



# MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP **NEWSLETTER**

**No. 45 - May/June 2002 edition**

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**NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME, this *Newsletter* is a little late - apologies. However, events have been moving rather fast on a number of fronts in the last couple of weeks, so at least we can report on the latest news.**

Transport is the predominant theme this time, with the rather unexpected planning application for a Park & Ride on the A38 at Bedminster Down, and the options for a possible new road to connect the A38 and A370. To their credit, the City Council have consulted widely on the Park & Ride application, and many M.V.C.G. members will have received a letter with the details of the scheme and the map showing the site opposite the former petrol station and next to 'The Pavilions'. You can also view the plans at Bishopsworth Library.

The letter asks for comments within 21 days. If you have an opinion, do let the planners know, but don't worry over much about the deadline; this application certainly won't be considered until the autumn. As I write, M.V.C.G. hasn't take a

view, but one comment will certainly be that the application is premature; we need to consider the wider position, not least the proposed A38-A370 link.

There is a meeting at Bedminster Down School on Monday 10 June at 7.00pm to hear more about the proposed Park & Ride. Several M.V.C.G. Committee members will be going along to listen to the arguments, and we would also like to hear what individual members think. Do please let us know, either at a meeting, or by letting us see any letter which you write to the planners.

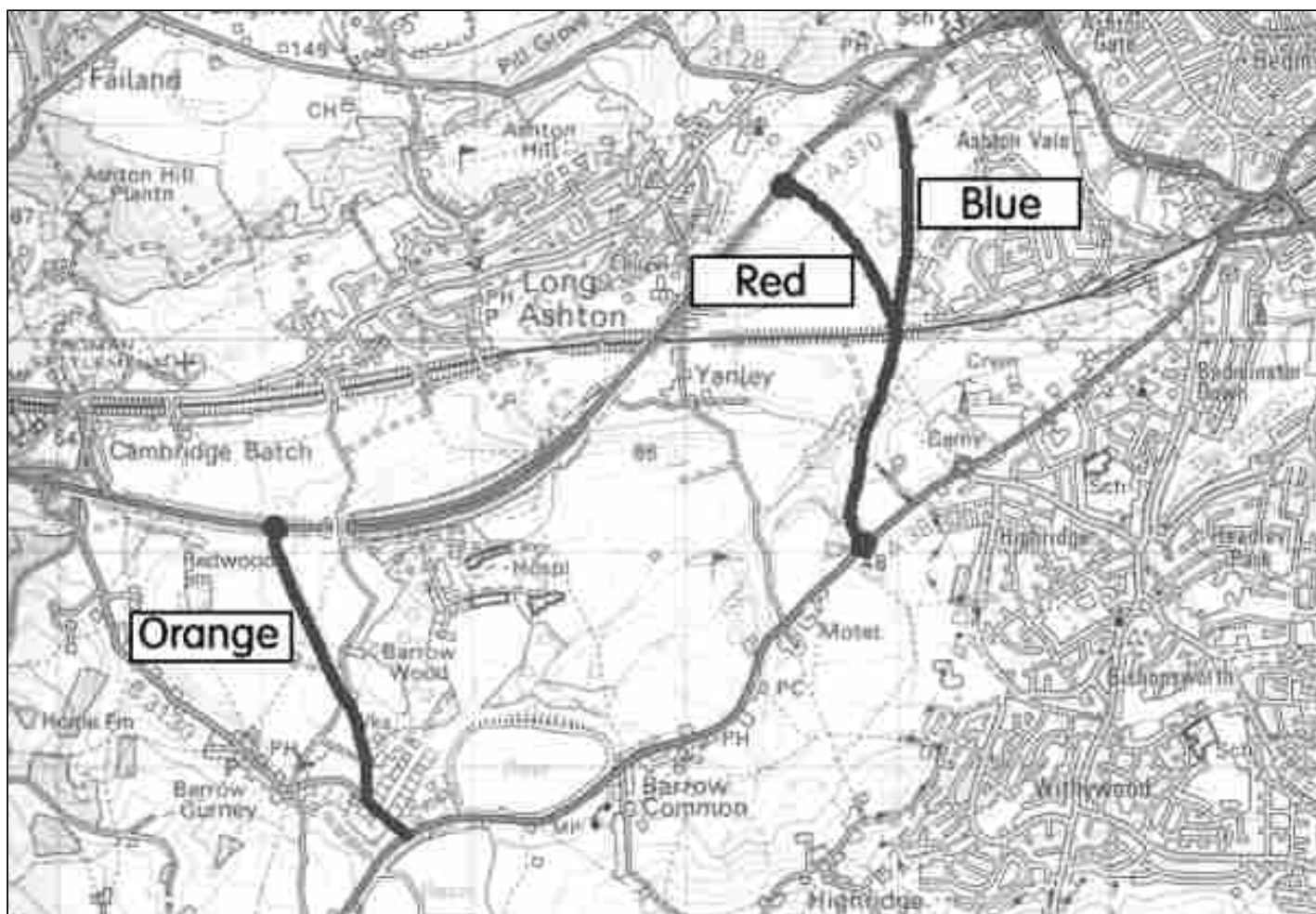
Finally, a last reminder to those who haven't yet renewed their membership for 2002. If there is a renewal slip with this *Newsletter* then you haven't paid your sub. Please do so very soon, or we shall regretfully remove you from the membership list. Our thanks to all those who have renewed and who continue to support M.V.C.G.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

