



THE CAVE HILL CAMPAIGNER

Published by
The Cave Hill
Conservation
Campaign
Summer 2011

New Future for Floral Hall?



The Floral Hall was the fruit of a period of municipal expansion at Bellevue in the mid 1930s which also saw the arrival of the zoo. There was an open air bandstand on the hill, but in 1933 the Corporation decided that they needed a fully fledged dance hall. The hall, designed by D.W Boyd, opened in May 1936 having cost less than £10,000. A report at the time described its facilities:

"The promise of luxurious accommodation which its striking facade holds out is fully justified indoors ... The main concert hall provides comfortable seating accommodation for 1,000 people and the decoration scheme, carried out in subdued blue and gold, sets off the architectural features advantageously."

The longer term judgement has been favourable. Paul Larmour described it in 1987 as 'a striking and, for Belfast, rare enough example of a particular brand of 1930s modernism.'

The high point of the hall's life came during the war years, though it narrowly avoided being requisitioned by the air force because 'it was a place of amusement visited by the members of the forces'. Numbers attending dances soared from 36,318 in 1939/40 to 182,969 in 1943/44.

Though attendances gradually fell away in the post-war years it remained a major venue until the Troubles. By 1970 it was losing £10,000 a year. It was only kept open because of an indirect approach by Trust House Forte to take over both the zoo and the hall.

Trust House Forte got cold feet and by August 1971 closure again beckoned, but was staved off by a petition signed by 200 people. Roller skating and private functions continued until 4 January 1974 when Teddy Palmer and the Rumble Band played at the last dance.

By then it was intended that the hall would become 'an integral part' of the new zoo. Instead an extraordinarily chequered history followed in which scheme after scheme collapsed.

The first of these came in 1979 when the Ulster Museum proposed to transfer its Botany and Zoology Department

to the new zoo and run an interpretative centre in the hall. Lack of government support seems to have torpedoed this. The Council's plan to proceed with self-funded restoration fell victim to colossal cost overruns at the new zoo by the late 1980s. It remained as an increasingly dilapidated fodder store.

Once again the Council clutched at private sector straws. In 1996 they reached agreement with Zeilmann and Company for a major hotel development and for a £3.6 million project to convert the Floral Hall into a health spa. The Cave Hill Conservation Campaign bitterly opposed the hotel scheme, but in any case the whole project had collapsed in acrimony by 1997.

Then in 1999 Queen's University proposed to refurbish the hall to provide for 'a number of functions relating to the education, conservation and management aspects of the Zoo'. By 2001 nothing further had transpired.

The genesis of present proposals emerged in 2002 when the Belfast Buildings Preservation Trust planned to develop the hall for wedding receptions and events in a £2.5 million scheme. Councillors continued their long tradition of failing to build effective partnerships and were so unenthusiastic that they preferred to consider demolishing the building!

They were only stalled when its listing was upgraded to category B1. Hence the Preservation Trust proposal came back into play and was considered much more sympathetically in 2004. It was notable for its self-contained and purely commercial emphasis and because the Council could not yet envisage wider linkages.

By 2010 that landscape had changed radically and for the better. An additional partner had been brought on board in the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and new proposals now strongly favour a multiple use future in which commercial events would fit in with zoo priorities and a wider relationship with the Cave Hill Country Park. As of now the scheme is still on track. It is fully supported by the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign.

John Gray



SAN • MAR

• UNISEX SALON •

Specialists in Colouring

Also:

- Eyebrow Waxing •
- Eyebrow Tinting •
- Eyelash Tinting •

640 Antrim Road

Tel: 028 9077 7002

In This Issue:

New Future For The Floral Hall?	1
The Year in Review	3
<i>Editorial: The Significance of Small</i>	4
Griffith's Valuation and Cave Hill	5
Past Times	6
Book Reviews	8
What Should We Do About Mountain Bikers?	9
Frost	9
Easter Tuesday 1941	10
Cave Hill	10
Walkers	11
The Draft Planning Bill	11
Upcoming Activities	12
Membership Form	12

FORTWILLIAM GARDEN CENTRE

*Fresh Flowers
Fruit
Vegetables
Garden Sundries
Bouquets and
Fruit Baskets*

575 Antrim Road
Tel: 028 9077 1013

The Cave Hill Campaigner is published by the
Cave Hill Conservation Campaign
c/o 32 Waterloo Park, Belfast, BT15 5HU.

Chair: Cormac Hamill
Editors: Edward McCamley
Martin McDowell

Please visit our website at:
www.cavehillconservation.org
All correspondence welcome by email to:
info@cavehillconservation.org

gapwines

 UK OFF LICENCE OF THE YEAR 2006



WHISKEY MASTERCLASS WITH THE COOLEY DISTILLERY

We are privileged to be hosting 1 of just 10 Whiskey Masterclasses organised by the Cooley Distillery in Ireland this year. Don't miss out on a fantastic opportunity to be taken through the fantastic multi award-winning Cooley Whiskey selection by their very own Master Blender.

Cooley Distillery is the only independent Irish whiskey distillery. Established in 1987, Cooley takes its name from the location of its distillery, situated at the foothills of the Cooley mountains, in Co. Louth. In 2010, Cooley re-activated the Old Kilbeggan Distillery in County Westmeath as a fully functioning distillery. Cooley has been a driver in expanding consumer choices in the Irish whiskey category and in particular has driven the development of Irish Single Malts and Grain whiskeys.

WHISKEY MASTERCLASS
WITH COOLEY DISTILLERY



DATE: THURSDAY 23RD JUNE

TIME: 7.30PM

VENUE: FORTWILLIAM GOLF CLUB

Tickets ONLY
£10 per person

The Year in Review 2010 - 2011



The annual issue of the Campaigner gives me a chance to report on the happenings over the last year. The fact that the magazine appears at all is a tribute to all those who work so hard to bring it out and to the editor in particular.

