.

The 12th of September is a definite date for your diary. On the 12th and 13th of September the drystone wall started in July will be continued and anyone interested in joining in is welcome.

The 12th September is also the date of the Dundry Hill Group A.G.M. which will be held at 6.45pm in Dundry Village Hall. We will be looking to appoint a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary for the general meetings which will occur once every two months. We will also be looking for anyone who is interested in the publicity, projects and fund raising sub-committees. It is our intention to keep the meetings fairly short and the sub-groups will meet as required. If you would like to stand for a position or find out more about them, please do contact me. If you are interested in being involved, but do not feel able to commit much time on a regular basis, please still get in contact. Anyone with an interest is most welcome.

Finally, the 12th is an opportunity to help us celebrate the start of the Dundry Hill Project at 7.30pm. After an outline of the Dundry Hill Project's aims for the next three years, we are lucky enough to have Jim McNeil, a story teller and poet who you may remember from the opening of the Forest of Avon community path, to entertain us during the evening. There will also be food provided and the bar will be open. So please do come along and enjoy what promises to be a great evening. If you are able to attend, would you please let me know as early as possible.

I am based at the Gatehouse Centre and I can be contacted, for any reason, on (0117) 935 9710.

BARBRA WHARTON

CONSERVATION AREA

IF YOU LIVE in the proposed Bishopsworth and Malago Conservation Area, then you should have received one of these leaflets through your letterbox.

If you *do* live in the conservation area and you *haven't* received a leaflet, please let me know. There was a map of the conservation area in *Newsletter No. 21* (March 1998).

We had agreed to help the City Council distribute the leaflets, and several M.V.C.G. committee members shoved leaflets through letterboxes.

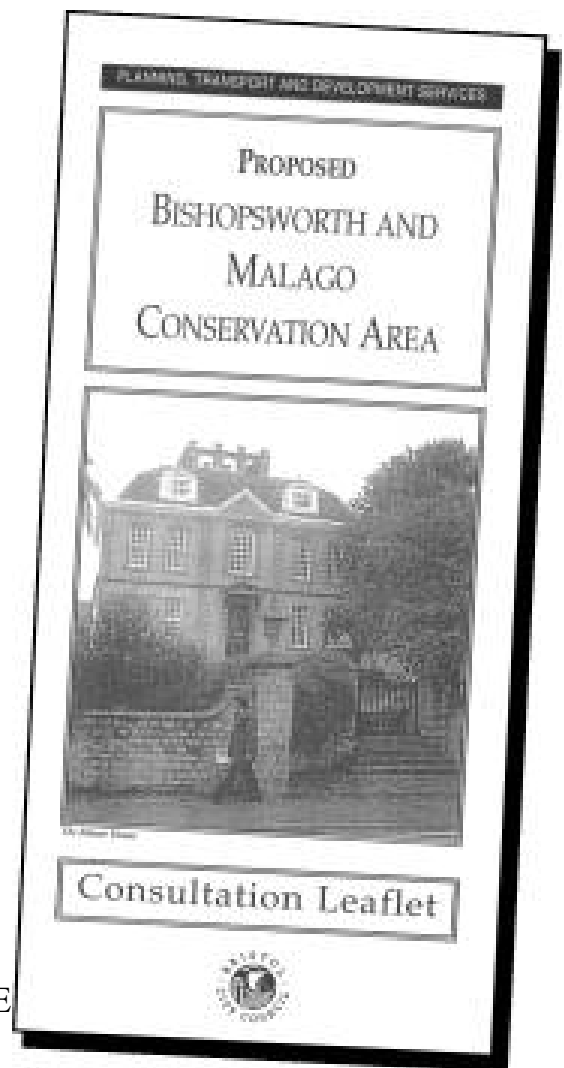
The leaflet sets out the proposals and invites residents to give their views. There is also an exhibition which has been in Bishopsworth Library and the Willows Housing Area Office.

Both the leaflet and the exhibition have a very clear map of the conservation area and set out the effects of designation.

