



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP **NEWSLETTER**

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THERE'S an autumnal flavour to this edition of the *Newsletter*. Not in any melancholy sense, I hasten to add; those who came to Barbra Wharton's super talk on 'Eating the Countryside' will be aware of the possibilities offered by the 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness'. Some of the recipes Barbra gave us are inside.

Other items are more spring-like in their hope for the future. As well as the promising news reported on page 2, there's the prospect of progress at Symes Avenue, where a planning application is expected soon for a major supermarket with associated small shops and other facilities. Local residents group COMMUNITY AGAINST POVERTY are seeking the views of local people and have produced a questionnaire which they would like to distribute as widely as possible. If you can help, or just want to give your views, please contact C.A.P. at 237-239 Gatehouse Avenue, phone 978 2441.

There's progress too with the South Bristol Rivers Initiative at Manor Woods. Although Allied Domecq withdrew as sponsors, the Wildlife Trust and the City Council are continuing to build on the work already done. Have a look at the new surface by the pond (on page 4, or, better still, in real life). M.V.C.G. continues to do our bit, with garbage raids in Manor Woods and with direct action from time to time in clearing overgrown paths and removing rubbish blocking the dam. The same team also cleared the 'Drum', the path behind Bishopsworth Manor House, where an overgrown hedge was preventing access.

As a purely voluntary group, everything we do depends on people giving their time. John Taylor, one of our key founder-members, has resigned as Treasurer because of other commitments. We thank him for his essential work, and welcome Beryl Heaton who has bravely taken on this role.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

KEEP 'EM CROSSED!

IN THE JULY *Newsletter* (no. 28), we invited you to keep your fingers crossed for progress on various issues which M.V.C.G. had been working on for some time. Don't uncross them yet! - but there's good news to report on Chestnut Court, the 'Elm Tree' wall and 'Elm Tree Corner'.

The planning application to use **Chestnut Court** for office premises was withdrawn, as we reported in the last *Newsletter*. Now there's a new application - and a new owner. The building has been sold to a gentleman who wants to restore the original house and convert it to four flats. There would also be new build in the grounds. At the time of writing we haven't seen the application but it should be available at the City Planning Department at Brunel House by the time you are reading this. Do let us know what you think.

At **Elm Tree Corner**, we had a meeting on site with Mike Boxall of City Council Traffic Management. He isn't keen on our idea of changing the junction priority, but he has agreed to do a traffic count on Highridge Road with a view in due course to possible traffic calming measures. Meanwhile, our ideas for tree planting have taken a big step forward. A working group led by Lis Pibworth has prepared an application to Urban *Britain in Bloom* for grant aid for trees for Elm Tree Corner (and bulbs for throughout our area). It seems likely that the application will be successful and we are meeting the City Council arboricultural officer on site to plan planting.

And the **Elm Tree Wall** has been repaired by Wessex Water after the damage caused by the overflowing drains in May. The mason has done a splendid job, as you can see. Our congratulations to him and to Wessex.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE



MILLENNIUM MILESTONE

THE FIRST Millennium project to be officially opened in our BS13 patch was inaugurated on 28 September. The MILLENNIUM GREEN at Teyfant Community School - part of the wider and massively ambitious Hartcliffe Community Campus project - was formally declared open by the Lord Mayor at a well-attended and very happy ceremony.

After short speeches and an excellent buffet in the neighbouring Teyfant Church, we moved outside for the opening ceremony. The children of Teyfant School sang for the assembled

company in the new amphitheatre as the sun shone.

The Lord Mayor cuts the ribbon, watched by Tessa Coomers, Project Co-ordinator >>

The Green has been well designed and well planted and will mature in the coming months and years into a tremendously attractive asset for the area.



