



The Cave Hill Campaigner



Published by The Cave Hill Conservation Campaign
Issue No. 26 | Summer 2023 | Price: **FREE!**

Cave Hill Conservation

The Cave Hill Conservation Campaign's reporting system for environmental incidents

A great deal of concern has been expressed recently about environmental-related crime and antisocial behaviour across parts of the Belfast Hills including wildlife crime such as badger-baiting and poisoning of birds, as well as the dangers posed by the use of scramblers. However, most of our information about environmental crime in the region is in the form of scattered anecdotal reports, which means it is difficult to get a full picture of what is happening across Cave Hill. This also makes it hard for the authorities to mount a comprehensive response to the problem.

Cave Hill Conservation Campaign (CCC) have therefore created a reporting system for environmental-related incidents on Cave Hill. Any member of the public who observes an incident, or has evidence of an incident, can send an email report to CCC. In terms of the incidents that can be reported, the system has a broad remit including dead animals or birds, signs of digging at badger setts or fox dens, scramblers or quad bikes being ridden (as well as tracks), fires being set, broken fences or signage, fly-tipping or, indeed, anything the observer considers to be environmental-related crime or antisocial activity. We ask people reporting incidents to CCC to provide precise location information with a dropped pin (Google Maps) or a what3words address, together with photographic or video evidence where possible. CCC acknowledges receipt of the report and details of the incident are entered systematically in a database (though without storage of reporters' personal details), which is updated regularly.

We believe that gathering these data will in the long term provide us with a more objective assessment of environmental crime (including opportunities for analysis for any patterns or trends), and give us a better idea of the full extent of this problem in Cave Hill. We also hope our data will assist the authorities in devising

a comprehensive strategy for the local area and will be more helpful in this regard than simply reporting all incidents to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), who will not have the resources to respond to everything that is going on. Although this is primarily a CCC initiative, our intention is that it will link into the Belfast Hills Partnership's wildlife crime programme. We hope there will also be opportunities to incorporate insights shared by the PSNI's wildlife crime team.

The reporting system is currently being trialled among the directors of CCC, enabling us to address any teething problems. Of the incidents reported to us so far, approximately half relate to the illegal use of scramblers, which is not surprising in light of two recent high-profile incidents in Ligoniel Park and



In This Issue:

The Cave Hill Conservation Campaign's reporting system for environmental incidents	1
A Word from the Chair 2023	2
The making of Bellevue Pleasure Gardens.....	4
Cavehill - A Poem by Tom Morgan.....	7
In Praise of Allium Ursinum	8
The Maze – an ongoing story	9
Ballynature Day 2023.....	10
BACK IN TIME: What things were like when the Cave Hill Basalt formed	11
The Herb Garden 2023 – A Team Effort	12
Wheels of Time.....	13
Join us for a free walking tour!	15
No Place Like Home - A Poem by Martine Owens	15

Cave Hill Country Park where police helicopters were mobilised to apprehend scrambler-riders. We plan to make the system accessible to all CCC members in May 2023 and to the public later in the year. We expect to report on the first year's data in the 2024 issue of The Campaigner.

We would still emphasise that if you witness someone

committing a criminal act, you should contact the police on 999 (urgent) or 101 (non-urgent) – the new system is not a replacement for that. Please consider your own safety first and do not make any attempt to engage the offender(s).

Ajay Mirakhur

A Word from the Chair 2023

This last year has seen society here in Northern Ireland returning to near-normality. In our own case, we have been able to meet once more in person and for the last few months, Belfast City Council have again opened the Castle to make a room available for our meetings.

On Cave Hill at the height of the pandemic, there were issues associated with the much-increased use of the hill. It was hard to avoid close contact with people on the narrow paths and quite a number of people were not familiar with the behaviour expected in the countryside. In particular the litter problem increased considerably and dog faeces became a major problem. Nowadays, the footfall on the hill has returned to what it was pre-Covid and the littering problems have lessened. There is, however, no room for complacency and were it not for the efforts of some of our members who lift litter regularly, the condition of the hill would be much worse.

We have also been able to reinstate our full monthly guided walks programme without having to observe irksome Covid precautions and I'm delighted at the turnout of the public at these walks. We have also created a group of volunteers who come together on one Saturday a month to carry out tasks on the hill. We have nearly finished renovation of the maze and there are plans to open it formally to the public in the Autumn. Our volunteers have also undertaken the re-design and replanting of the herb garden in the Castle grounds and we hope that this garden will be a resource available to any restaurant in the Castle as well as to members of the public.

Our programme of external talks has also resumed; local groups are again happy to meet in person and have invited speakers and we are only too happy to send a speaker with an illustrated talk to any such group with an interest in Cave Hill. I gave a talk to the North Belfast Historical Society in February and to the public in Chichester library in April.

We have had a presence at two fairs; one was a morning in Girdwood in November run by Volunteer Now to highlight resources available to men aged 60+. We were, of course, extolling the benefits of being out

and about on Cave Hill. The large environmental fair which was held in Ballynure pre-Covid was resurrected in March this year and we had a table there where we drew attention to the richness of Cave Hill and made contact with a broad range of environmental organisations.

During the year, the mountain-bike route known as the Middle Trail was formally launched. This was a result of a lot of hard work over two years by the bikers and a lot of meetings between the Council, the Cave Hill Mountain Bikers and ourselves. The result has been that the trail has not generated the furore which might have been expected. It is not a standard walking trail; walkers can use it and there are plenty of notices warning of the presence of bikes. But it would be prudent for walkers on or crossing this trail to exercise

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

FORTWILLIAM
— GOLF 1891 CLUB —

INVITES NEW MEMBERS FROM
ACROSS THE WHOLE COMMUNITY
(LADIES, GENTS & JUNIORS)

VERY REASONABLE OFFERS AVAILABLE
EMAIL: OFFICE@FORTWILLIAMGC.CO.UK
TEL: 02890 370770
(BETWEEN 10AM AND 1PM)



caution. There are still issues of concern; for example in places the trail is too wide. But it has bedded in well.

Our environmental work continued again and for the tenth year in a row, we carried out a weekly butterfly survey from April to September.