Just over a year ago we embarked on a new aim: to make the whole area of Cave Hill and all it contains better known and appreciated. We ran a series of guided walks from April to October which were included in the 'What's On' section of *City Matters*, the Belfast City Council quarterly magazine. The programme of walks will run again this year but will be more varied and some will have particular themes. See the notice elsewhere in this edition.

In pursuing that strategy I must emphasise that we, in no way, are losing sight of our monitoring role and we will continue to keep an eye on the site and to work as much as ever with the Council in conservation work.

We have indicated our willingness to give talks about Cave Hill and to guide particular walks. In response to that, we



gave a talk to the North Belfast Historical Association and to Newtownabbey Round Table. The Ulster Museum asked us to run three guided walks for them allied to their exhibition of the renowned landscape artist, Richard Long. These took place in November and February.

We have also become one of the official Friends groups of the Council – Friends of the Cave Hill, as it were. That will not be our name; we are not changing that nor will our new status make any difference to our procedures in relation to financial management or meetings. It will give us a small annual income which will not deter us raising matters of concern with the Council should we feel it necessary.

We decided last year that from this year onwards, we would hold our AGM in March. It worked well and we attracted a much greater crowd than usual though that may have been partly due to the popularity of the guest speaker and his topic. Brian Barton a well-known local historian who has written a history of St. Peter's Parish spoke about the Chapel of the Resurrection. He outlined its history and regretted the way that through a combination of misfortunes, it had become derelict. We had hoped to get some information on the future of the Chapel and to that end, we had invited a representative of the site developer, Merit Homes of Magherafelt, to the meeting. We were disappointed when the developer declined to attend.

Our website (www.cavehillconservation.org) has proved



popular and in the course of the coming months it will be upgraded. There was an unusual amount of snow on Cave Hill this year but for those who ploughed through there were great photo opportunities. Check the website gallery for some of the best.

Although it has been a quiet year, the same old problems keep occurring. There are still sporadic disturbances around the access points to the Hill and dog-fouling is still evident. I have the impression that mountain-biking is getting worse and causing increasing damage to more parts of the hill, particularly across the top. We have made submissions to the Council regarding these

in the past and we will continue to do so.

The impending reduction of public spending will undoubtedly have an impact on public spaces such as Cave Hill. It may be that such a reduction will cause maintenance of standards such as litter or tree renewal within the Park to fall. We will be alert to these and we are prepared to point these out. I hope that our members will bring any instances of falling standards to our attention. In that case we can then engage in dialogue with Park staff in order to find ways of reversing any such reduction.

In conclusion I would like to thank all those hardworking and dedicated members of the committee who give freely of their time and energies to help maintain Cave Hill so that it will continue to give as much pleasure in years to come as it now does to me and countless others.

Cormac Hamill



SWIFT CUT BARBERS

164 CAVEHILL ROAD, BT15

**NOW
OPEN**

Monday - Saturday
9:30am - 5:30pm

Late Night Thursday
Open until 7:30pm



**Fresh
Garbage**

Specialists in:

- Incense
- Perfumed Oils
- Oil Burners
- Tiger Balm

Belfast's
Original
Alternative Store
For Over Forty Years!

If it's different...
.....we've got it!

24 Rosemary Street, Belfast
Tel: 028 9024 2350

The Significance Of Small



We hope that our readers will enjoy the new colour version of the Cave Hill Campaigner.

The magazine is distributed to over three thousand homes in the vicinity of Cave Hill and we regard it as an important means of drawing attention to the activities of our organization, alerting residents to threats to the local environment and giving publicity to articles on cultural and historical issues with a bearing on Cave Hill and its environs.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the owners of local businesses whose support in these difficult times makes the continued existence of the Campaigner possible. Thanks are also due to those stalwarts who support our fund raising events.

Many of us are familiar with the phenomenon whereby a vacant property or an under-used public facility rapidly descends into dereliction. This process which has adverse effects on the adjacent area, usually begins with broken windows, and increasing deposits of litter. Then, with alarming rapidity, the property becomes a ruin, and very possibly, the haunt of vandals. The neighbourhood is blighted.

Such a development is now referred to as a "Tipping Point". The idea was first popularised by a former Washington Post writer called Malcolm Gladwell and became the core of his highly influential book – unsurprisingly entitled – "The Tipping Point".

Gladwell famously cited the example of New York City, pointing out that when disorder was evident in small ways such as broken windows, the prevalence of litter or

The Cave Hill Campaigner • 4

small scale law-breaking it quickly morphed into criminality. The "Tipping Point" was the failure to deal quickly with the early indications of social disorder.

What, one may ask, has this to do with Cave Hill? Well, Cave Hill and the adjoining Castle Estate constitute a considerable area which in many respects acts as an anchor for the surrounding neighbourhoods. Previous issues of the Campaigner have highlighted threats to the integrity of the area such as inappropriate development, fire-setting, biking and vandalism. Gladwell points out that it only requires a tiny percentage of people to bring about a 'tip' after which an idea takes hold in the minds of the ill-intentioned: the idea that an insufficient number of people care about the original condition of the area. Preventing this, he insists, is relatively easy. All it takes is a persistent emphasis on the small things that push the 'tip' in the other direction. The cumulative effect of quickly removing litter, vigilance with respect to anti-social behaviour, regular use of an area by citizens, visitors and tourists all help to maintain an area in a way most residents wish it to be.

Please support the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign in its programme of activities – outlined elsewhere in the magazine, and make your own contribution to preserving and enhancing our area's most distinctive facility. As a major supplier of soon-to-be-discarded plastic bags has it, "every little helps".

Edward McCamley

CAVEHILL CHIROPODY

166 Cavehill Road

Mr D Muise

D.Pod.M., M.Ch.S., S.R.Ch., H.P.C.

Health Professions Council Registered

Your Local Chiropodist
For All Chiropody Requirements

Special rates for pensioners

Tel: 02890 391411

J.D. O'Boyle

M.V.B., M.R.C.V.S.