*Tania Ford
enjoying the
day
after all her
hard work
>>*

*<< The
amphitheatre
receives its
first
performance*



Malago Valley Conservation Group wishes the Millennium Green every success and we look forward to helping the Campus project in whatever way we can.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

A SLOE WALK THROUGH MANOR WOODS

THE SUN WAS SHINING BRIGHTLY ON MANOR WOODS as André and I set off on a fine October morning in search of sloes. The water in the Malago was looking very clear, with no unpleasant smells, and, as we approached the pond we noticed a speckled wood butterfly and later on a red admiral, making the most of the warmth of the late sunshine.

We had a look at the improved path from the garage which was fairly clean, certainly much better than on our first garbage raids. The shrubs that have been planted along the edge are surviving well, although the brambles and undergrowth will need to be controlled until they are established.

We leant on the dam for a while in the hopes of seeing the kingfisher - or at least the heron - without success, but we watched the dragonflies darting across the water and the flurry of activity as the mallards and moorhens enjoyed their watersports. This year's brood of ducklings are now half-fledged and are looking very smart and chipper. The new hardstanding at the pond edge is a big improvement; both the ducks and the people feeding them were finding it very useful.



So far, our haul of sloes was small. Plenty of blackthorn trees and bushes, but not a lot of fruit, or the berries already withered. However, there were plenty of other berries glowing amongst the old man's beard: hips, haws, spindleberries and the last of the blackberries. We went along the cliff edge above the quarry, finding some more sloes and enjoying the view. We admired the goats at the top of the path and came down to Vale Lane and back through the lower entrance and into the quarry. The apple trees have a large crop of fruit this year and we found them to be sweet and crisp - because, of course, we had to sample the different varieties! By the time we began to retrace our steps we had enough sloes, having found a good source as we left the quarry.

Coming across the hill above the Interceptor where the grass had been left longer, we found plenty of purple clover and some buttercups. What a glorious place on a perfect autumn day!

Oh, by the way - why sloes? To make sloe gin, of course!

LOLA HARDINGHAM

SLOE GIN

*To each 1lb of sloes
one bottle of gin
8-10oz sugar*

Prick the sloes over with a needle or fork, sprinkle with granulated sugar and cover with gin.

Keep corked tightly in a fairly warm place for three months. Shake jar occasionally.

Strain into bottles and cork tightly. Drink!

BEECH LEAF GIN

*1 bottle of gin
½ lb of sugar
¼ pint water
1 miniature bottle
of white rum*

Pick a large quantity of beech leaves on a dry day. Pack leaves into glass jars, pour over some of the gin and press down with a wooden spoon. Add more leaves until they are about an inch from the top of the jar, then fill to the brim with gin, screw the lids on and leave in a dark place for two

weeks. Strain the liquid into a measuring jug and squeeze the leaves. There should be about 1¼ pints of green liquid.

Heat the sugar and water in a small pan until the sugar has dissolved, then boil for 2-3 minutes, and set aside to cool. Add the rum and cooled syrup to the green gin and pour carefully into clean bottles. Seal with new corks or screwtops.

EATING THE COUNTRYSIDE

HOW DO YOU MAKE ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL? What can you do with dandelion leaves? Are nettles merely a nuisance? The answers to these and many other questions were revealed in a fascinating talk by Barbra Wharton in October. The table in front of her resembled a Harvest Festival display with leaf-bearing twigs, berries, and flowers.

Barbra went through the uses of each plant in turn. Elderberries for jelly, elderflowers for cordial and wine. Rowan berries make good jelly too, but we must remember with any berries not to take too many, but leave plenty for the birds. Sloes are good in sloe gin. This was enthusiastically endorsed by André, who brought along some that he was making to show us. Nettles when cooked are similar in texture to spinach, and although it is wise to wear gloves when collecting them, they won't sting the throat when cooked! Dandelion leaves go well in salads whilst nasturtium leaves give a peppery flavour.

During the tea break we were able to taste for ourselves various jellies such as crab apple, and rowan, and Barbra had also prepared elderflower cordial. Later we learned how we could use garden flowers in many ways. For instance they make ice cubes attractive when frozen in the centre. Some flowers are particularly succulent when dipped in batter and lightly fried.