The final part of the consultation process will be a public meeting to be held on **Thursday 3rd September at 7.00pm at Bishopsworth Junior School**. The meeting will be chaired by our good friend Cllr Peter Crispin and speakers will include Robin Smyth, the City Council officer with whom we have been working closely on the conservation area, and ourselves.

The final date for comments to be received by the Council is 12th September. Robin will then produce a report on the consultation for the City Planning Committee and there is every chance that the official designation of the Bishopsworth and Malago Conservation Area will take place in October.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE



GOOD INTENTIONS?

WE MENTIONED briefly in the last *Newsletter* that the City Council were seeking views on the road schemes in south Bristol which they had inherited from Avon County Council. The report by Halcrow Fox, the firm of consultants, was available at Bishopsworth Library - I hope I wasn't the only one to ask to see it.

There are four schemes under consideration, two in south-east Bristol and two in the south-west. The proposals in our area are the well-known completion of the Avon Ring Road (originally, pre-war, the Bristol Ring Road) from the Cater Road roundabout to Queens Road, up King Georges Road, across Highridge Common to the A38 Bridgwater Road and then over the fields to the end of the A370 Long Ashton By-pass. This was analysed in two sections: Cater Road to the A38; and A38 to A370.

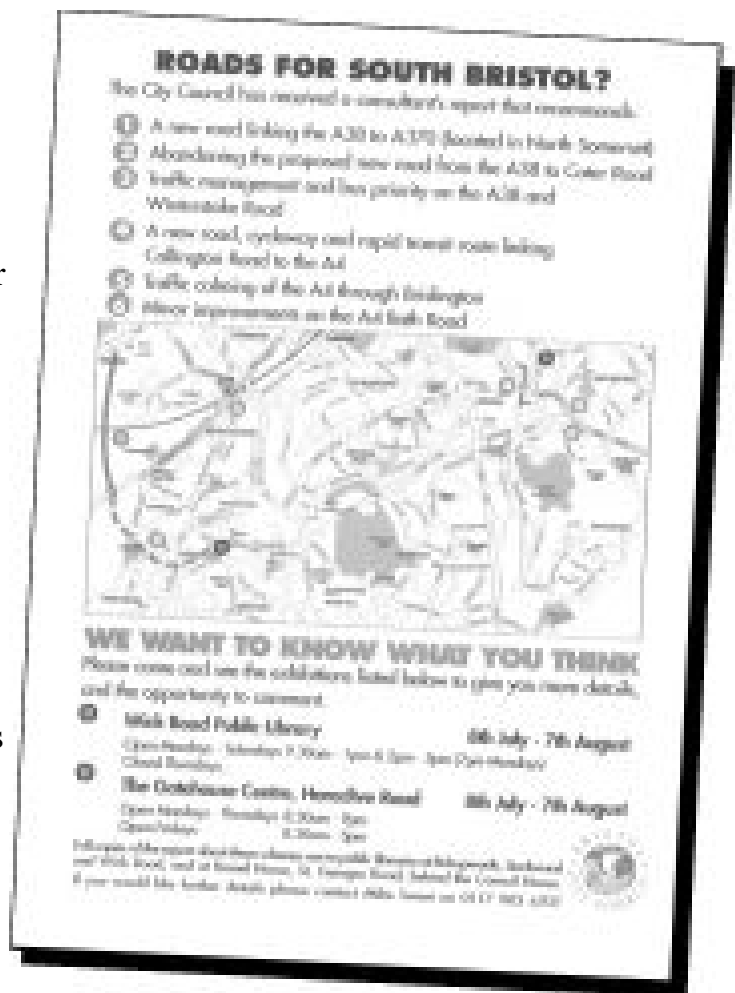
VOSCUR had arranged a meeting for interested local groups with Mike Sweet, the City Council officer handling this project, and we emphasised the importance of wide-spread and thorough consultation. We suggested ways of achieving this - using the *Bristol Observer*, notices in libraries and housing offices, the *Bristol News* - as well as the leaflets which would be delivered to some houses along the route. We also emphasised that the exhibition which was being proposed needed to be available for some time to give people a chance to know it was there.