Antrim Road

Veterinary Practice

321 Antrim Road,
Belfast, BT15 2HF

Tel: 028 9075 2333

www.vetsinbelfast.com

Frame Of Mine Art & Custom Framing

www.frameofmine.co.uk



Picture Framing

Original Art

Limited Edition Prints

10% Off
Everything*
with this advert
T&C Apply



Tel: (028) 9077 4207

502 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 5GF

Griffith's Valuation and Cave Hill



Between the years 1847 and 1864 every landholding throughout Ireland was registered and plotted along with the sites of houses, their owners and tenants. This is known as Griffith's Valuation or the Griffith Valuation. Antrim was one of the last counties surveyed, it was finished in 1862

This material is now freely available on the internet and it casts a useful light on Cave Hill one hundred and fifty years ago.

The first thing is to access the site. You can go directly to: <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/index.xml>

The site is can also be easily accessed by through the Belfast Hills Partnership website.

The front page of the Griffith site immediately offers you the option of searching the records for a family name. It is this facility which makes the site a very useful tool for anyone doing any genealogical research. But in this instance we want to look at a physical area. So click on: "Place name search".

Much of Cave Hill lies in the townland of Ballyaghagan. Enter this into "place" and be careful with the spelling – the site is very unforgiving of misspellings. There is no need to complete any other details; this is the only townland of this name in Ireland. Click "search". You will now be shown icons to click for occupants and for map views. Hover over the larger magnifying glass option and confirm that it offers a map in a new window. Click on this.

Perhaps the most important and valuable feature of this map is the slider at the top right of the page. You can grab this with your mouse and by sliding it left, you can bring up the modern map and by sliding it to the right, you can look at the same landscape as it was in the middle of the nineteenth century. One is overlaid exactly on the other and you can fade in either. This allows you to see what features have survived and what has disappeared.

Use that facility to look at the modern map and use the magnifiers and shifters on the left of the page to centre the map on Ballyaghagan. Make sure that the Hightown Road is clear on the left, the Antrim Road on the right and the North Circular Road on the bottom. Now move the slider to the right so that the mid-nineteenth century landscape is shown. Do it slowly so that you can relate the features that emerge to the modern landscape.

Locate the top of what we now refer to as the Green Road where it starts on the Hightown Road at the

modern entrance to the Park. Come down this road (eastwards and then south) and you'll find a row of buildings marked a to g on land marked 3B. This is Daddystown. A little below this there is another solid row marked g to b on land marked 6. This is Mammystown. These were cottages built for the quarry workers. Below Mammystown is a single building marked a – this appears to be the dwelling of the quarry manager. Armed with this knowledge, you can now stroll up this path and locate Daddystown; the low remains of the cottages are still discernible on an obvious sweeping bend. Flowering Blackcurrant and Fuschia are also indicators of one-time cultivation here. Mammystown has virtually disappeared; it now lies on the other side of a high hedge about 150 metres below Daddystown.

To check out who lived in these cottages, close the map window and click on occupants. Click on Original page for the first person on the list – Alexander Reid. This brings you to the original ledger page with a list of people living in Ballyaghagan and codes indicating exactly where they lived. So 3B a to g indicates that two cottages were unoccupied and the rest occupied by James Townsley, Woods Murray, William Chambers, Richard Murray and Thomas Russell. Further down you can see who is registered in Mammystown, coded 6b to 6g. A Robert Murray appears to have been the quarry foreman or manager on his own in 6a.

(For much more information on Mammystown and Daddystown, see Ben Simon's recent publication *Voices from Cave Hill* reviewed elsewhere in this magazine.)

Go back to the map and trace the track from the Hightown Road past Benn's Cascade (called Waterfall here) to the track junction and then along eastwards instead of going down towards Daddystown. Use the slider to help since the modern track to McArt's Fort lies along this way. The modern track is incomplete; it is shown stopping just at the point where it takes a sharp left and goes up the hill. On the nineteenth century map, you can clearly see just above this point a single dwelling. The remains of this dwelling are today still visible. There is only this farmstead on land coded 5 and so no lower case letter was needed to distinguish it. Reference to the original ledger shows that this belonged to an Andrew Hyde and was clearly the highest occupied farm on Cave Hill in the nineteenth century.

Once you are familiar with this excellent site, you can have a lot of fun doing your own research here. And if you want to turn your attention to the eastern side of Cave Hill, the townlands to try are: "Low-wood", "Green castle" and "Ballygolan" (You must use these spellings and spacings) Enjoy!

Cormac Hamill

**CAVE HILL
ADVENTUROUS
PLAYGROUND**

**FUN & ADVENTURE
FOR 3 - 14 YEAR OLDS!**

Open Daily:
April to September

Open Weekends:
October to March

Tel: 028 9077 6925
www.belfastcity.gov.uk

**Gardening
Services**

**Overgrown Trees &
Hedges Cut & Removed**

Replanting

All Wastes Recycled!

Phone Phillip on:
Tel: 028 9071 6200
Mob: 078 7233 4180

Past Times

Those who have read the recent book by Ben Simon, *Voices From Cave Hill*, will have been lucky enough to read some fascinating stories about life near or on Cave Hill, and in the Belfast Castle Estate, in times gone-by. Since publication two local residents have volunteered additional stories to the Cave hill Conservation Campaign that shed some more light on some of the events that have taken place in the area, and they are included here as an addition to the memories captured in this book.

In Ben's book a wooden 'playhouse' is described as being behind the Belfast Castle and was presumed to have been built for one of the Shaftesbury children. Helen Walker, nee Kelso, recalls the exact location of the little wooden house and recalls an interesting story on its intended purpose.

Pre-war memories

"When I was a child in the 1930s and 1940s I lived on the Serpentine Road and the Castle Grounds were part of our playground. Every Sunday, my sister and I went, with our parents, to the Castle for coffee, for them, lemonade and biscuits for us. Later they used to sell ice-cream out of a window in the Castle. It was the window down near the door to the current Cellar Restaurant, on the right hand side, nearest the castle entrance."