Reports are coming in from other parts of the Belfast Hills that appear to indicate a growth in wildlife and environmental crime. Birds have been shot, raptors poisoned, badgers and foxes killed. Scramblers have been creating eroded tracts across moorland. But nobody knows the extent of this destruction; such reports are only anecdotal. Belfast Hills Partnership is moving towards creating a database of such incidents and it is our hope that this database, as it grows, will reveal the extent of the problem and cause the authorities to take these issues very seriously. I would like to know what such problems are on Cave Hill and then feed that into the database. So we will soon be asking our members and members of the public, if they see evidence of such crimes, to take photos (if safe to do so) and report it to us. This report is not a substitute for alerting the authorities; if you see a crime taking place, you should report it at once to the PSNI.

Public access to the Belfast Hills has been an issue for many years and we have been party to many meetings and discussions in an effort to increase this access and to create a public route from Divis to Cave Hill. This last year, developments have occurred; there have been a number of land sales which have happened or are happening raising hopes that these issues may be resolved in the near future. We here in the north of Belfast are lucky; our untrammelled access to 750 acres of countryside on Cave Hill is something which is not available to a lot of people elsewhere in Belfast. As part

of a concerted effort to raise access issues and keep them to the fore, we led a public walk from Belfast Castle to Ligoniel. We will do so again at various intervals over the next two years.

Our presence on social media has improved. We have 3600 members on our Facebook who take an interest in Cave Hill. Our website looks really good with lots of photos and electronic versions of the twenty five magazines we have published over the years. And we also have an active Twitter account.

I would like to thank everyone who helped and supported us over the last year: all the Belfast City Council employees who have helped us in many ways, all our members whose subscriptions keep us going and in particular our seventeen trustees who give freely of their time and energy in order to keep Cave Hill in good condition as a resource for us and for those who come after us.

Cormac E Hamill (Chair)

WWW.DIRTYCARSWANTED.COM



DIRTY CARS WANTED

Full Range of Valeting Services available

028 9078 1380

22 Glanlead Drive, Belfast, BT15 3FW

Belfast

The perfect blend of character, charm and sophistication...

**Weddings
Conferences
Restaurant
Fine dining**

Antrim Road, Belfast
Tel: 028 9077 6925



www.belfastcastle.co.uk

The making of Bellevue Pleasure Gardens

The present-day City of Belfast Zoological Gardens (formerly Bellevue Zoo and before this Bellevue Gardens) draw their foundations back to the public transport system in the shape of trams. By early 1881 the horse drawn vehicles of the Belfast Street tramway company had reached Chichester Park on the Antrim Road, leaving those who desired to travel beyond this end to make their own arrangements.

The options at that time were to hire a hackney carriage or to secure one's place on one of the very few long carts which would occasionally turn up to greet the tram, or in fact as a last resort to dander the 3 miles to Glengormley. Therefore, to accommodate this quite considerable volume of trade, the Cavehill and Whitewell tramway company was formed by local business interests and commenced operation of a roadside tramway system in 1882, from Chichester Park to Glengormley village. It was worked diversely by horse and steam tram until 1895, and then horse only until the electrification as a centre of road line in 1906.

The Cavehill and Whitewell company, in expectation of an influx of passengers eager to sample the newly converted operating system of travel, provided a

second nourishment room in the old Bellevue gardens at Glengormley, and a large hall was procured to provide shelter if it was wet. The redundant horse car bodies were converted into summer houses and the utmost was done to make the gardens additionally attractive. Passengers were offered cheap fares to the terminus, there to enjoy the facilities offered by the revamped gardens.

This very popular leisure area, greatly admired by those early excursionists from the city, had been owned by the Glengormley General Recreation Company, and by mutual agreement, the Cavehill and Whitewell company paid a half yearly endowment to maintain its operation to their mutual benefit, until the gardens were bought outright by the Cavehill and Whitewell company in 1894. It was the Cavehill and Whitewell company who enthusiastically promoted this facility, to stimulate and attract additional investment on to their cars.

The demand and influx of passengers prompted the Cavehill and Whitewell company to place a Bill before Westminster, seeking approval for a physical connection at Chichester Park with the Corporation tramway and thus all running powers to the city centre.

In April 1910, the introduction of the Belfast Tramways Bill, endorsed by the Corporation, was held before the House of Commons. It was to agree the combination of the Cavehill and Whitewell company into the Corporations city system. By June 1911, the Corporation had interim agreement to operate the Cavehill and Whitewell company pending clarification of the legal accuracies.

The head office and car yard of this former Cavehill and Whitewell Tramway Company was situated at Whitewell in the townland of Drumnadrough. It was housed on approximately 32 acres and included on site, were several disused limestone quarries, which operated up to 1884. The principal manager of the Belfast City Tramways Company (the former Belfast Street Tramways Company), one Andrew Nance, had a vision of developing this land into a playground and pleasure garden (at the expense of the old gardens at Glengormley).

Mr Andrew Nance had been formerly the past Manager of the Belfast Street Tramway Company from 1881 until 1904 and had also been a director on the Board of the Cavehill and Whitewell Tramway Company from 1892. It was he who advised the Cavehill and Whitewell Company in 1893 to obtain the old Bellevue Gardens from Glengormley General Recreation Company and to enlarge further its attractions.

The Corporation and with the entrepreneurial leader-



the salon

REWARD SCHEME
ALL BEAUTY TREATMENTS
NAILS AND TANNING

182 Cavehill Road, Belfast
MONDAY - SATURDAY 9AM-5PM
OPEN LATE TUESDAY & THURSDAY

TEL: 028 9071 2271

THE **CAVE** **184 CAVEHILL ROAD**
NEWSAGENTS

**DAILY DELIVERY
OF NEWSPAPERS**

CALL US ON: 028 9071 4798

Email: thecavenewsagents@gmail.com



ALSO A HUGE SELECTION OF:

- CARDS • GLOSSY MAGAZINES •
- CONFECTIONERY & SOFT DRINKS •
- POPULAR "AMERICAN" SWEETS •
- TOYS & GIFTS • & MUCH MORE

ship of Andrew Nance, set sights on initiating the expansion of the pleasure gardens. In September 1912, the Corporation appointed Ernest Cheal (director) from the Cheal and Sons landscape firm of Crawley to begin a survey and create proposals for the intended site on Bellevue. They were given responsibility for developing a grand plan for the site. By 1913 the firm had already begun conquering the craggy slopes, forming a system of zigzag paths, planting native and honorary native trees, building an embattled wall around the perimeter of the plateau and to end - constructing a grand staircase from the Antrim Road to the upper plateau.