## THE A38-A370 LINK

IN the Christmas *Newsletter* (no. 42) we reported that JMP Consultants Ltd had been engaged by North Somerset Council to consider whether a new road link was needed between the A38 (Bridgwater Road) and the A370 (Long Ashton by-pass), and, if so, what route it should take.

JMP have come back with four options which have been the subject of another consultation exercise. One option is for no new road, just improvements in public transport/traffic management and a park and ride, and the other three options are for new road links. One of them (the 'blue' route) is the reserved line of the former Avon Ring Road from a new roundabout on the A38 at the land-fill site down to the David Lloyd Tennis Centre. The second option (the 'red' route) is a variation of this, with the northern section of the new road swinging west to join the Long Ashton bypass further along; this would avoid the Site of Nature Conservation Interest at Ashton Vale. The third option (the 'orange' route) is for a new road from the A38 at Barrow Tanks which by-passes Barrow Gurney and joins the western end of the Long Ashton by-pass.



*The three A38-A370 link road options*

M.V.C.G. was particularly concerned that if the choice was for the blue or the red route, then that would increase the pressure for building what might be seen as the 'missing link' - the former Ring Road line from Cater Road to the A38 through Withywood, up King Georges Road and across Highridge Common. We do not believe that this road is needed. It would destroy large amounts of green space in Withywood which could be selectively developed or brought into better use as properly designed public open space. It would be a massive intrusion in residential areas, and it would destroy Highridge Common, one of our most important green spaces.

As we reported in *Newsletter 42*, this road has been rejected by Bristol City Council and is in the process of being removed from the Local Plan, the Transport Plan and the Joint Replacement Structure Plan. However, there are people locally who would like to see it reinstated and constructed. Some people believe that it would have positive economic effects; we think this argument is misconceived, and certainly wouldn't justify the destruction the road would cause. Other people are suffering from the use of Kings Head Lane as an unofficial ring-road link and believe that the dropped road would bring them much-needed relief. They may well be right about that, but M.V.C.G.'s view is that you don't solve a traffic problem by inflicting it on someone else. In any case, the inappropriate use of

Kings Head Lane ought to be dealt with by banning its use by HGVs - a course of action which the City Council are inexplicably reluctant to take. So M.V.C.G.'s policy is that we support the Council's abandonment of the former Ring Road from Cater Road to the A38.

In that context, we are against the blue and red routes for the A38-A370 link. We also came to the conclusion that there were positive reasons for supporting the orange route: it's the shortest, and thus the cheapest both in financial terms and in its impact on the countryside; and it directly relieves the village of Barrow Gurney, which, as we all know, is devastated by through traffic.

We have written to North Somerset with our views, and copied the letter to Bristol Transport Planners, and we await further developments.

## **KEEPING UP WITH THE COUNCILLORS**

Following the Council elections in May, our congratulations to Ron Hodges, re-elected in Bishopsworth; to Royston Griffey, newly elected in Hartcliffe; and to Colin Smith newly elected in Whitchurch Park. Other councillor members of M.V.C.G. who were re-elected are Mary Sykes and Peter Crispin. Congratulations also to Pete Crispin who is now Chair of the South & East Planning Committee.