"We usually went up opposite Gray's Lane, past the Dower House, as we always knew it, (*this is Martlett Towers*) and then over to the left passing the "Hut". I was told that it had been built by the Shaftesbury family for a son, who was ill. I thought that he had had TB, as the treatment would have been plenty of fresh air. We were told that the little house had been where he and his nurse lived in the summer.

I don't remember who told us but it could have been Mr. Magowan, who was a Ranger on the Estate. If you come past the Castle with the entrance on your right, you take the first path up on the left and the wooden house was a little bit up on the left handside."

"When I was very young and, I think, through part of the war, Guy's Shop on the Antrim Road was owned and run by a Miss O'Neill. I thought that she was very old but that was through a child's eyes. The shop was all one open area, with large bags of sugar and flour, which were weighed out into paper bags for customers. She had a "message boy", and we knew him as Billy O'Neill. He had been a barman. He couldn't read or write but he had a great memory. He walked round all the nearby houses in the morning and people gave him their orders. He remembered what everyone wanted without noting anything down and came round later with a very large basket on his arm, with the groceries. I remember my mother saying that Billy never forgot anything. I think that Miss O'Neill may have closed the shop when she found it too difficult to weigh all the small amounts of the rations during the war."

Helen Walker

Mark Maxwell is a local who had a very unusual childhood. When he was still at primary school his parents accepted a post in the Belfast Castle as joint caretakers and he was to spend the next ten years living in an apartment on the third floor of the Castle at a time when renovations were proceeding and much of the building was semi-derelict.

The Cave Hill Campaigner • 6



My life at Belfast Castle 1973 -1983

My father had been working as a park attendant at Victoria Park in east Belfast where we lived when the caretakership of the Castle came up. In those days it was acceptable for the Council to stipulate that a married couple were required. My mother and father were not very happy with the quality of my primary school and the potential for extra income through letting out our house was also attractive. My father duly applied and was appointed. This was the start of ten very happy and interesting years.

At that time the Castle estate had around 10-12 labouring/gardening staff, two contractors, men driving tractors, and three park attendants (one of whom was my Dad). The contractors, men and gardeners worked set hours and the staff turnover was not particularly high. One or two of them were real characters – Cornelius "Neely" in his black bushranger hat and Gerry with his fund of tall stories.

The shift work took up weekends and summer evenings and the Castle estate was fairly remote from any pubs or shops. Only my father (who lived on site) and one other man Steve McCartney stayed for any length of time, other-wise attendants were always finding other jobs or transfers to less remote parks. The arrival of the "new attendant" was always a feature of interest for me. The foreman was Raymond Harrison when we arrived and shortly before we left he was replaced by Alan Jones.

SPAR 

CAVEHILL

325 Cavehill Road, Belfast, BT15 5EY

*It's where you can get
everything you need!*

Tel 028 9039 1500

SPAR 

*The
Master Butcher
for
Grade A Beef,
Lamb, Pork
and Poultry*



**Stanley's
Meat Centre**

569 Antrim Road, Belfast

Tel: 028 9077 4615



turned up to greet him and he was followed around by a semi-royal entourage. He was a fairly short elderly man in dark and rather baggy clothes and wore a hat. I presume that he was the 6th Marquess (who died in 1975) so possibly he knew or suspected that he had not much time left and wanted to pay a visit or final visit while he was still able.

In 1981 or 1982 there was a grave robbery and desecration at the Chapel of the Resurrection. One of the people in the houses adjoining the Chapel noticed that someone had broken in and reported this to one of the attendants. The attendant was not sure whether or not the Chapel constituted part of the Castle grounds and consulted my father as he had been there longer. The issue had never come up before as the Chapel was never used so my father and the other attendant took the matter to the foreman who referred it to higher management. It was ultimately determined that the Chapel was not part of the Castle estate and the matter was referred to the Church of

Ireland and the police.

When my father took up post in 1973 the old greenhouses on the Antrim Road/Ben Madigan side of the estate were still in operation. There was one man working there, known as "old Bob" and he was approaching retirement. As I recall he retired only a year or two after we came. When Bob was off my dad would have gone over and stoked the boiler and fed the goldfish. The greenhouses and potting sheds were not open to the public; they provided material for the flower beds in the park. When Bob retired it was decided not to replace him and to close the greenhouses (which were shortly destroyed by vandals once they were left empty). There were one or two interesting plants there, probably relics of the Donegall/Shaftesbury days, and a team came from the Botanic Gardens and relocated these to there. The remainder were bedding plants and the like and these were distributed among the labourers and park attendants. Thereafter bedding plants were always provided centrally by Belfast Parks (which suggests that the Castle greenhouses were by then an anomaly left to "die a natural death" when Bob retired).

When the police went into the Chapel they found that the tombs had been broken into and the bodies had been disturbed. The police tracked down the culprits who were from the Shore Road area and a court case ensued.

In 1983 there was a firebomb at Belfast Castle. We left the Castle very shortly after the fire, mainly as a consequence of the fire having brought home to both our family and Belfast Parks management the limited availability of fire escapes and exits from the building. My mother and father were joint caretakers and had originally planned to remain on beyond my father's retirement until I finished school in 1985. As it was, we left two years earlier than that due to unforeseen circumstances! It was after this fire that the current railings round the Castle were put in place.

Mark Maxwell

There was a pool in the main greenhouse with one large goldfish, who may well also have been a relic of the Donegall/Shaftesbury days! When the greenhouses closed my Dad and I transferred the goldfish to a large bowl and brought him to our flat in the Castle where he survived for a further six or seven years - I believe that he died in 1981.

Lord Donegall came to visit the home of his ancestors about a year after we moved to the Castle. A clergyman asked permission to bring Lord Donegall who would be visiting him to view the Castle. The early seventies were still a fairly deferential time - several managers

**TEAGUE'S
PHARMACY**
192 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2GW

FREE
Prescription Collection
& Delivery Service

Also: Digital Processing

Tel: 028 9075 7576
www.teaguespharmacy.com

CASSIDY'S
347 - 349 Antrim Road

Christenings and parties catered for.

