



The Cave Hill Campaigner



Revival of the Cave Hill Maze

Remember the millennium? Y2K, 2000 AD? Yes, the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign (CCC) was formed during the last millennium and is still going strong.

One of our projects for the millennium was to create a maze in the former Rose Garden to the north of Belfast Castle. This was led by one of our members - Louise Wilson - who decided on a unicursal (closed curve) design. This means that the labyrinth has no junctions and consists of a single path leading from the entrance to the goal. There was a cat mosaic under which was buried a time capsule - designed and created by pupils from Cavehill Primary, Ben Madigan and Park Lodge schools in 2001. This time capsule was removed and has been safely stored. Pupils from these schools also helped in the planting of the original 1,800 beech trees.

Fast forward to 2021 and the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the maze, the beech trees have reached 20 feet and more in height - and are in serious need of maintenance if the maze is to keep its shape.

The task to restore the maze was offered to volunteers from the membership of CCC last year. This gave everyone a chance to take part in our planned activities in a very practical way. It was a great opportunity for members to meet up outdoors and make connections with the hard working CCC committee.

Saturday September 11th 2021, was the day chosen to start the work which would take several months to

complete. Belfast City Council provided tools and first aid support. There were around 18 workers the first day from age 10 to age 70 plus. Everyone got stuck in to the tasks with great enthusiasm. Leaves came down, twigs came down, branches came down. No-one thought of taking a break and the work continued for 3 hours, we felt exhausted but very happy tree surgeons (amateur!!) by the end. It was rewarding to see the extent of the progress but daunting to see how much work was still needed at that point.

We made further plans for future working parties to meet on the second Saturday of each month. On the second Saturday of October, the weather was inclement and so there were fewer workers, but we had coffee and snacks provided by some thoughtful members and welcome breaks were built into the session. The work was also very much helped by Michael, a new member who is a tree surgeon by profession. We could also see that up to 1,000 new trees would be needed to fill out areas which had become bare. Work continued in November and December, and by 2022 the trees were trimmed and the maze was ready for the next phase.

New Year 2022 saw more tidying work and the

In This Issue:

Revival of the Cave Hill Maze.....	1
Gazumping in the Belfast Hills	2
Bats in Cave Hill Country Park	3
A Word from the Chair 2021/22.....	4
Organised walks in 2022.....	6
A Love Story on the Hill	7
Hope at Christmas Time	8
How did the caves at the top of the Cave Hill form?	9
Wilbur, A Gentle, Quiet Soul	10
Millennium Maze Restoration	11
In Memory of Elizabeth Byrne McCullough	11
Breakthrough for the Hills Access Campaign ..	12
A Walk on the Cave Hill	13
Cave Hill and the Covid Emergency	13
A Short History of Belfast Castle	14
A Breaking and Entering at Daddystown	15
Membership Form & Merchandise	16

Tree Planting.





Members at work.

planting of 9 fruit trees which were donated by a local supplier. Much excitement was caused by the discovery of mosaic tiling under the soil while planting the fruit trees. This was not related to the Cat mosaic referred to earlier and will need further excavation and exploration!

We have recently obtained 1,000 willow trees - and these have been planted, thanks to the dedication of our members. We anticipate these faster growing trees will need ongoing maintenance and we are hopeful that our willing volunteers will help with this so that the maze may reach its wonderful potential and become a place for all to enjoy in the coming years.

Ann Marrion McCambridge

Work begins to prune the maze.



Gazumping in the Belfast Hills

There is clearly a danger that demands by Belfast Hills Action Campaign and others for access to the hills will lead some landowners to seek exorbitant prices for their land. The latest example of this is the offer of 20 acres at Upper Hightown Road for £200,000 or £10,000 per acre. The land concerned is quite strategically placed from an environmental point of view as it is adjacent to the Cave Hill Country Park and stretches down to the Carr's Glen stream. Lying on a steep north-eastern facing slope it is of poor agricultural value and fit only for rough grazing. The asking price is four times that of the £2,500 per acre recently paid by the Woodland Trust for Colinward Hill! No public body could justify paying such an exorbitant price and nor would BHAC expect them to do so!