This 'Grand Floral Staircase' was to be divided into several flights of ornamental stone steps with bowls of flowers at various stages invigorated the tiresome climb up to the plateau. There were wooden arches erected and rambling roses planted which in a few years would give the whole place a most decorative effect.

In the face of the mounting debt caused by many structural failures during construction, the Corporation quickly transmitted the concern over to the Tramways Committee, obliging them to give an immediate and full account of their stewardship. Resulting from this censure all work was stopped on site from November 27th, 1913, pending a report from the City Surveyor. When the City Surveyor made his inspection and subsequently reported back to the Corporation, he estimated that the total cost to complete the layout and equip the ground as a pleasure park for the people would be £40,000. As it later transpired even this was a conservative estimate.

Great consternation was induced by the report, resulting in lengthy and often intense discussion within and beyond the Council Chamber, with regards to the wisdom of continuing further with the project. However, further debate was thrust into the background as the Great War of 1914-1918 burst upon the scene and all thoughts of completing the work were subjugated to the furtherance of the war effort. Throughout this period the vision and dream of Andrew Nance to provide a pleasure garden on the slopes of Cavehill for the people of Belfast remained prevaricated, with just a skeleton staff retained on site, to fill in subsidence as it occurred, and to capture the overtures of mother nature as she sought to take over and return the area to the wild. Thus, it remained until the war ended, by which time Andrew Nance had retired, having surrendered his post in 1916, aged 69 years, after 35 years of distinguished service with the Belfast Tramways. He was however retained by the Corporation for several years in an advisory capacity to his successor Mr James Moffett.

The accomplishment of the Bellevue contract fell to the new General Manager, and after a great deal of bitter debate, money and the necessary will was found

to complete the project, and the new 'Bellevue Pleasure Gardens' was formally opened to the general public in July 1920 by Lord Mayor Sir W.F. Coates. As previously recorded, the construction of the gardens had been plagued by a catalogue of near disasters, including land slips and subsidence which had sundered the great staircase and caused part of the boundary wall to collapse on to the main Antrim Road. To compound the problems the newly erected teahouse was burnt down in 1914.

Contemporary reports imply that the café was a pretty little building, situated midway up the steps and off to the left-hand side. On the heels of these frustrations and during the period of the 1914-1918 War, only maintenance work was carried out, and the gardens lay near abandoned. Upon interruption of hostilities, debate ensued on the advisability of continuing further with the project. Fortunately, good sense prevailed and in due course the Corporation reinstated that which nature had swept aside, and when the café was rebuilt, it was located in a quainter location at the southern edge of the plateau. To accommodate the junketing on the great day, a marquee was erected and approximately 100 guests sat down to luncheon. The dining area was attractively designed with Palms and adorned with a dazzling display of sweet roses. All of this was provided by the curator of the City Parks, Mr James Davies.

From the opening in 1920, Bellevue flourished, and as anticipated crowds flocked from the city by the thousand, travelling by tram to view this exciting new development. It was considered the 'in thing' to promenade in the newly created gardens and tree lined walks on the slopes of Cavehill and to breathe deeply of the clean mountain air, denied to many who toiled in the industrial heart of Belfast.

The achievement of Bellevue was apparent, however, there was one major disadvantage: it not having a natural water course, either by river, spring nor underground catchment in the area. The adjacent property to Bellevue was known as Hazelwood and was owned by a Mr Ebenezer Reid (the property was owned by the Grant family before this), where there was a good supply of water. Mr Reid was aware of the problems facing the Corporation in developing the area without valuable assets. In August 1920, Mr Reid with his accompanied Solicitor Mr J.L. Galway, submitted a letter to the Bellevue Sub-Committee, offering to sell the grounds known as 'Hazelwood' adjoining Bellevue Pleasure Gardens. Powers were requested and obtained, but in true fashion, matters dragged on for a considerable period, not reaching a conclusion until July 1923, at which time the Belfast Corporation Act of 1923 was authorised and a cheque of £7000 was signed for the acquisition of Hazelwood.

The stage was now set to launch the improvement of the property into an extension of the Bellevue Pleasure Gardens. Mr E.M. Reid the former owner had resided on the estate in Hazelwood House and this large residence was converted in due course into the popular Café Hazelwood.

Mr Murray (Superintendent of the Bellevue Estate) and Mr Davis (Curator of the City Parks) were instructed by the Tramways Committee to generate a report detailing the work required for the newly acquired site, to bring it up to the appropriate standard to perpetuate the Bellevue title (the level of work needed to reflect the standard of the Bellevue Pleasure Gardens, which had previously been completed).

This report which was submitted to the Chair and

the Tramways Committee concluded that the grounds of Hazelwood would require considerable work to remove thick underwood and gorse, whilst a portion was marsh, would require the necessary draining before any paths were to be cut. It also contained plans for contouring the grounds, giving easy access to all parts of the property. The report interestingly denoted the plans for a lake to be formed around the Ballygolan Fort (an ancient monument), which would keep the Fort intact whilst providing a catchpit for heavy or persistent rain. The estimation of the clearing, draining, making paths and forming a lake would cost £16,000. The work was estimated to employ 100 labourers for 52 weeks, with a total labour cost of £12,000.

The considerable task involved in formatting the grounds at Hazelwood continued throughout the winter

and the following spring and was finally complete to the satisfaction of the Tramways Committee in June 1924. Concurrently work was pressing ahead with the conversion project of the former Hazelwood house on the estate into a restaurant and café. The building, eventually named 'Café Hazelwood' was situated on the left side off the avenue heading up from the Antrim Road close to the summit. This building hosted the original dances and cabarets long before the opening of Floral Hall in 1936. Café Hazelwood introduced a series of cabaret and dances in response to requests from the people of Belfast who preferred an amorous backdrop for entertainment.

The establishment of a full zoological anthology in conjunction with Bellevue Pleasure Gardens was first discussed in the Council Chamber in April 1923. The suggestion was not received with any great eagerness but continued to be debated at various times in the interim until 1932, when plans were offered to provide a small but representative collection of animals on the plateau to gauge response. Despite severe concerns, the Committee overcame resistance due to the likelihood of increased revenue accrued from

NORTHFIT

P E R S O N A L T R A I N I N G

PRIVATE PERSONAL TRAINING STUDIO

GET IN TOUCH TODAY TO GET STARTED

MOUNT LENNOX BUILDING
683 ANTRIM ROAD
07703 557796



the additional deployment of the tramway system from all parts of the city.