## **MANOR WOODS**

MOST READERS will know that a group of travellers moved onto the Vale Lane end of the Manor Woods open space in late May. The good news is that they didn't stay long, and that damage to the grass surface is minor. However, the bad news is that a tree near the path was chopped down, and the wooden part of the gateway entrance feature has been almost totally destroyed.

We have spoken to councillors and Council officers, and there is agreement that the damage will be repaired and things restored. At the time of writing, we don't know exactly how or when the repair work will be done, but we will keep in touch with the Council and report back to members in the *Newsletter*.

# THE OLD VICARAGE

AS WE REPORTED LAST TIME, the developer of the Old Vicarage, Bishopsworth, has removed more trees and shrubs than was allowed under the planning permission for the conversion work on the building. To mitigate the damage, a revised planting scheme is being agreed with the developers and will be made the subject of a formal planning application.

Cllr Richard Eddy (ward councillor) arranged meetings with the neighbours and M.V.C.G. to discuss the planting scheme. One obvious comment, which Richard fed back to the planners, was that the scheme showed the hedge onto Ilex Close only partially replaced and left space for new buildings which were not part of the planning permission (the developer withdrew plans for new houses on Ilex Close following objections from the neighbours and ourselves).

Now the developers are in the process of agreeing to the revised planting scheme, but with the proviso that they won't immediately reinstate the Ilex Close hedge - because they intend to apply for planning permission for new houses! If permission is not obtained, then they would plant the hedge.

This turn of events is not exactly a surprise, but we (and the neighbours) will be keeping a very close eye on the Old Vicarage for the foreseeable future.

# PHONE MASTS

ALSO in the last *Newsletter*, we reported the continuing saga of planning application for mobile phone masts. As suggested, the mast which was refused permission at Vale Lane, close to Manor Woods, has now been taken to appeal. We shall see what happens.

And another mast has been applied for, as many of you will know, at the Chrysalis Conservatories site on Bridgwater Road. This application was considered by the Council's South & East Planning Committee on 22 May. The committee wasn't in a position to make a decision, because the public consultation period hadn't then expired, so they left the officers to take a decision under delegated powers while bearing in mind comments from the committee and the public. We have written to oppose the mast, but, if the officers feel that the case for outright refusal is not sufficiently strong, we suggested that the mast be reduced in height (from 15 metres to 12 metres) so as to reduce its visual impact.

## WALKING BY BUS

YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED the rather smart 'Optare' buses in Bedminster, on the A38 or in Dundry village. They are a new service called the 'Chew Valley Explorer' and they are designed to make it easy to get out from Bristol to the Chew Valley and Mendip.

To encourage walkers to use the bus rather than cars, there is a series of guided walks on many (not all) Sundays over the summer. The walks are provided by the Bristol Group of the Ramblers' Association, and you meet the walk leader on the bus. The next walk is on 23 June, and the bus leaves Bristol Bus Station at 9.05am (it's at Dundry at 9.33am). Other walks are on 7 and 14 July, 11, 18 and 25 August, and on 8 and 21 (Saturday) September.

There's an attractive leaflet available with the bus timetable and an insert showing the guided walks. I got a copy at the Council's Planning Office at Brunel House, St Georges Road (where our good friend and former Council Cycling Officer, Mike Ginger, pointed it out). You can ask at Bishopsworth Library, or you can ring the Chew Valley Project Officer at BANES on 01275 477609 or e-mail [andy\\_fear@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:andy_fear@bathnes.gov.uk).

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

## OUR WILD LIFE

*Reports from readers about wildlife in our area continue to come in. Nothing has inspired so much comment in seven years of M.V.C.G. Newsletters. Please keep it up!*

ABOUT 18 months ago I was building a tree house for our daughters when a sparrowhawk flew out of a nearby tree straight towards me. We were eye-to-eye; it came within a couple of metres before veering off and I don't know who was more startled! I have a vivid memory of its large eyes. Since then I have seen it (or a friend) once or twice and evidence of its activities in the form of feathers etc.

In late March I had a rare sighting - a coal tit on the bird feeder outside the kitchen window. We regularly have blue, great and long-tailed tits, but this was unusual.

Crows are nesting at the end of the garden on our left and magpies on the other side of the garden to our right. Instead of taking the plentiful twigs from the bonfire pile (I wish they would!), the magpies insist on breaking living twigs off



the trees. Does anyone know why they do this? Is it because the living twigs are more flexible perhaps?