Food Monday to Saturday
Breakfast.....9.00am - 2.30pm
Lunch.....12.00 noon - 2.30pm

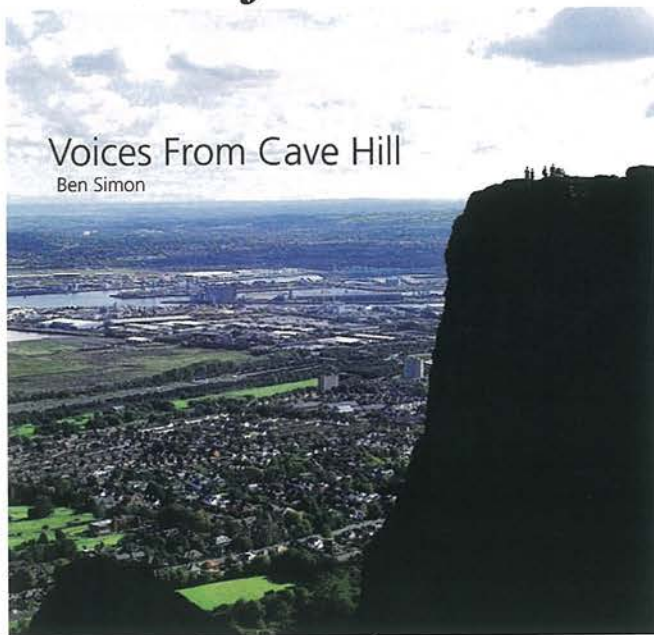
Sunday
Breakfast.....9.00am - 12.00 noon
Lunch.....12.00 noon - 2.00pm

Tel: 028 9080 5553
or: 028 9080 5554

BCC 5 stars. Scores on Doors.

Book Reviews

Voices from Cave Hill



Voices From Cave Hill

Ben Simon

by Ben Simon,
Published by Forest of Belfast. 2010 £8.50

Ben Simon has done us all a great favour by this publication; us being, in the first instance, those of us who live in North Belfast and have any interest at all in Cave Hill. And he has done a service to the wider constituency of local historians by shining a light on the recent history of Cave Hill.

Over the last year or two, Ben Simon identified and then interviewed residents of North Belfast in particular who had strong memories of Cave Hill and he has quoted them virtually verbatim; there appears to have been only a very light editing so that the individual voices come through clearly.

But he has added considerable value by providing introductions and copious notes so that the remembrances are firmly anchored in recorded history. But the voices add the intimate details that conventional histories ignore. What we have in this book is the certainty of historical facts leavened by the personal flavour of individual memories.

It needs to be emphasised that this is not the work of a professional historian and the reminiscences need to be treated with caution. But they are valuable for all that; these are voices recalling a period fast disappearing from memory; were it not for this book, we would have a less clear idea of social life near Cave Hill at that time.

A reading of this book, it will add considerably to your pleasure in walking in the park, in particular in the three areas he concentrates on – the quarry settlements of Mammystown and Daddystown, Belfast Castle Estate and Bellevue.

The ease with which facts can disappear is illustrated by one error in the book. Mammystown was a settlement of six cottages inhabited from the middle of the nineteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth. As such, it would be easy to think that an accurate memory of its location would persist. Yet Ben Simon has located Mammystown in the wrong place on the map on pages 6 & 7. It is only the very recent emergence into easy public access of the Griffith valuation which mapped these settlements has allowed us to locate Mammystown accurately. (See my article elsewhere in this magazine for guidance in accessing this resource).

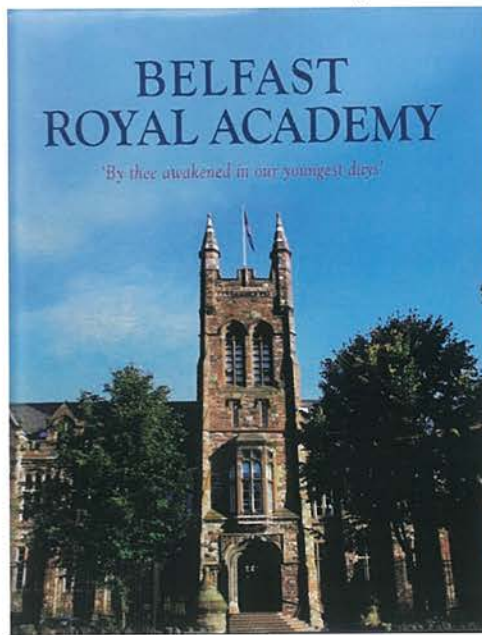
I have one other quibble. Whenever he quotes the words of the various contributors, it would be useful if their birth years accompanied their names. Then again, some of the elderly ladies who are quoted might have been reluctant to provide this information. But in the interests of historical truth....

These are the only small flaws I can find in this publication and it is outweighed by its many fine qualities. Apart from its historical value, the book is a handsome volume, well-illustrated on good quality paper and not expensive. Do buy this book, and if you know any North Belfast exiles, send them a copy: it is guaranteed to make them homesick.

Cormac Hamill

The Cave Hill Campaigner • 8

Old School, New Book



Booklink
225th
Anniversary
£20.00

The castle-like appearance of Belfast Royal Academy has been a familiar feature of this part of the city since its appearance in 1881. The school is in fact the oldest in Belfast and before its transfer to Cliftonville in the late 19th century it was situated in Academy Street near what is now St Anne's Cathedral. Amongst its pupils in the early years was Wolf Tone's

younger brother Arthur, who unlike his more famous sibling, we learn, opted for a life as a seaman.