The Tramways Committee decided that subject to approval of the Council, that they would provide amusements for the plateau at Bellevue. The Haymarket Amusements, which was a company, formed by Harry Monzo and Harvey Wilton, commenced to set up and operate a series of amusements on the plateau. There were Water Dodgems, Auto Scooter Cars, Tunnel Railway, Kiddies Whip and Roundabouts (all electrically powered) and to have them up and running for the remainder of the 1933 season. Harry Kamiya also commenced the installation of a steam railway in 1934 to run from the south end to the north end of the plateau along the base of the cliff face. In addition, he also introduced a shooting range, a House of Thrills, a Brownie – Coaster, the Bomber, Skee Ball and a Fairy Wheel. The Haymarket amusements also purchased a redundant locomotive named ‘The Bug’ and with six carriages from the Romey, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway. This was to be the flagship of the attractions on the plateau. It had a gauge of fifteen inches, a track length of one-quarter of a mile and two stations. The one to the south end was called Bell Hazel Station and the other simply Bellevue Park. On the day of opening of the zoo, the locomotive was renamed ‘Sir Crawford’, after the Lord Mayor, who drove it on its maiden run. Following an appropriate length of time, the engine was again renamed, this time ‘Jean’.

The application of a dance hall on the Bellevue site was first considered by the Tramways Committee in 1933. The City Surveyor was ordered to formulate outline plans and estimates for the requirement of an appropriate hall for entertainment on the plateau, not to exceed the cost of £15,000. The firm, Stewart & Partners, put together plans and an estimate of £21,900. The Ministry of Home Affairs had pledged a donation of £15,000 towards the building of the hall, however the balance of £7000 would seriously impede the progress of the zoological garden and therefore the proposal was abandoned. A year later in November 1934, the idea was back on the schedule and propositions were invited for the building of what was being termed a floral hall. This was agreed to be constructed within the Hazelwood boundary. The Firm J.&R. W. Taggart from Hopefield Avenue in Belfast were successful in obtaining the contract to build this floral hall to a design by local architect David Wright Boyd. This fine example of Art-Deco architecture was officially opened on 4th May 1934 by the Lord Mayor Sir Crawford McCullagh.

All the way through the years at Bellevue Pleasure Gardens – positioned as it was at the end of an accessible tram ride from all parts of the city – represented an escape from the often-bleak realities of life, if only for one day. In conformity with a considerable decline

in business between the 1950’s and 1960’s, the Bellevue site was showing signs of age and distress in its fabric and the general public had cause to feel uneasy at the sight of animals caged and confined in old, constrained residences. A major re-evaluation of the situation was undertaken, and in importance after much debate spread over several years, plans were devised, and work commenced to relocate the zoo on the slopes at Hazelwood. With admirable speed the new project pressed forward, and the first animals were relocated to new paddocks by the end of 1979. Leisure patterns and modes of travel continued to change. In tandem with the decline in public transport arrivals modern day living has dissuaded the masses from trekking over the Cavehill, despite the superb views obtained from the summits. Many of the paths are now heavily overgrown and have been left to those with memories of their past pursuits and to those seeking exercise.

Owen Boyd

CAVEHILL

*I drive the winding road to Cavehill,
Park at the Castle, brown and brooding,
Watch ferrys churning white waters
Through freezing Belfast Lough.
Below me cats are visible through mist
And frost on mosaic tiles where
(My daughter’s favourite play place)
A child skips past eating a sandwich.*

*Above me gravelly paths for bikes
And walkers wend to McArts Fort
Past ash, beech, birch and rowan.
Streams run through a patch of bluebell.*

*This day the Fort is in my head
Where Tone and others made their
Declaration never to desist until Ireland was free.
Under an oak a bat sweeps past me
As I watch Belfast’s cranes, the Titanic Centre*

*And the noise of traffic down below.
The blackbird is singing over the Lough.*

*Pasts are contained in this moment
Of basalt, dunnocks and wrens.
Somewhere in my mind the Devil’s
Punchbowl where I dug for hidden treasure.*

*Today I feel free and light as Wild Garlic,
Herb Robert and Primrose soothes lines
Of deceit on my brow; turn the car;
Wave at tourists and others making
Their frosty-breath, uphill walk today.*

Tom Morgan

In Praise of Allium Ursinum

When Howard Carter discovered Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922, one of the more unusual finds was a number of garlic cloves, scattered around the floor. Early references indicate that garlic was a part of the daily diet of many Egyptians, especially those involved in heavy work, as garlic was believed to build strength. Perhaps this garlic was left by a careless workman over 3,500 years ago.

The Old Testament accounts of the captivity of the Jewish People in Egypt also reference a fondness for garlic since, when Moses took the people out of Egypt; it is recorded in Numbers 11:5 that they missed "the fish, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions and the garlic."

It is recorded that during the earliest Olympics, garlic was fed to competitors before events, which possibly notes garlic as the first recorded "performance enhancing" agent used in competitive sports.

The Romans also regarded garlic as an important source of strength and endurance. It was part of a ship's manifest when setting sail. Indeed, Dioscorides, who was the chief physician in Nero's army, wrote a five volume treatise on medicine containing references to garlic as an aid to "clean the arteries".

Garlic was certainly an important element in the monastery gardens in Ireland as the monks prized it as a vital medicinal aid. The works of Hippocrates and the aforementioned Dioscorides were known and copied in the monasteries. These texts, along with the works of Galen were the main sources of medical knowledge and each of these writers advised the use of garlic as a cleansing or purgative agent.

However it is within the Chinese culture which we find the widest use of garlic and perhaps the earliest use

also. The use of garlic in traditional medicine can be found as far back as 2000BC and is known as Da Suan, used to aid respiration and digestion. Fatigue, headache and insomnia were often treated with garlic. There is also evidence that it was used to treat and improve male potency.

This brief review on the uses of garlic was prompted by a walk on Cave Hill at the beginning of spring a few months ago. While walking through the Belfast Castle grounds towards the end of February, I noticed a small group of people who appeared to be foraging just off the path beyond the Maze. I was somewhat curious and descended the slope to be met by four members of the Chinese community who were gathering young wild garlic leaves.