Some of our suggestions were implemented, but not all. An exhibition was placed at the Gatehouse Centre for a month - but the only way anyone had of knowing it was there was if they

happened to live on the route of the proposed road and had therefore received one of the leaflets (shown opposite).

So far as the actual recommendations are concerned, the consultants suggested **dropping** the section of Ring Road from Cater Road to the A38 (i.e. not building up King Georges Road or across Highridge Common). They proposed that the link from the A38 to the A370 **should be built** as a single carriageway road from the current access to the Terry Adams landfill site through to near the David Lloyd Tennis Centre. They also recommended traffic calming and bus priority measures on Bridgwater Road and Bishopsworth Road, and the construction of a combined cycleway and footpath from Queens Road (opposite the 'Queen's Head') along the reserved line of the road - currently grass - through to the Gatehouse Centre.

The M.V.C.G. Committee discussed these proposals at length, and we have now sent off our views to Mike Sweet.



- We **AGREE** with the recommendation to abandon the safeguarded highway route from the A38 to the Cater Road roundabout. We welcome the removal of a long-standing threat to the local environment and we would like to be involved in discussions about how best to improve the reserved area in King Georges Road. We would like to see substantial tree planting in the lower part and would be happy to help with a contribution either financially or with labour.
- We **PARTIALLY AGREE** with the proposal to construct a cycleway and pedestrian route from opposite the 'Queen's Head' to the Cater Road roundabout. There should indeed be a cycleway and pedestrian route along this line but they must be separate. Pedestrians and cycles do not mix and a combined route should only be considered where there is no room for separate ones. Again, there needs to be substantial landscaping of this 'green desert' and we would like to be involved in the design.
- We **ABSOLUTELY REJECT** the recommendation to construct a single carriageway from the A370 to the A38. It would be a massive intrusion into the Green Belt and seriously damaging to the areas of nature conservation interest in Ashton Vale. On a practical level, since it is wholly in the North Somerset area and that authority has said that it has no intention of putting up money for its construction, then the only way it would ever be built is by contributions from associated development - which would itself be unacceptable in the area.
- The associated recommendations for traffic calming and bus priority are welcome in principle. However, we are not at this stage giving *carte blanche* to the detailed recommendations in the report. These need to be studied at length after the decision has

been taken to abandon the road schemes and consultation needs to be lengthy and thorough. The Bishopsworth and Malago Conservation Area is well on course for designation in the autumn and traffic calming in Bishopsworth 'village' is a priority.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

CLEVEDON VISIT

DESPITE June not living up to its usual promise of reasonable weather we were fortunate that it stayed dry for the evening of 23rd June when 24 members assembled for a guided tour of Clevedon.

We met at the pier toll house where we could view the pier, but a visit to this recently restored Victorian masterpiece was not possible as it is closed in the evenings. Perhaps we can save that treat for another day.

Due to the size of the group we were divided into two parties to be shown around. It was a fascinating tour, ours being conducted by Derek Lilley, a member of Clevedon Civic Society, and the second by Jane Lilley his niece. We were told the history of many of the imposing residences, and features were pointed out to us which many of us would probably have overlooked. We crossed a park where we were entertained by squirrels and we explored some of the back streets. We found some very good viewpoints and descended steps where we could see gardens and observe the way in which the houses had been extended over the years. Our guide pointed out the many buildings which had once been private schools; there were an incredible number considering the size of the town.

At the end of our walk we met up with the other group at the Heritage Centre, situated in one of the delightful houses along the front, where coffee and biscuits had been laid on. Suitably refreshed, we then had the opportunity to browse among the very interesting displays which gave a further insight into Clevedon's history. (When you next go to Clevedon, allow time for a visit). A most pleasing end to a delightful evening.