John Gray



fresh "garbage"

Specialists in:

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

Belfast's **ORIGINAL** Alternative Store
for over 40 years!

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

24 Rosemary Street, Belfast

Tel: 028 9024 2350

Bats in Cave Hill Country Park

Every autumn for a number of years, we have organised an annual bat walk in Cave Hill Country Park, usually in the area closest to the Castle. Aidan Crean, a local bat expert, brings bat detectors and we walk around listening to the bats. Bats use echolocation to find the insects they prey upon and different bats use different frequencies. These frequencies can be used to identify them but they are well above the range of human hearing. The detectors turn these frequencies into ones we can hear.



Pipistrellus Female

responded very positively and made a total of fifteen. One day, in the middle of February, five CCC volunteers spent a morning putting them up. We selected trees on either side of the main road to the Castle from the gates at the top of Innisfayle Park. They are numbered and clearly visible from that road. Our hope is that some bats will use them and that the sight of them will alert people to the presence of bats in the Park. And we are looking forward to seeing the results of our handiwork on our next bat walk in the autumn.

Cormac E Hamill

Over the years we have identified three species on Cave Hill, out of the nine confirmed in Ireland. These are the Common Pipistrelle, the Soprano Pipistrelle and Leisler's. The pipistrelles are the smallest of our bats, weighing in at about 5g, not much more than the weight of a 1p coin. As you might guess from its name, the Soprano Pipistrelle emits sounds of a higher frequency than the Common Pipistrelle. Leisler's bats are the biggest in Ireland, about three times the weight of Pipistrelles.

These bat walks involve a lot of standing around holding detectors, as you might imagine. This leaves plenty of time for discussion and often people remark that there are not as many bats as they might have expected. The suggestion arose last year that we ought to do something to help them and put up bat boxes. These are made to particular specifications and provide secure places for bats to roost.

So earlier this year, we bought wood and asked the North Belfast Community Men's Shed group in Edenderry Mill to make them up for us. They

Bat Box Preparation



Bat Box Installation



Castle Locksmiths & D.I.Y.

WE CAN SUPPLY AND PROGRAM REMOTES
OR CAR KEYS FOR:



Tel / Fax: (028) 9074 1418 Email: castlelocks@ntlworld.com

After Hours: 07802 739169 Address: 359 - 365 Antrim Road
Belfast, BT15 3BG

A Word from the Chair (CCC): 2021/22

All of us have been affected in many ways by coronavirus; our personal lives have been marked and the activities of our societies and social groups, so important to our mental and physical health have also been affected.

We too in Cave Hill Conservation Campaign have been affected. Our activities throughout the last year have had to change, though not to the same extent as the previous year. We had hoped that our programme of guided walks on Cave Hill would be able to go ahead but in fact Belfast City Council did not allow any organised activities in their parks until mid-May 2021 and so we lost the first three walks. However, we were able to carry out eight more guided walks in the Park while observing Covid precautions.

Our outreach to community groups whereby we can deliver an illustrated lecture on Cave Hill was affected. For most of the period, all community groups had ceased to gather together indoors and so there was no demand for our talk. But that is changing; we were able to give one talk to the Strandtown Probus group in February 2022 and one to the public in Chichester library in April 2022.

For a number of years, some commercial firms and agencies in the Belfast area have offered to send personnel to us on a particular day and we facilitated much-needed litter lifts on Cave Hill with them. That ceased entirely for two years with the advent of Covid, with the exception of our local Indian community who did a litter lift in the second Covid year and another this year. However firms are beginning to show interest this year and one company has already asked for three litter lifts.

During the last year the crowds have stopped coming to Cave Hill in the same numbers as they did in the first year of the pandemic. When there was little activity permitted, the parkland, woods and heath of Cave Hill served a very useful function in bringing relief to the locked-down. But there was a cost in that the litter problem became very bad. Some of our members individually lifted a lot of the litter on regular visits and helped to reduce its effect. I applaud their voluntary efforts.