I had an interesting conversation with one of the young girls who was full of enthusiasm for the nutritional and culinary advantages which could be gained from the use of the plant. She was surprised that people here did not seem to use or value wild garlic and explained to me that in China the plant is very widely used and valued as part of the household herbal medicine armoury. It is grown throughout the year in China, but I explained that with us, it is very much a spring plant, coming to its peak as the white flowers emerge around May.

While standing amongst the extensive bed of pungent green leaves we exchanged recipes. I proposed to her a wild garlic pesto recipe which I make every year, mixing half and half wild garlic leaves with parsley to lessen the strength of the garlic.

On the other hand, she offered me a Chinese recipe which she intended to create that evening when she returned home to the Antrim Road, using wild garlic and eggs to make pancakes. A very traditional Chinese dish, apparently.

We parted after this cultural, culinary exchange precipitated by the annual explosion of the growth of Allium Ursinum

Finnog

A profusion of Allium flowering in the wood.



Castle Locksmiths & D.I.Y.

WE CAN SUPPLY AND PROGRAM REMOTES
OR CAR KEYS FOR:



RENAULT



VAUXHALL

SEAT

Tel / Fax: (028) 9074 1418 Email: castlelocks@ntlworld.com
After Hours: 07802 739169 Address: 449 Antrim Road
Belfast, BT15 3FE

The Maze – an ongoing story

In our 2022 Campaigner, we told how we decided to restore the long-neglected Castle maze and we expected the work to be completed in a matter of months. Now here we are, a year later and the finish is in sight.

Every second Saturday in the month this last year, our intrepid bunch of volunteers have continued the work. The nearly 1000 willow trees we planted began to grow swiftly but they needed tying horizontally so that they would grow thick. The leaf litter lying thickly on the paths in the Maze had to be scraped away. The ivy growing rampant through the lovely yew hedge surrounding the Maze had to be taken out so that the hedge could grow properly. Some of the original wooden supports had rotted and needed replacing.

We uncovered a mosaic in the ground as we planted fruit trees. This turned out to have been a mosaic with a cat motif created with the help of students from Ben

Madigan Prep and Park Lodge in 2000 when the Maze was originally planted. It was placed in the centre of the Maze. It was subsequently lifted when the Council replanted the Maze a few years later and left at the side and it became covered in leaf mould and soil. We have now uncovered it and we will make a feature of it this year. We also received a donation of foxgloves from Stupid Price Plants which we planted around the inside of the Maze with the help of a bunch of students from Belfast Metropolitan College. We were also helped on another Saturday by the Church of the Resurrection cubs and beavers who helped lift away the branches as we trimmed the trees.

We hope to organise a formal opening of the Maze in the Autumn and we'll have posters within it explaining its story. Our expectation is that this will be a peaceful oasis within the estate; we hope the visiting public will enjoy the resource, respect the work we have done and keep the place unvandalized.

Cormac Hamill



FORTWILLIAM GARDEN CENTRE

- Fresh Flowers •
- Fruit • Vegetables • Garden Sundries •
- Bouquets • Fruit Baskets •

575 ANTRIM ROAD
TEL: 028 9077 1013



Ballynature Day 2023

After an absence of three years during the Covid emergency, the celebrated nature and conservation gathering organised by the Ballynure and District Community Association resumed on 4th March 2023. This year was especially appropriate, as the County Antrim Village has been chosen as a finalist in this year's Britain in Bloom Competition.

Members of the Eco Volunteer group organised the parking for the hundreds of visitors who made their way to see the colourful display of wildlife awareness in over thirty stands and displays in the Presbyterian Church halls.

And what a show there was. This free event provided information about our native flora, wildlife, birds and insects; displays by blacksmiths, bee-keeping, woodcarvers and artists; for children (of whom there were many), there was storytelling and face-painting. Upstairs, there were short talks by acknowledged

authorities on bird-song, invasive species, the threat from wildlife crime, and practical guides to nature conservation.

The Cavehill Conservation stand featured a practical guide to making bird-feeders with pine cones – especially popular with children. Seeds, plant pots

and compost were available for visitors who wanted to brighten up their gardens with sunflowers and geraniums. And a wide range of printed resources and information provided guides to the natural and historical heritage of Cave Hill. Our volunteers engaged in warm and friendly discussion with those who, familiar as they were with the place of Cave Hill in the folklore of the country, were anxious to learn more about it and how best it might be protected.

Tea, coffee and snacks were available to families and members of conservation groups who wished to pause before taking in the next display. For those who braved the cold outside, Jackson's well-known coffee shop offered a warm and welcoming alternative.

However, behind the genial atmosphere there is a wider purpose.

At the same time as the Ballynure event, researchers from the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland published their findings in a new Plant Atlas. Half of Britain and Ireland's native plants declined in the last two decades; ancient arable wildflowers have been reduced by 62%; earthworms, on which the health of soil is so dependent, have declined by one third. The sad fact is that Britain and Ireland are the two most nature depleted countries in Europe.

If, in addition to a wonderful exploration of the heritage of the countryside, more people, and especially children, became alert to this tragic loss of flora and fauna, events similar to Ballynure's Nature Day should provide a timely awareness of what is being lost, and what might be done to prevent further damage.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council are to be congratulated on supporting this initiative.

E McCamley

BEN MADIGAN'S
BAR & KITCHEN
ESTD 2019

Your new local

FOR BOOKINGS AND ENQUIRIES CALL
028 9692 2009

FIND US AT
169-175 Cavehill Road
Belfast. BT15 5BP

EMAIL
info@benmadigansbar.com

WEB
www.benmadigansbar.com

SPAR 

CAVEHILL

325 Cavehill Road, Belfast, BT15 5EY

Now with Post Office in store!

Tel: 028 9039 1500



BACK IN TIME:

What things were like when the Cave Hill Basalt formed

Nothing lives long
Only the Earth and the mountains.
– N. American Indian aphorism.



Sample of fresh basalt from the Cave Hill.

When and why did the Cave Hill Basalt form?