STEVE WILMSHURST

*Angela James saw her first swallow on 18 April. And it's wild in our open spaces too. The Bee Orchid (far right) is in the long grass area of Manor Woods and the Common Spotted Orchid (right) is on Highridge Common. Both photos were taken in the last fortnight.*

*Printing in black and white doesn't do them justice - have a look at the pictures in colour on our website at [www.mvcg.cjb.net](http://www.mvcg.cjb.net).*



## PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

SUMMER IS HERE - in Programme terms, anyway; no more meetings at St Peter's Rooms until October. As we go to press, we don't know of any Dundry Hill Group events after our joint Fossil Walk on 9 June, but keep an eye on their website at [www.dhgbristol.cjb.net](http://www.dhgbristol.cjb.net). However, the University of Withywood (UW) has a walk on Dundry on 20 June. M.V.C.G.'s own events are shown by the **M** symbol.

- **M Sunday 9 June:** *Guided Walk to hunt for Fossils on Dundry Hill* (jointly with DHG). Meet at 10.00am at Dundry Village car park. Wear old clothes and walking shoes. Return for 12 noon. *Please note: this is the second Sunday in the month to avoid clashing with Golden Jubilee celebrations.*

- **Monday 10 June:** Meeting to discuss the proposed Bedminster Down Park & Ride at Bedminster Down School at 7.00pm.
- **Thursday 20 June:** *Walk on Dundry.* Meet at the University of Withywood, 131 Queens Road, at 7.00pm (UW).
- **M Monday 24 June:** *Garbage Raid.* Meet at 3.45pm at 'The Drum' - the path at the back of Bishopsworth Manor House from Manor Road to Vicarage Road.
- **Saturday 6 July:** *Bishopsworth Jubilee Fun Day* in Kings Head Park. Noon-5.00pm.
- **M Tuesday 16 July:** *Herbal Walk* in Manor Woods. Meet at Bishopsworth Library at 7.30pm.
- **M Monday 29 July:** *Garbage Raid.* Meet at 3.45pm at 'The Elm Tree'.
- **M Tuesday 20 August:** Our twice postponed *Visit to Alvis Brothers' Cheese Farm and Farm Walk.* Please wear suitable shoes/boots. Meet at **6.55pm** on the A38 outside the Farm Shop (there is a pull-in). The Farm is on the left at the bottom of Red Hill. If you would like a lift or can offer one, please ring Lola on 964 1116.

## SUMMER DAFFODILS!

THANK YOU to everyone who keeps supplying cans for recycling (recycling into steel for the steel ones; recycling into money and then daffodils for the aluminium). Now that summer is here (ha!) you may well be cracking open the odd tube at the barbie. Don't forget to save the empties for M.V.C.G.! Please deliver to 14 Queens Road, or ring us on 964 3106 and we'll collect. Thanks.

## IN DEFENCE OF THE PRIVET

*A few years ago, a gardening programme on Radio 4 was very dismissive about privet hedges, which rather rattled me! Here's a 'poem wot I wrote' about it ...*



We have a privet in our garden  
It's six feet tall and three feet wide.  
We can hardly hear, and cannot see  
What goes on the other side.

It shelters us from the cold north wind.  
Our big green privet is very dear.  
The blackbirds love it and always nest there,  
And it only needs trimming a few times a year.

On the other side of the garden, a fence is set.  
The fence is dead - Long Live the Pri-vet!

ANGELA JAMES

## Malago Valley Conservation Group

<b>Chairman</b>	André Coutanche	964 3106
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Lola Hardingham	964 1116
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	Lis Pibworth	987 0825
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Beryl Heaton	964 5780

### Committee Members

Anton Bantock, Don Bartlett, Brenda Docherty, Mavis Palmer, Jack Price

### Co-opted Members

Tania Case, Valerie Gay, Peter Hall, Audrey Milton, Ted Thomas, Sue Walker, CSV Environment, Cllrs Bernard Chalmers, Peter Crispin, Richard Eddy, Royston Griffey, Ron Hodges, 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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**Newsletter** edited by André Coutanche, 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 8LB; telephone 964 3106; e-mail [andrec@mvcg.cjb.net](mailto:andrec@mvcg.cjb.net); web address [www.mvcg.cjb.net](http://www.mvcg.cjb.net). Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome. The opinions expressed in this Newsletter do not necessarily represent those of M.V.C.G.

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