The book under review is an illustrated history of the school, published to mark the 225th anniversary of the Academy's establishment, and in many respects it celebrates also its connection to this part of the city – as well as with Cave Hill, since the first playing fields and the Preparatory School (known as Ben Madigan) are situated just below the tree line of Cave Hill on thirteen acres purchased from the Shaftesbury Estate in 1935 for £13,500. And since 1974 one of the first indications of summer has been the sight of Academy pupils on their annual sponsored walk over Cave Hill.

The book will have a special appeal to those associated with the school but the history of the Academy is so intertwined with that of Belfast that it represents a significant addition to our appreciation, not only of the development of education in Ireland, but also important aspects of the social history of the city and North Belfast in particular.

Founded in 1785 the Academy moved to its present site in 1881. It became a co-educational school in 1900 but so nervous were many anxious late-Victorian parents of this initiative that it was agreed to only on condition that boys and girls entered and left the building by separate entrances in the two towers at each end of the old building, and they were forbidden to see each other during the course of the school day. Inevitably, some would argue, with the admission of girls, the examination results improved significantly, although it was not until 1924 that both genders were allowed to share the same classrooms as they do today.

The Academy is also connected to Belfast's Jewish community. In 1904 a new synagogue was opened in Annesley Street, off Carlisle Circus. The community prospered in the early twentieth century but numbers were never big enough to sustain a Jewish school and as the only non-denominational school in the area, the Academy became the school commonly selected by their parents for Jewish children. By 1942 Louis Levi became the first Jewish pupil to become Head Boy of the Academy. In 1964 a new community centre and synagogue was opened on the Somerton Road.

This text of this history is based on the work of the distinguished historian, the late ATQ Stewart, and Edward McCamley, a former Head of the Academy's History Department. The book is illustrated with a really impressive display of portraits and photographs, many in colour and published here for the first time. The fascinating aerial photographs of North Belfast and of the Cave Hill will be of particular interest to those who live in the area (as many Academy pupils do) and effectively complement what is an important addition to the social history of the city.

Martin McDowell

What Should We Do About Mountain Bikers?



You are coming down the main path from the caves. Suddenly there is a screech of brakes, a spray of gravel, and a near miss as mountain bikers rocket past you. Along one of the summit paths a major earthwork that would do justice to prehistoric man appears; no, it is a jump constructed by bikers. Such is the unacceptable face of mountain biking.

Set against this, it is a healthy and non-polluting sport and the majority of bikers seek to avoid endangering others or causing undue damage. It cannot be categorised generally as a crime. Nor do the City Council bye-laws specifically ban it; the relevant rule states, 'A person shall not ride any bicycle in a manner which is unsafe or likely to cause damage to the park or give reasonable cause for annoyance or alarm to other persons in the park'. These are matters of interpretation rather than outright prohibition.

The Council seems to be in something of a quandary as to how to deal with the issue. In 2002 the Parks Committee agreed to 'the possible development of a dedicated mountain biking facility'. By 2006 this had become a less ambitious 'local facility'. They then sought the advice of a professional off-road cycle track designer. He concluded that 'the existing path system at Cave Hill could not accommodate sustainable dual use for both mountain bikers and pedestrian users'. That was the end of any plan for formal mountain biking provision on the hill.

The Mary Peters track/ Barnett's demesne was recommended as an alternative. Henceforward the Council's efforts to make formal provision has focussed there, but the estimated cost in 2010 was £340,000 and the possibilities of grant aid are remote.

That has left the Cave Hill as a major unofficial mountain biking venue. Even as the Mary Peters track/ Barnett's demesne option emerged, Council officers described how they 'had been liaising closely with those involved in mountain biking making them aware of the issues, and as a result there has been a significant reduction in the use of the Cave Hill Country Park', but in an addendum to the same report they had to admit that 'the problems have re-emerged at the Cave Hill... This is illustrated by the number of vehicles

with specially fitted bike carriers on site in the evenings and at weekends'.

Apart from the general issue of 'damage to paths and the forest floor', they noted 'the building of dangerous jumps' and 'fence cutting'. The Council officers also concluded that 'To try and remove mountain biking from the Cave Hill Country Park would be a very costly exercise in terms of man hours and possibly with little success given the nature of the sport'.

That does seem to be an unduly passive response to the situation. Perhaps it is time to resurrect a proposal for a voluntary code of conduct made in the May 2001 *Campaigner*. In amended form this could be as follows:

Mountain bikers should:

- Avoid use of the main pedestrian paths for downward journeys.
- Avoid use of the hill after heavy rain (to minimise damage to informal paths).
- Show care and consideration for other park users.
- Wear helmets and appropriate safety equipment at all times.
- They should be reminded that cutting down trees, and constructing jumps by digging holes and building ramps is actionable under the bye-law 'damage to the park' clause.

Council officers have liaised with the mountain bikers, so it should be easy enough to discuss proposals of this kind with them and, hopefully, to win their support. It is not a perfect solution, but it is better than doing nothing.

John Gray

Frost

From Cave Hill to Belfast Lough

Frost holds its steely grip.

At our door red berries

Look through a beard of ice.

The gate has been lifted

From its metal base

And winter darkness

Is made darker by

The light off snow.

Seagulls shriek above our roof

Far from their frozen strand

Where the shape of the world

Has changed.

Cold cold wind in the waterworks

Where ducks skid in comical ease.

There is no repose for fox or squirrel;

Even ego is put on hold.

Stay under the quilt;

Putting your head out

Is burying your face

In a bank of snow.

Hope, hope for thaw to begin;

The shape of the world will change again.

- Tom Morgan



A professional and pro-active service:

- Tax returns and advice
- Business accounts
- Payroll and Vat services
- Help and advice for business start-ups

636 Antrim Road, Belfast

Phone: 028 9028 8635

Email: peter@cavehillaccountancy.com

Website: www.cavehillaccountancy.com

Easter Tuesday 1941

There were four German air raids on Belfast in 1941. The second attack had a devastating effect on North Belfast.