The basalt of the Cave Hill has been in existence for around 60 million years – many millions of years before humans appeared on Earth. Geologists call this time the Early Palaeogene Period (the Palaeogene extended from 66 to 23 million years ago) and Ireland would have been approximately at its present day's latitude. At this time the North Atlantic Ocean was opening; that is North America was pulling away from Europe causing the Earth's crust between the continents to stretch and, in places, to fracture. In the north-east of Ireland magma, from deep in the Earth, ascended through the fractures to the land's surface and was extruded as lava. According to magnetic studies, the vulcanism in the Cave Hill area lasted for about one million years but it was not continuous; there would have been episodes of quiescence between the lava flows and these could have lasted for hundreds, maybe even thousands, of years. Thickness of the lava flows varies between a few centimetres to two to three metres but it can be difficult to distinguish between different

*Lava flows at the top of the Cave Hill shown by flat surfaces. Individual lava flows can be hard to discern.
(Photo: Mr. P. Millar, the Belfast Geologists' Society.)*

flows unless a lengthy period of quiescence allowed weathering to produce a layer of red soil before it was buried by the next eruption.

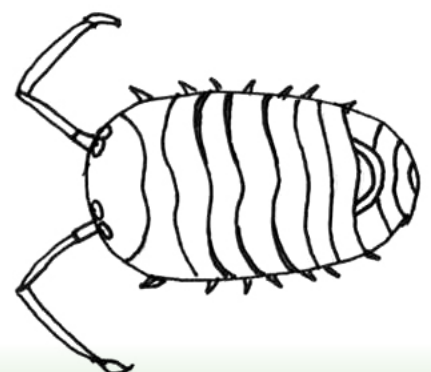
Today, the altitude of the Cave Hill is 368 metres (1,207 feet) but when the basaltic lava cooled it is very likely to have been higher because, in the intervening years, it has been eroded, especially by the ice during the long spells of glaciation during the Ice Age. (It is thought the ice in Ireland during glacial times was, on average, around one kilometre thick.)

What kinds of land animals and plants lived at that time?

When the dinosaurs became extinct, around six million years before the Cave Hill Basalt formed, the mammals, which survived the cataclysm that caused the demise of the dinosaurs, were able to occupy the ecological niche left by these reptiles. The mammals, originally, were rodent-sized but, during the Palaeogene and subsequent times, became larger in size and more numerous and diverse. Birds also survived the calamity that caused the dinosaur extinction and some of the mammals and birds that exist today evolved in the Palaeogene. Invertebrates like insects, spiders, earthworms, woodlice, centipedes, millipedes and snails were also around.

By the time the basalt had formed, flowering plants proliferated, to the advantage of insects, like bees, which fed on their nectar and pollen. However, no fossils of animals or plants are present in the Cave Hill Basalt and, therefore, it cannot be said with certainty the type of fauna and flora in the volcanic region of the Cave Hill around 60 million years ago. The extremely hot (around 1,000°C) lava would have incinerated any living thing in its vicinity. We know from fossil plant material preserved elsewhere in Antrim that Sequoia

Below Right: Sketch of a present-day woodlouse (actual size around 1cm). Woodlice can be found under wood or stones in gardens etc. These crustaceans were living when the basalt of the Cave Hill was forming.



trees colonised the landscape during long quiescent periods (the Inter-Basaltic Beds).

The climate when the basalt was forming

During the Early Palaeogene, the north-east of Ireland, and indeed the whole world, experienced a hot, humid climate – it would have been warmer than today. Evidence for this climate can be found in Co. Antrim where an iron-rich rock, called laterite, of Early Palaeogene age can be found. Laterite forms by deep weathering of basaltic rocks in a warm, humid climate. As the Palaeogene proceeded, however, the climate became cooler and drier. Grasslands would have replaced forests and this would have been advantageous to grazing animals.

The future of the Cave Hill Basalt

The basalt has been present for around 60 million years, surviving extensive episodes of glaciation and dramatic climatic changes. No one knows the future



A sample of laterite of Early Palaeogene age.

for certain but in all likelihood it will still exist, albeit eroded to some degree, for millions of years into the future, long after our species – modern humans – have disappeared from the face of the Earth!

Patrick Gaffikin

The Herb Garden 2023 – A Team Effort

Volunteer members from Cave Hill Conservation Campaign CCC have been working to restore the herb garden at Belfast Castle which was first created in the year 2000 as a millennium project. Geraldine Birch was the leader of the project at the time and at this time we planted a variety of herbs. Plant labels were made explaining the uses and names of the different herbs. A leaflet was made with the help of the Belfast City Council to publicise this information to the general public.

Unfortunately, over the years, the herb garden was not maintained although many of the plants thrived, such as the bay shrubs and these became very large trees - fast growing evergreens. A Ginkgo tree was planted and is still there. Honeysuckle, Rosemary and many others survived, as did some visitors, such as wild strawberry.

Over the past year, a few keen volunteers have worked to restore the garden to its former glory. Jawine, Ajay and others have enjoyed the work and Stupidpriced Plants donated new herbs to aid our work. CCC funds helped purchase more plants and other materials which have been needed. Council Staff have also been very helpful. Overgrown plants were tackled to promote new growth and stepping stones were added to help with maintenance. Additional pollinator plants and some flowers to promote a variety of colours have helped the appearance of, what we think, is a less formal approach. We hope to label the plants soon and create a new leaflet detailing the use for herbs in this era when people are interested in the origin of their foods and the benefits of herbs.

You can find the herb garden, down the back steps, inside the garden at the castle. We hope to get signage and we would welcome visitors to the castle to view, enjoy and try out some of the plants. We also welcome more workers to help with weeding which as Jawine says “never stops”!

Many thanks to the sterling work carried out by Ann, Jawine, Moya, Jack, Ajay, Patricia and others. We aim to have an official opening of the herb garden by 2024.

Ann Marrion



Wheels of Time

I would like to examine some of the various modes of transport serving The Cave hill area during the past decades. Cavehill Road is one of the oldest bus routes in Belfast and was awarded route No. 1. It was originally served by petrol buses but these were replaced during World War Two by diesel buses. The route was never considered suitable for trolley buses or trams because of its remoteness at the time and its steep incline.

In the 1920s the service terminated at the end of Henderson Avenue and later it progressed slightly further up the road and terminated at Shandarragh Park. During World War Two the bridge at the Upper Cavehill Road and North Circular junction was removed and the Ballysillan Road was widened just after the war. These two actions enabled the route to be extended to the Carrs Glen terminus and this in fact is where it terminates to this day.