During the year we decided, for the first time, to create a monthly volunteering activity for our members. We started with the maze, north of the Castle. This was planted at the millennium but was never maintained. Over five months, we cut all the beech trees which had grown too high and leggy,

down to six feet high, planted nearly 1000 willows between the trees to fill the gaps and planted 9 fruit trees within the enclosure. We also began to remove the ivy which is growing through the splendid yew hedge surrounding the maze. It is our intention to put some seats to allow weary parents to sit while the children run around the maze.

Our bat walk in September alerted us to the need for roosting sites for bats in the park. So we commissioned a Men's Shed group in Edenderry Mill to build us 15 bat boxes and our volunteers put them in place in February. You can see them high up on the trees on both sides of the main avenue to the Castle from Innisfayle Park.

For the ninth year in a row, we carried out the weekly butterfly survey between April and September; these results were submitted to Butterfly Conservation and form part of a nationwide database charting the slow decline in species and numbers. We also monitor general issues in the Park and we submitted a monthly report to the Council bringing particular concerns to their attention.



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** NEWS AGENTS **184 CAVEHILL ROAD**

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

One major development that occurred during the year is the accommodation that Belfast City Council has reached with mountain bikers on Cave Hill. The Council has engaged in a lengthy consultation process with interested parties, including ourselves, over two years or so. This has resulted in allowing the bikers to adopt a particular downhill trail, known as the Middle Trail and little used by walkers. Signage has been put up to alert walkers should they decide to follow that trail and other precautions will be taken to minimize contact between walkers and bikers. Environmental surveys have been carried out to ensure that there will be no irreparable damage. This development is, of course, controversial. There are regular walkers who argue that there should be no place for bikers on Cave Hill. Our view is that the demand for the use of bikes for recreation is a legitimate one and is best handled through cooperation and compromise. My plea to all hill users is to treat all other users with consideration and tact, to recognize that we all have a right to be there and that tolerance is the only way forward.

I'd like to thank our directors and volunteers who, every year, put a lot of wisdom and energy into keeping

our programme of activities going. Thanks also to those experts who come every year to lead our guided walks. And also to those in Belfast City Council, from the workers on the ground in the Park, to those in the Castle and those working in headquarters, who also have facilitated our work.

The importance of Cave Hill to the physical and mental health of the citizens of Belfast has been illustrated during the present pandemic. It is interesting that people did not need to be told this; during a time of personal and social stress, they knew to walk there and they enjoyed it. Belfast is very lucky, and those of us living in North Belfast, doubly so, to have Cave Hill so accessible. But public access means that proper maintenance is needed and that requires more permanent workers than the constrained Belfast City Council budget can supply. That leaves room for a group such as ours to help in maintenance and improvement and it is our pleasure to do so.

Cormac E Hamill
Cormac E Hamill

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



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

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 care

Join us for an organised walk in 2022

The following guided walks are planned and available free of charge.

Please check our website and facebook page before travelling, in the unlikely event we need to change the details.

DATE	DAY	TIME	DETAILS
18 June	Sat	03:30-06:30	Solstice Walk. Greet the sun at dawn on a summer solstice morning before most of Belfast has stirred. Meet at the Castle. Grade M
25 June	Sat	10:00-13:00	Tree I.D. Walk. Wildlife consultant Karl Hamilton will guide us through the trees of the Park and help us to identify some of the wide variety of trees, native and imported, that grow there. Grade E
16 July	Sat	10:00-13:00	A Bug Bonanza. Debbie Nelson runs a wildlife rescue centre and has a phenomenal knowledge of nature in all its variety. She will lead us on a walk, looking for and talking about some of the many varieties of bugs found in the Park. Meet at the Castle. Grade E
20 August	Sat	10:00-13:00	A History Walk. Cormac Hamill is Chair of the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign and has a broad knowledge of Cave Hill in all its aspects. He will concentrate on the range of history to which Cave Hill is connected. Meet at the Castle. Grade M
2 September	Fri	20:30-22:30	Bats of Cave Hill. Aidan Crean will introduce us to these enchanting nocturnal animals during an evening dander. Meet at the Castle. Grade E
17 September	Sat	10:00-13:00	Fungal Foray. Debbie Nelson will lead us on a snuffle through the Cave Hill woods to see what fungi we can find and identify. Meet at the Castle. Grade E
15 October	Sat	10:00-13:00	The Archaeology of Cave Hill. Local archaeologist Cormac McSparron will lead a trip to the various remains on the hill from the Neolithic period to the early Christian period. Meet at the entrance to the Park at the top of Hightown Road. Grade E
25 October	Wed	19:30-22:00	Cave Hill by Starlight. A chance to look down on Belfast by night and get a view of the stars and planets. Meet at the Castle. Grade M