The air raid sirens sounded at 10.40 pm on the night of 14th April. Shortly after the characteristic wailing died away, the clear night sky reverberated with the double-pitched throbbing of German aircraft engines as the first wave of Junker 88 and Heinkel 111 bombers approached the city from the south-east. The leading planes dropped flares to illuminate the target for the succeeding waves of bombers. As the flares floated down on their parachutes, the streets below were bleached by a brilliant orange and white light which seemed to those who witnessed it to create an artificial daylight more stark and revealing than sunlight.

For the next three hours about one hundred and eighty aircraft pounded the city with hundreds of tons of high explosive and incendiary bombs. Whether by accident or design (opinion remains divided) most of the high explosive bombs and parachute mines cascaded down on the northern suburbs. A huge swathe of North Belfast, from York Street up to the Antrim Road and on over to the Crumlin and Shankill Roads, was devastated. Rows of buildings and entire families were obliterated. The noise was appalling. As each wave of aircraft swept through to its attack the drone of their engines fused with the resonant thud of exploding bombs to generate a toneless thunder occasionally punctuated by the crash of anti-aircraft guns. However, after 1.45am the action of the latter was rendered useless when a bomb destroyed the Gun Operations Control Room of the Anti-Aircraft Command at East Bridge Street.

The raid ended shortly after 3.00am on morning of the 15th April by which time the anti-aircraft guns had long since fallen silent. The bombers flew on over the west and eventually turned south to return to their bases in northern France by tracking down the coast of neutral Southern Ireland.

Behind them fires still raged in Belfast. Morning, darkened by a pall of smoke which lay as if draped over the city, brought with it the nightmarish task of recovering and, where possible, identifying the bodies of more than seven hundred dead. This work was made more difficult by the panic-stricken flight of thousands of citizens, and dangerous by the collapse of many bomb-damaged buildings.

There was a massive bomb crater at the top of Glandore Avenue and another one in the Castle grounds. Tram wires had been torn down. The lower Antrim Road was covered in debris and soil from the gardens of the adjacent houses, giving it the curious appearance of having been ploughed up.

The Government eventually acknowledged the death of seven hundred and forty five people. (The better known air-raid on Coventry caused over five hundred and fifty deaths). For days afterwards the bodies of those who had died were taken to St George's Market and to the Falls Road Baths for identification by relatives. Thereafter they were buried in mass graves in Milltown and City Cemeteries.

E. McCamley

The Cave Hill Campaigner • 11

Cave Hill

*We are drawn
To Emperor's profile
Napoleon's Nose
A Majestic ancient plateau*

*MacArt's Fort
The highest point
Enthronement place
Of Celtic Kings*

*Men of 1798 plotted rebellion
On Cave Hill slopes
Planter and Gael
United in aspiration*

*Ulster's highwayman – Naoise O'Haughan
Found refuge in these woods
Where Chichester raised Baronie castle
Guarded by mythical cat*

*From the summit
Disused linen mills and empty port
Redundant cranes
Remnants of our industrial past
No longer Titanic City*

*Here on the crest
Between Lough and sky
No dividing wall
This hallowed place of Madigan
Bestows an inner peace
And spiritual renewal*

*Non judgemental
Millennium's silent witness
Of our past failings
And heroic stands*

*For we who make Pilgrimage
To this archaic hill
Receive in benediction
A fervent sense of place*

- Joan Murray

the Salon Hair & Beauty

Why not come along, relax and indulge yourself in our luxury salon with its highly trained and friendly staff?

We have a wide range of hairdressing services plus:

Real Hair Extensions	Nail Extensions
Facials	Make-Up
Specialist Waxing	Airbrush
Sunbeds	Tanning

Open Six Days

Tuesday until 8.00pm, Thursday until 9.00pm

Saturday 9.00am until 4.00pm

O.A.P. Days Mondays and Tuesdays

182 Cavehill Road

Tel: 028 9071 2271

www.thesalonna@hotmail.com

NEESON'S PHARMACY



170 Cliftonville Road,
Belfast, BT14 6LB



FREE
Collection &
Delivery Service

www.neesonspharmacy.com

Tel: 028 9074 4049

Walkers



Napoleon's nose? - don't get me started; I'm forever correcting people about that. It's an affliction of the dedicated hill walker who daily patrols the familiar terrain and is filled with a feeling of ownership of all he surveys (or is it just me!). It's the compulsion to regurgitate his smattering of local history to anyone who points at McArt's Fort and enquires how he can get up to Napoleon's Nose! Right away, whether wanted or not, he is informed that in Napoleon's time the town stopped at Corporation Street, from where the classic profile of the face is seen to best advantage, with the nose being the cliff above the caves, and McArt's Fort being the tip of the tricorn hat. The lecture stops only when fear is seen creeping into the hapless enquirer's eyes as he realises he is in the clutches of an obsessive, and scurries away.

So who are these people who set off up the hill, wrapped in puffer jackets against the cold, suitably booted, and equipped with high-tech extendable walking sticks or humble blackthorns, according to taste? They fall into two main categories: dog walkers and dog-less walkers. The latter can be further divided into dog-less walkers in packs, and solo dog-less walkers - of which I am one. However I carry a stick, which makes people think that I must have a dog nearby - after all who would be so selfish as to walk the hill alone, depriving some poor canine of an outing. A moment later and I can see the accusation in its eyes. But I remain dogged in my doglessness.

These greetings between complete strangers are part of a carefully calibrated ritual; after all, who wants to get chummy with someone who might turn out to be a serial killer? How would you know? Friendliness without intimacy is the aim in such encounters. Regular walkers can meet daily for years, even decades, yet know little more about each other beyond this cursory acknowledgement - and by mutual consent. It's a cultural thing; in this part of the world most people are unable to pass without some form of acknowledgement.