BERYL HEATON

WE'VE GOT NETTED

M.V.C.G. is on the Internet. All VOSCUR members were invited to take up the offer to join Digital City Bristol. You can learn all about it in November (see the Programme), or you can try for yourself at Bishopsworth Library (amongst other places). If you are already a Net-nerd, you can find us at <http://www.bristol.digitalcity.org/org/community/malago/index.htm>.



PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

WELCOME to the new season of talks arranged by our indomitable Programme Group. The first meeting on 15 September will not be Tony Targett, as mentioned last time, as he is unavailable then but hopes to visit us later in the season. However, we shall be repeating the 'bring and buy' of local produce which proved so interesting and successful before.

M Monday 24 August: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at the 'Elm Tree' at 4.00pm.

Thursday 3 September: *Public Meeting on the Bishopsworth and Malago Conservation Area* (see page 3). Bishopsworth Junior School at **7.00pm**.

Saturday 12 September: *Dundry Hill Group A.G.M.* at Dundry Village Hall starting at 6.45pm, followed by a *Celebration* of the start of the Dundry Hill Project at 7.30pm (see page 2).

M Tuesday 15 September: A talk on *Canals* by MIKE HORSEMAN. Usual time, usual place, i.e. 7.30pm at St Peter's Rooms (side of St Peter's Church, Church Road, Bishopsworth). Don't forget to bring your home-grown or home-made produce for the Bring and Buy.

M Monday 28 September: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at Withywood Post Office at 4.00pm.

M Tuesday 20 October: *Wonderful Willow* by BECKY HEATON. 7.30pm at St Peter's Rooms.

M Tuesday 19 November: A Demonstration of Digital City Bristol (see opposite). MARC DAY of U.W.E., who is 'Harbourmaster' of Digital City Bristol, will show us what it is and how it works. We will be using the public information terminal at Bishopsworth Library, so meet at the Library at 7.30pm.

M Tuesday 15 December: Our inimitable *Christmas Do* at St Peter's Rooms at 7.30pm. More details when the Programme Group have dreamed them up - all ideas welcome (964 1116).

We are hoping to arrange a visit to the Bristol Astronomical Society's observatory at Failand in the autumn; and, as another follow-up to another excellent talk, to arrange for Chris Sperring to lead us on an 'Owl Prowl'. Watch this space for dates and details.

GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS ...

YOU MAY REMEMBER the little yellow leaflet we did a couple of years ago as a simple Guide to Manor Woods. Since then, we have had the idea of expanding it into something much more ambitious - an A4-sized loose-leaf binder to be called *My Manor Woods Scrapbook*, with sections on the history, geology, topography and wildlife of the area. Readers could then add their own pages - drawings, photos, notes on things seen, pressed leaves and flowers - so as to personalise it.

We applied for a grant to cover the cost of production so that we could sell it at a low price through schools etc. The City Council have awarded us a Local Agenda 21 grant of £500, and we're very grateful. The bad news is that we had costed the production at £2000. But we're going to make a start, and we'd like to hear from anyone who has ideas or would like to help. Please ring me on 964 3106.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

Malago Valley Conservation Group

Committee Members

Chairman	André Coutanche	964 3106
Vice-Chairman	Lola Hardingham	964 1116
Treasurer	John Taylor	964 2913

Other Members

Anton Bantock, Brenda Docherty, Royston Griffey, Beryl Heaton, Mary Sykes.

Co-opted Members

Geoff Clarke, Tessa Coombes, Tania Ford, Peter Hall, Chris McFarling, Vanessa Van Eecke (*Minutes Secretary*), Sue Walker, Cllr Bernard Chalmers, Cllr Terry Cleverley, Cllr Peter Crispin, Cllr Paul Walker, Cllr Claire Warren (*All the City councillors for Bedminster, Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe and Whitchurch Park wards are invited to become co-opted Committee members*).

Newsletter edited by André Coutanche, 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 8LB; telephone 964 3106. **Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome.** The opinions expressed in this *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of Malago Valley Conservation Group.

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