What you should know beforehand:

Please be prepared for bad weather and bring footwear suitable for rough ground. Some of the walks will be moderately strenuous and some people may find them challenging. Easy walks are graded E and more challenging ones are graded M. Young people under 16 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

If you have any worries about fitness or have medical conditions which might affect your ability to walk, please talk to the leader at the start of the walk. If the leader assesses you as not being fit for the walk, you will not be able to take part.

It is very important for your own safety and that of the group that you obey the instructions of the walk leader or of any of the assistant leaders. Of particular importance is that you must ensure that the group stays together at all times.

All these activities are free.

For further details:

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

WWW.DIRTYCARSWANTED.COM



Full Range of Valeting Services available

028 9078 1380

22 Glanleam Drive, Belfast, BT15 3FW

A Love Story on the Hill

Henry Joy Mc Cracken and Mary Bodell

The links between Henry Joy Mc Cracken, the United Irishmen and the Cave Hill have been well documented in the Campaigner over the years. In the 2014 edition of the magazine, (available online), John Gray explains some of the aspects of the connections in his excellent article, 'Cave Hill Looking Back, Volunteer Well'.

In June 1795 a select group of United Irishmen, including Wolf Tone, Thomas Russell and Henry Joy Mc Cracken swore an oath at Mc Art's Fort "never to desist in our efforts until we had subverted the authority of England over our country and asserted our independence".

In the lead up to the 1798 Rebellion Henry Joy spent time hiding out at the home of David Bodell and his family on the Belfast side of the Cave Hill. Bodell was a gamekeeper, and it appears that Henry Joy was in love with Mary, one of his daughters. Stories arose after his death to indicate that they had been secretly married but no evidence has emerged to substantiate these stories.

After the defeat of the United Irishmen at the Battle of Antrim, Henry Joy fled to Cave Hill as a place of refuge. His sister Mary Ann recounted that she went searching for him and discovered eight of his friends in a blacksmith's forge on the Limestone Road. She later came upon her brother in Bodell's house on the Cave Hill.

Henry Joy was captured on his way to Carrickfergus, tried for treason and sentenced to death. When his sister visited him shortly before his death it appeared to her that he was holding something back that he wished to reveal.

After his death Dr. Steele Dickson, a Presbyterian

minister and a member of the United Irishmen who was in prison with her brother told Mary Ann that Henry Joy had confided to him that he had a child and that in his final moments he was anxious for her welfare. The child, Maria, was around four years of age although it is clear that Mary Ann was ignorant of the details of her brother's relationship.



1801 Mary Ann (24) and Maria (7)

Mary Bodell left for America after the execution and the child, Maria was adopted by Mary Ann. She went to live with Mary Ann in the McCracken family home in Rosemary Lane. Maria became her constant companion as Mary Ann began a life of social activism and campaigning in Belfast on a wide range of issues including the abolition of slavery, the promotion of the rights of women, education of children and defence of the poor. Maria continued to support her as she got older as Mary Ann was recorded at the age of 88 handing out anti-slavery leaflets at Belfast docks to passengers bound for America.

In middle age Maria married William McCleery, another Belfast Radical, in 1847. He was a widower with four children and they moved to Mary Ann's home which at that time was in Queen Street. Having parted from William, Maria went on to marry Christopher Aitchinson in 1862 (aged 68). Despite this, on his death in 1874, William left Maria a very large estate, she was living in Edinburgh at that time. The McCleery family remained living with Mary Ann and they all took up residence in 62 Donegall Pass in 1865, just a year before her death in 1866 aged 96.