Having whetted our appetites, Barbra showed us books written on the subject, and there were recipes we could take home. I think most of us will be having a go for ourselves. I am sure that all those present would join me in thanking Barbra for such an interesting and informative talk, and for the 'goodies' she brought along for us to try.

BERYL HEATON

ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL

25 Elderflower heads
3 lb sugar
½ oz tartaric (or citric) acid
4 oranges sliced
1 lemon sliced
3 pints water

Put all ingredients in a bowl, stir and leave for 24hrs. Stir occasionally to dissolve sugar.

Strain through muslin into sterilised bottles. Keep in the fridge or a cool place. You can also freeze it in a plastic bottle for later in the year. It will keep for a long time. If it gets warm it will start to ferment and you will have fizzy cordial

It is now ready to dilute and drink.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

THE **M** symbol means an event organised by M.V.C.G. The regular monthly talks start at 7.30pm at St Peter's Rooms (by the side of St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth). Everyone is welcome (non-members will be asked to pay a 50p visitor's fee). Most months we will also have a repeat of our successful PLANT AND PRODUCE BRING AND BUY to add to our funds - please bring what you can. M.V.C.G. members are also welcome at events arranged by the Dundry Hill Group (DHG) or the University of Withywood (UW).

M THURSDAY 18 November: PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE FROM TUESDAY TO THURSDAY BECAUSE OF THE BISHOPSWORTH QUIZ. *Greening Your Home* - a talk on energy efficiency by NICOLA BRIDGER of the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre. Plus BRING AND BUY.

M Monday 29 November: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at 3.45pm at Bishopsworth Library.

Thursday 25 November: GEOFF CARGILL will talk to the University of Withywood about the new *South Bristol Churches and Community Trust*. The talk begins at 7.30pm at the University of Withywood, 131 Queens Road (UW).

Thursday 2 December: A talk by local archaeologist BOB WILLIAMS on the Dundry area. Meet at 7.30pm at Winford Village Hall. Refreshments provided (DHG).

Sunday 12 December: ARCHAEOLOGY WALK from 10am-noon. Come and help gather information on Dundry's past. Meet at 10.00am at the Carpenters Arms (DHG).

M Monday 20 December: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at 3.45pm at Withywood Post Office, Four Acres.

M Tuesday 21 December: Mulled wine and merriment; nosh and nonsense - M.V.C.G.'s infamous CHRISTMAS PARTY. After the silly things to do, we will have our usual American Supper. Please bring whatever you can as a contribution to the feast.

Sunday 16 January: A BIRD WALK to see what winter birds are about. Meet 10.00am at the end of Alderwick Avenue, Hartcliffe (DHG).

M Tuesday 18 January: A welcome return visit by MARGARET HAYMAN whose talk (with fantastic slides) is called *Further up the Garden Path*. Plus BRING AND BUY.

M Monday 24 January: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at 3.45pm at Symes Avenue.

DOWN BEMMINSTER

OUTSIDE OUR AREA, but of interest to many M.V.C.G. members, will be the news that the City Council are proposing a new conservation area based on British Road/Hebron Road.

It's a largely unspoiled survival of a classic Victorian suburb of finely built terraces with some distinguished individual buildings. Anton Bantock first proposed its designation

as a conservation area when he spoke to the Council's South & East Planning Committee about British Road School, since sadly demolished, and Anton's historical knowledge has been a main input into the process.

The Malago Society has been commenting on the proposals (some of the individuals involved may be familiar to M.V.C.G. members) and the scheme will go to the City Council Planning Committee in December.

Malago Valley Conservation Group

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

Committee Members

Anton Bantock, Brenda Docherty, Royston Griffey, John Taylor.

Co-opted Members

Tania Ford, Peter Hall, Mike Jarrett, Anne King, Chris McFarling, Sue Walker, Barbra Wharton, Cllr Bernard Chalmers, Cllr Tessa Coombes, Cllr Peter Crispin, Cllr Richard Eddy, Cllr Ron Hodges, Cllr Dave Johson, Cllr 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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