In the post war years, the Antrim Road was one of Belfast's main arterial routes, bearing in mind the M2 motorway had not then been built. However, the area itself was very well served by public transport. A tram company called "The Cavehill and Whitewell Tram" ran from Chester Park to the centre of Glengormley Village. Originally these were horse drawn trams but later became steam powered. This route was taken over by Belfast Corporation Trams and became an electric

Below: A preserved example of one type of bus which served Cave Hill Route 1, driven by myself in 2000 while participating in the Bangor Vintage Bus event. (Photo by A. Montgomery Senior)



tram route which would have run from the city centre out to the centre of Glengormley Village. When these trams arrived at Glengormley they did not require a terminus or turning circle. The driver simply got out of the front end of the tram, walked to the rear end of the tram where he had an identical driving position, thus the rear became the front, and he would then have headed back to Belfast City centre. The Antrim Road was also served by conventional buses. Belfast Corporation ran diesel buses to villages beyond Glengormley such as Roughfort and Carnmoney. The Antrim Road also carried green buses which were originally belonging to N.I.R.T.B. which later became the Ulster Transport Authority, later to become Ulsterbus. These routes would have served Larne, Ballymena, Magherafelt and the Northwest.

Many of the early horse drawn trams had been converted into electric trams and as the 1950s approached, Belfast Corporation Transport needed to look for an alternative. It was decided to expand the trolleybus network. Trolleybuses were very similar to conventional buses, although they picked their power supply up by mains overhead wires. Three of the poles can be seen to this day just past the old driveway entrance to Bellevue Zoo and before the famous

CAVEHILL CHIROPODY

166 Cavehill Road

Mr D Muise

D.Pod.M., M.C.Pod., Hcpc

Health Professions Council Registered

Special Rates for Pensioners

Tel: 028 9039 1411



fresh "garbage"

Specialists in:

• Incense • Perfumed Oils • Oil Burners • Tiger Balm •

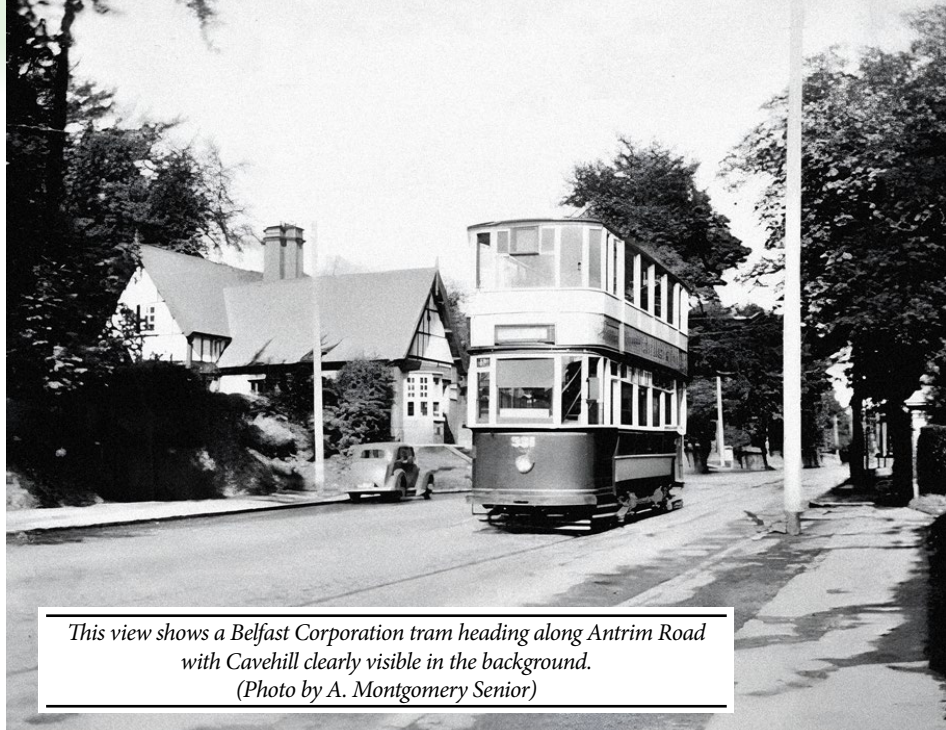
Belfast's **ORIGINAL** Alternative Store
for over 50 years!

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

24 Rosemary Street, Belfast

Tel: 028 9024 2350

Bellevue steps. They stand behind the stone wall which was the perimeter of the old Zoological Gardens. Other reminders of the trolleybus age are still visible today. There is a turning circle for them at the Castle Gate Lodge which is now a dental surgery almost opposite the Landsdowne Court Hotel. There is another turning circle just past the Bellevue steps on the opposite side of the road. This would have been for the excursion buses at Easter bringing the city folk of Belfast to visit Bellevue Zoo. This annual excursion was a strong tradition and children would have been brought to roll their eggs on the slopes around Cave Hill and Bellevue on Easter Monday.

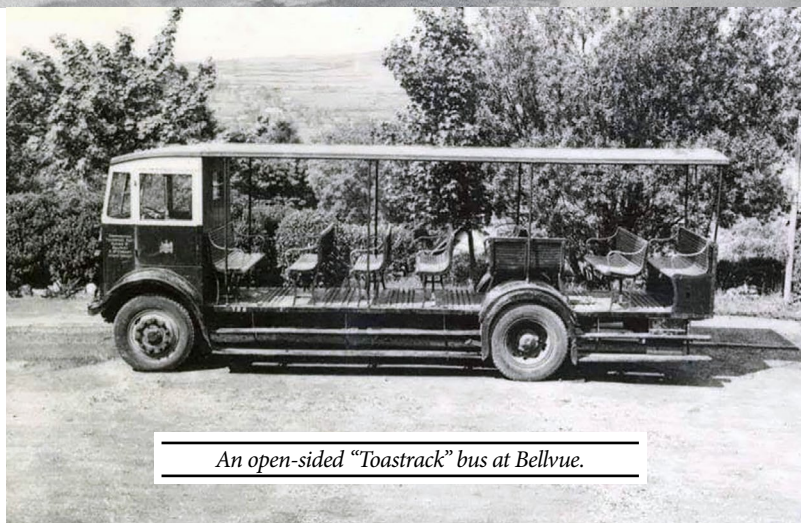


*This view shows a Belfast Corporation tram heading along Antrim Road with Cavehill clearly visible in the background.
(Photo by A. Montgomery Senior)*

The Whitewell Road was also served by trolley buses and the terminus was the cobbled turning circle just on the lower side of The Throne Hospital opposite Arthur Road, which remains today.