Maria died in 1878 and was buried in the McCracken family grave in Clifton Street Cemetery along with Mary Ann.

Two remarkable women from a remarkable period of Irish history both having lived under the shadow of Cave Hill.

Cave Hill has such a dominating presence over Belfast. For many of us it is a place to find peace, refreshment, an opportunity to reflect upon the beauty of the natural world around us. It also has its own stories of love, tragedy, life and death. We are fortunate to have it preserved for us to enjoy.

Bran and Martin Donaldson

CAVEHILL CHIROPODY

166 Cavehill Road

Mr D Muise

DPodM, MRCPod, HCPC

Health Professions Council Registered

Special Rates for Pensioners

Tel: 028 9039 1411

Hope at Christmas Time

During November 2021, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland ran a competition to develop an image for the Moderator's official Christmas card 2021 to be distributed. The theme was 'Hope at Christmas'.

My design was chosen from almost 200 entries by the judging panel of six people which included the Moderator himself. It was an image of the Cave Hill taken from McArt's Fort looking along the top path towards the Divis and Black mountain ridge, with two walkers on their journey home.

The image features two walkers walking along a snow covered path with the hope of reaching their destination. I spoke to the Moderator on a couple of occasions to discuss the design and concept behind it. The theme of the photo was that the walkers continued over the hill with the hope of eventually reaching their destination. Inside the front of the card there was a small devotional reflection reminding us of the hope that we have at Christmas time of the incarnation.

Presbyterian Church in Ireland Moderator Right Reverend Dr David Bruce said "I am looking forward to being able to send out my Christmas cards this year with Bill's evocative photograph on the front".

The Christmas card with the image of the snowy Cave Hill was sent out to the great and good of our society, to all of the political leaders and to church leaders.

The story regarding the photo being used by the PCI Moderator was run in the North Belfast News and the Presbyterian Herald.

Bill Corr



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

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

How did the caves at the top of the Cave Hill form?

*The hill has its own stories
That go back and back
To the very bones of time.*

*- Ann Murray (North Belfast poet)
From: 'Cavehill, Belfast' (2020)*

Formerly called Ben Madigan, the Cave Hill is thus called because of the five caves below the summit. The fourth cave is the largest, the lowest cave is the second largest while the one closest to the top is difficult to see from below. Over the years, many have asked the question: "How did the caves form?" There are two schools of thought regarding the answer to this question. One is that the caves were man-made and the other is a geological answer.



View of the caves of the Cave Hill (Photo: Mr. L. Speight, Co. Fermanagh)

Speciality coffee
Artisan Bakes
Brewing equipment



The former theory is usually held by archaeologists, who say the caves were hacked out of the basalt rock sometime in the distant past. But, there are flaws in this argument. One is why the caves were constructed in the first place and, the other problem is why were they made? It is highly unlikely they were used for habitation or storage because there is no convincing

evidence to support this. And, how did humans, in the past, scale the precipitous cliff face carrying suitable tools and then excavate the hard basalt rock without having any safety equipment or a stable platform from which to work? Some people, who attempted to climb the precarious cliff unaided in past decades, lost their lives. Even experienced climbers, using appropriate safety gear, would find negotiating the almost vertical cliff a serious challenge.

The second explanation is a geological one. When the hot basalt lava was extruded, around 60 million years ago (known as the Early Palaeogene Period), it would have contained dissolved gases such as water vapour, carbon dioxide and, to a lesser extent, sulphurous gases. These would have bubbled-out of the lava and it is possible some of these gas bubbles were very large in size, leaving substantial cavities in the basalt rock when it solidified. All the voids in the cliff lie approximately in the same vertical zone and this may support the geological theory of their formation.



A picture of the lowest cave. Note that it is easier to climb-up into it than to descend from it! (Photo: Mr. L. Speight, Co. Fermanagh)

There is still a bit of a mystery as to how the caves formed but of the two explanations, the geological one seems the more plausible. In the case of the lowest cave, it may have been somewhat smaller originally and, in this instance, could have been enlarged by humans. What is certain, however, is that, on a universal basis, caves (as opposed to lava tubes) in basalt are not very common; usually caves form in limestone rock – a good example being the Marble Arch Caves in County Fermanagh. So, whether the caves at the top of the Cave Hill are artificial or natural, they are something of a rarity on a world-wide basis.