Striking the right note is what counts. Such greetings can vary from the bright, effusive "Grand mornin'" to the shy, wordless, yet friendly, smile. From there it can regress down to the reluctant grunt, the nod, the twitch - all nonetheless with reassuring eye contact; and then further down still to the barely perceptible glacial nod without eye contact - to, finally, the worst of all: total indifference to the other's presence. So the types best avoided are the (usually male) companionless, dog-less, stick-less, smile-less, grunt-less, nod-less, those who oblige you to wonder what domestic disquiet has belched them forth on this bright sunny day. But these are rare. Most walkers are imbued with the generosity of spirit and sense of well being that only exercise in the fresh air can give, as the sights and sounds and smells of woodland and moor lift the spirits. Who can come upon the first blush of daffodils, or the haze of bluebells glimpsed between the trees, without feeling the better of it.

And the hill walker has no predators, other than those thoughtfully provided by his fellow man: motorcyclists and the occasional feral youths. Thankfully, the latter confine themselves to the bushes of the lower slopes, leaving the higher paths to those of a more contemplative disposition. But even here irritants can be encountered - mostly dog related. There is, of course, the inevitable and ever present dog mess where watchfulness is one's only guide. Then there are the heart-stopping moments when a huge snarling leash-free dog suddenly erupts from the

bushes straight ahead, fixes you with a stare, and plants itself in your way, with no owner in sight. The presence of an owner, even with a leash, is not always a guarantee of safety; equally alarming, is a twelve stone rottweiler bounding towards one towing a youth in its wake.

But despite all, the breathtaking view from McArt's Fort, on a mist free day more than repays the effort involved in getting there. Even for someone not in the first flush of youth it is confirmation that there's life in this particular old dog yet. For inevitably, there will come a day when the legs themselves will set less elevated goals for us, and we may find ourselves confined to the lower slopes. Here, at leisure, we will observe the frolic of youth, and we may - as a last hurrah - even join them and go feral ourselves.

John Rooney

The Draft Planning Bill

The Belfast Metropolitan Resident's Group is an umbrella group for twenty four community associations in the greater Belfast Area. The Cave Hill Conservation Campaign is one such group.

What follows is a summary of the BMRG's objections to the Draft Planning Bill.

The Bill will devolve planning to councils. This will, in all probability, result in a system not dissimilar to that in the Republic where the devolution of planning has been little short of disastrous, and a major factor in the distorted building patterns which have driven the country into such appalling financial difficulties.

In addition, these proposals will politicise planning matters. As everyone is well aware, councils are institutions which can serve their own ends, which are not inevitably expressive of the wishes of the community as a whole. This is particularly true on planning matters where councillors have shown little independence, preferring instead to adhere to the imperatives of party machines. Electoral considerations will not require councils to take account of public opinion on planning matters.

The BMRG believe that too much power is being vested in councils and that the community should have a Statutory Right of Participation.

The Bill sidelines the Regional Development Strategy the policies of which are the outcome of the most thoroughgoing consultation ever undertaken by the DoE and the result of years of work. In fact, if decision making is to be consistent across, and between, plans, a higher standard of conformity will be required. As it stands, the Bill will fatally undermine the RDS since local area plans will only be required to 'have regard' to the RDS.

The BMRG believes that there should be three classes of development instead of the two proposed. A new category of minor applications which would include things such as roofspace conversions or the construction of conservatories should be added. Furthermore, all applications by a district council should be handled centrally by the Planning Service.

The Bill makes no provision for Third Party Appeals which offer cheap and effective means of improving the quality of development management decision making. The simple fact is that so many inappropriate developments get planning permission because the present system is biased in favour of applicants ie the developers.

The way this bias works is simple. If planning officials refuse an application, they are then bombarded with requests from developers' lawyers and consultants at the Planning Appeals Commission. The best way to remove this bias is through the introduction of a Third Party appeal system. A standard objection to this is that it delays planning decisions. However one should consider whether a hasty decision is better than a good one. BMRG believes that the public interest lies in good decisions and that the long view is the more important.

Upcoming Events

Although we are already well through the year's activities, here are some of our upcoming events that you may like to participate in:

- Saturday 18th June, 10.00am - 13.00pm:** Guided Walk to Summit of Hill
- Saturday 16th July, 10.00am - 13.00pm:** Guided Walk on Botany by Jim Bradley, Belfast Hills Partnership
- Saturday 20th August, 10.00am - 13.00pm:** The Buildings of the Castle Estate - Guided Walk by Ben Simon (covers locations of buildings featured in Ben's recent book)
- Saturday 17th September, 10.00am - 13.00pm:** Guided Walk to Summit of Hill
- Saturday 15th October, 10.00am - 13.00pm:** Guided Walk to Summit of Hill
- Friday 25th November, 7.30pm:** 'Night at the Races' at Fortwilliam Golf Club

For all the walks above the meeting place is in front of the Belfast Castle at 10am

If you plan to attend one of our walks make sure you come suitably dressed!



CALLING ALL MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS!

If you are a member wishing to renew your membership for 2014 or a new member wishing to join, it's never been simpler! You can either join at our Annual General Meeting or attach a cheque to the form below and sent it to:

Cave Hill Conservation Campaign, 32 Waterloo Park, Belfast, BT15 5HU.

All email addresses supplied will be kept secure and only used to communicate with our members.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Email: _____

£10 Waged

£5 Unwaged (please tick appropriate box)

If you are a current British taxpayer please tick here (we will then be able to reclaim the income tax already paid from the Inland Revenue - ticking this box will not cost you any more money but will benefit the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign)

The Cave Hill Conservation Campaign is a Registered Charity (Charity Number XR96728)

COPY CATS

design
copy
print

PRINTING • B/W & COLOUR COPYING
WORD PROCESSING • LAMINATING
FAX SERVICE • BINDING

DESIGN & PRINT OF BUSINESS
STATIONERY & PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

STATIONERY • CARDS • GIFTS
PRINTS • FRAMES

CANVAS PRINTS & FRAMING SERVICE

PRINTING FROM CUSTOMER MEDIA

537 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 3BU

tel/fax: 028 9077 6457

email: copycats-ni@btconnect.com OR copycats@rocketmail.com

Cavehill Campaigner printed by Copycats
<http://www.belfast-printing.co.uk/>