When the families visited Bellevue Zoo, they could also have taken advantage of a ride on a miniature steam train. This ran up until the late 1940s and took in the entire length of the car park for the present day Zoo. It would have run almost up to the Floral Hall but was withdrawn and sold for scrap in 1950. However due to some fortune, the locomotive was never cut up for scrap and was acquired in the early 1970s for preservation. It was fully restored and now runs on a miniature steam railway line in Southeast England called "The New Romney Preserved Miniature Railway".

During the 1940s and 1950s Belfast castle and the Floral Hall were major dance venues and special buses were run from various parts of Belfast to transport



An open-sided "Toastrack" bus at Bellevue.

revellers to these locations on Saturday evenings.

Those alighting the corporation buses on the Antrim Road could avail of the open sided buses called "Toastracks" which ran from the Antrim Road to The Floral Hall many times a day. The original one, built by SD, had solid rubber wheels and did not have a steering wheel. It was steered by means of a metal bar, so I am told! The later replacement for this was built on a Dennis bus chassis and resembled a bus at the time, without sides. After it was withdrawn from the Bellevue zoo run, it was converted into a flat lorry and was used for many years throughout Belfast during the removal of the steel tram tracks

Up to the late 1980s I can remember being on the Antrim Road in the mid afternoon and witnessing the electric milk floats crawling at a snail's pace back to the distribution centre in Glengormley with almost flat batteries.

Alfie Montgomery

*Miniature Train at Bellevue Zoo
(Photo by A. Montgomery Senior)*



Join us for a free walking tour!

Join us for a series of expert guided walks and learn more about birds, animals, flowers and history of Cave Hill. All guided walks are planned and available free of charge.

DATE	DAY	TIME	DETAILS AND GRADE (EASY & MEDIUM)
17 June	Sat	10.00-13.00	Botany walk. Meet at the car park off the Upper Hightown Road. M
24 June	Sat	03.30-06.30	Solstice walk. Meet at the Castle. M
15 July	Sat	10:00-13:00	A Bug Bonanza. Meet at the Castle. E
19 August	Sat	10:00-13:00	Forage on the Cave Hill. Meet at the Castle. E
1 September	Fri	20:30-22:30	Bats of Cave Hill. Meet at the Castle. E
16 September	Sat	10:00-13:00	Fungal Foray. Meet at the Castle. E
21 October	Sat	10:00-13:00	The Archaeology of Cave Hill. Meet at the entrance to the Park at the top of the Upper Hightown Road. E

What you need to know:

- » Wear suitable clothing and shoes
- » Under 16s to be accompanied by an adult
- » Dogs welcome, must be kept on a lead.
- » Please check our website/facebook in advance of each walk in case of any unforeseen changes.

For further details:

- www.cavehillconservation.org
- Facebook page for Cave Hill Conservation Campaign
- cormachamill47@gmail.com

No Place Like Home

*I'm a Sailortown girl, born and bred
Proud of this, deep in my heart
But redevelopment came, took our homes away
And the Docks people had to make a new start.*

*We were moved all over Belfast
Mostly against the families' will
But my parents made the right decision
To move us to below the Cave Hill.*

*Greencastle became our new home
Where we settled with neighbours old and new
And though our roots were still firmly in Sailortown
Our love for our new home just grew.*

*We were nestled just under the Cave Hill
And our Sundays were spent walking out
With family and friends we would dander
Up to the Castle, it's grounds, and roundabout.*

*As a young wife with a family we remained in this locale
In an area we all loved
Still under the Hill and beside the Lough
We'd spend leisure time going to both.*

*And over the years we would travel
Through Ireland and Europe we'd roam
But we'd always come back to the Lough and Cave Hill
Because... there's no place like Home.*

Martine Owens

The Master Butcher
for Grade A Beef, Lamb, Pork & Poultry



Stanley's Family Butchers

569 Antrim Road, Belfast
also find us at

Madigan's Court, 739 Antrim Road

Tel: 028 9077 4615

Our State-of-the-Art Hygiene Facility is Now Open



Hygienist Benefits:

- Tracey will gently remove plaque and calculus, and help stop your gums from bleeding.
- She will discuss the factors that cause bleeding gums and loose teeth.
- She can advise on the latest oral hygiene products and teach you how to brush effectively.
- She will polish your teeth perfectly, using our Airflow™ unit and remove food and drink stains - This can help prevent unpleasant tastes and bad breath.

Arrange an appointment today. You don't have to be a patient of the practice to attend our hygienist:

CAVEHILL
dental and
implant clinic

Tracey Houston

Dip Dental Hygiene (QUB)

Lead Hygienist,
Cavehill Dental Care

Tel: 028 9037 0206

www.dental-implants.org

165-167 Cavehill Road, Belfast, BT15 5BP



CALLING ALL MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS!

If you are a member wishing to renew your membership for 2023, or a new member wishing to join, you can email membershipccc@hotmail.com and send a bank transfer, or attach a cheque to the form below and send it to:

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

All e-mail addresses will be kept secure and only used to communicate with our members

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

E-Mail: _____

- £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.)

There are 2 ways to pay:

- Cheque, payable to Cave Hill Conservation Campaign
- Bank transfer (standing order if possible)
Sort Code: 93-83-19 Account number: 29194005
(Cave Hill Conservation Campaign, Allied Irish Bank, Glengormley)

Please add your name as the reference and send us an email to membershipccc@hotmail.com so we can keep in touch

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
NIC104466



Printed on recycled paper

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

Chair:Cormac Hamill

Editors: . Martine Owens & Martin Donaldson

Please visit our website at:

www.cavehillconservation.org

Facebook Page: 'Cave Hill Conservation'.

We would like to thank all local advertisers for their loyalty and generosity in helping to fund the Campaigner magazine.

Also, a great deal of thanks to our committee members Geraldine Birch and Ann Marrion McCambridge for their help in managing the advertising.