Patrick Gaffikin

Wilbur, a Gentle, Quiet Soul

I started drawing a character called Wilbur during lockdown, inspired by long walks on Cave Hill, in the company of a thirteen year old, a Saluki (a fancy greyhound) and a Jack Russell. It allowed me a peek into a different way of thinking, altering and slowing down my perspective of the day.

The time spent drawing was unrushed and unburdened - no deadlines, meetings, traffic etc.

On quiet, sunlit early mornings I drew the energy I felt in this special place, where the energy is still and full of life, at the same time.

Wilbur is a gentle, quiet soul, who reframes everyday moments, positively. Wilbur is about giving your day space. He is about letting go of our 'personal story' and connecting to a bigger picture or the universal.

Some of the most compelling stories we tell are those in which animals or inanimate objects act in human-like ways. The term for this is anthropomorphism. I use it to connect an audience to nature, as a living thing.

Two years on, I have hundreds of drawings of Wilbur and the world he lives in. The other day, while enth-

Below: Stillness Rather Than Silence



siastically talking about him and forgetting that not everybody 'knows' who Wilbur is, I was asked by an unsure fellow walker, if Wilbur was my partner. I had to laugh, but it made me realise how much this part of my day means to me and that obviously came across. I know the same is true for lots of others I meet on walks. I know because they tell me.

Maybe I need to take my exuberance about Wilbur, down a notch or two, but I doubt I will.

Wilbur really does live on Cave Hill. He is based on the Visayan Warty Pig, whose enclosure is at the top of Belfast's Zoo. The species is critically endangered in the wild, due to habitat loss and hunting. There are small remaining populations on the Visayan Islands in central Philippines. The pair at the zoo, Malcolm and Mabel, share their home with several successful litters.

What's next for Wilbur? I'm interested in creating an illustrated picture book and I have received an award from Future Screens NI, QUB and UU to develop the characters as augmented reality within a public space, due to be launched in 2023.

It's amazing what happens when you slow down.

Corrina Askin

Corrina lives locally and is a graduate of The Royal College of Art. Her work shows widely nationally and internationally including on Disney, Cbeebies, RTE and Milkshake, Channel Five.

Wilbur was part of the Imagine Festival of Ideas and Politics, March 26-27, Belfast. Reframing back alley spaces.

You can see more of Wilbur on instagram: @corrinaaskin



FORTWILLIAM GARDEN CENTRE

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

575 ANTRIM ROAD
TEL: 028 9077 1013

Millennium Maze Restoration – a Member's Perspective

I am a young member of the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign and so is my mum. She was taught by her parents to love Cave Hill and respect our environment and she has passed this onto me - like an heirloom!

The Maze was planted at the time of the Millennium by the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign. It is on the old site of the Belfast Castle's rose garden. It was very overgrown and broken when we had our first get-together to improve it last year. It needed a lot of work done to it to restore it and we knew it was going to be a big job! It was nothing we couldn't handle though.

Once a month, starting in September 2021, we all got together to help clear up and restore the Millennium Maze. Our work consisted of trimming trees and planting new trees too!

The trees were really overgrown when we first came to the Maze and so we trimmed them back, making space to walk and space to plant lots of new trees! It was sometimes quite prickly with thorns but most of us had quite a lot of layers on to protect us from getting hurt.

In February 2022, we planted willow tree saplings to fill the gaps in the Maze. These will grow very fast and soon will restore its shape. We also planted several fruit trees towards the entrance, which hopefully families will enjoy for years to come.

It felt amazing to meet and work with such a lovely bunch of people from all walks of life. I was the only kid there but everyone was so friendly. I had a wonderful,

fun time and was made to feel really welcome.

I cannot wait for it to be finished so everyone can see our hard work. The Maze will look wonderful through the hard work of our volunteers. This will be a lovely space to have a picnic, have a get together and if you are walking use this as a final destination for a rest.

Hopefully our Maze may one day be as well-known as the ones I have visited at Carnfunnock Country Park or Castlewellan Forest.

We invite everyone to have a good time up at Cave Hill when we are finished we would love it if you paid a visit to take a look at our efforts. I hope you have an amazing day!

Alana O'Flaherty

SPAR



CAVEHILL

325 Cavehill Road, Belfast, BT15 5EY

Now with Post Office in store!

Tel: 028 9039 1500

In memory of Elizabeth Byrne McCullough R.I.P.

The death occurred in late 2021 of Elizabeth, one of our faithful members. Eliz had a great love of Cave Hill and was often seen walking along the slopes. She had a talent for wonderfully descriptive language and had names for many of her favourite treks such as the Western Path, Level One and the Liscannor Steps. Eliz was passionate about nature and conservation. She touched many people with her enthusiasm and her warmth. She encouraged me to take on the role of Membership Secretary and was a positive and uplifting support.

Eliz, as she was generally known to her friends, will be sadly missed by all who knew her but much remembered during our walks on the hill.

*Ann Marrion McCambridge
Membership Secretary*



Breakthrough for the Hills Access Campaign

While the primary concern of the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign has always and rightly been the preservation of the Cave Hill itself, it has also been concerned about the wider environment of the Belfast Hills and access to them. At its very first AGM in May 1990 what was then the Save the Cave Hill Campaign adopted a constitution which included the following objective;

To support the preservation of the natural environment, and public access for appropriate uses to the Belfast Hills.

With a view to highlighting the issues involved, the Campaign, working in tandem with the Black Mountain Action Group and others, organised the Belfast Hills Walk from 1989 onwards with hundreds participating. This came to a sorry end in 2000 when farmers prevented access.

In the years following 1990 matters seemed to regress rather than progress. Plans to create a Belfast Hills Regional Park originally launched by then Minister, Richard Needham, were abandoned. Worse still was the decision in 2009 of a committee reviewing the Ulster Way to simply abandon the longstanding understanding that it should run along the skyline of the Belfast Hills.

The Cave Hill Conservation Campaign supported the establishment of the Belfast Hills Partnership in 2005 with one of the hopes being that it could address the access issue. Although the partnership has done much good work, this was one matter that it could not deal with. The partnership proceeds by consensus and includes representatives of the farmers. At least until very recently and with the backing of the Ulster Farmers Union they refused even to discuss access!

It was against this background and one of ever growing frustration that groups along the perimeter of the hills including the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign and those holding land in the hills and in the public interest came together in 2020 to form the Belfast Hills Access Campaign. In February 2021 they launched a major report, Access to the Belfast Hills – Promises, Betrayals and a Call to Action <https://bit.ly/3d8WOyP>

This detailed the whole abject history since the Second World War of failed promises on the access question and went on to demand the securing of key routes into and across the hills. These comprised four routes in all including two new links from the city to Black Mountain and Divis from Glencairn/Ligoniel

and Whiterock and the re-opening of a formerly accessible link between the top of Colin Glen and the Black Mountain and Divis. Finally the completion of the key spinal route (the Ulster Way) by securing access to its central section from Wolf Hill to Squires Hill was proposed.

What had been established during the previous history of failure was that the responsibility and indeed the powers to establish such routes lay with Belfast City Council. That was where the access campaign now focussed its attention and with immediate success.

The Campaign was able to give a presentation to the full Council at their March 2021 meeting and the matter was referred back to the People and Communities Committee which at their meeting on 9 March unanimously adopted the Campaign's proposals. That decision was unanimously ratified at the full Council meeting on 1 April. This was a landmark moment. For the first time the Council was committed to providing proper access into and across the Belfast Hills.

Of course there is many a pitfall between commitment and actual delivery! The Access Campaign intends to keep the pressure up but currently is encouraged by constructive meetings that have been held with Council officers. Of particular importance at this stage is that the Council has now made provision for access to the Belfast Hills within its capital programme and all four of our proposed routes have reached Stage Two in progressing to implementation.

One particular hurdle will almost certainly have to be jumped. While everyone would prefer to reach voluntary agreements with landowners it is almost certain that the council will have to use its powers of compulsory acquisition for key sections of the routes involved. Apparently this will require separate political decisions. We should not be put off by this prospect. With the help of our Reference Group of councillors which is representative of all parties on the council we are confident that there will be no wavering.

I am grateful to the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign for its resolute support for the Access Campaign.

John Gray

Chair, Belfast Hills Access Campaign

Contact: openbelfasthills@gmail.com

A Walk on Cave Hill

I have spent most of my life in the shadow of Cave Hill and always found it a pleasing and inspiring place to walk.

Walking over Cave Hill at different times of the day and in different seasons is to experience different landscapes and atmospheres, but always pleasure. In Spring, green shoots appear and the trees come into bud. Blue Bells appear, bringing with them the most beautiful scent while they spread as a vibrant and luxuriant carpet throughout the woods. Summer brings longer days and the number of walkers on the Hill increases. Autumn's arrival is marked with the brown, yellow and red leaves bedecking the trees.

Walkers arrive with purpose and gather ripening berries and nuts. As Winter takes over, the days grow shorter, the number of walkers falls and the Hill slumbers. However, it only takes a fall of snow to bring them back to the Hill!

My favourite time is early morning, approaching the lower paths while it is still dark. Torch in hand, I start on the path off Upper Cavehill Road; passing the river and, turning left, on through the woods. The torchlight draws my eye to the grasses, bushes and trees, and to the path, so on rainy mornings, I can avoid the puddles! I climb

on upwards through the wood until I reach the elephant's feet; look closely and you will understand why it is so named! The view from here on a clear day is spectacular. Moving on up, I turn left and shine my torch ahead to see the Caves. Then on to the Sheep's Path which curves left and leads to the Caves. I direct my torch downward to the right of the path and the Devil's Punch Bowl is revealed. I follow the path on upwards and through the wooded area before arriving at the steps that lead to a flat area overlooking Belfast, offering more stunning views of the city and the Lough. My thoughts drift and my mind's eye lingers on these unseen views and I resolve to return in daylight hours. I continue on upwards and bearing left, I walk a little further and reach the top of Cave Hill. At this point that I begin to hope that I have timed it to catch the morning sun rising above the horizon. Sometimes the cloud cover is too thick to see the sun rise, but there is always enough light seeping through to assure me that dawn has come at last. No two sunrises are the same, but they are all glorious. On to McArt's Fort, though as children we knew it as Napoleon's Nose! And yes, the views from here, in the gathering light, are fabulous!

Then it is time to make the descent down the Hill and back to daily life.

Anna McAleavy

Cave Hill and the Covid Emergency

Responsibility for Public Health is devolved to the Northern Ireland government. When the Covid emergency began, the Executive introduced a series of directives urging members of the public to exercise caution and not to travel to visitor attractions or beauty spots. It was not feasible to close many public open spaces, particularly the Cave Hill Country Park, which is accessible from open countryside and neighbouring urban areas. But Belfast Castle was closed and for a time the main gates of the Belfast Castle Estate were shut in order to limit vehicular traffic and to facilitate pedestrians.

The use of public open spaces, not least Cave Hill and the Castle Estate, became an increasingly important means for citizens to relieve the stress of feeling confined to their neighbourhoods, and to counter the anxieties created by the pandemic. Visits to parks increased significantly and became an important way of preserving physical and mental well-being.

There are no statistics available to accurately chart the elevated visitor levels, but Facebook postings and personal accounts testify to the important social role of Cave Hill at this time. The Covid crisis focused atten-

tion on the importance of open spaces and immersion in nature to many people adversely affected by restrictions on normal social interaction.

Inevitably, the increase in numbers created problems of sudden overuse of a relatively small and fragile area. The thoughtlessness of some motorists led to irresponsible parking on the approaches to the castle; prolific littering became a blight on and off the paths, with plastic containers and dog waste especially troublesome. Designated pathways became wider, unofficial routes were cut through the undergrowth and litter bins were vandalised. Remonstrations with offenders, however courteous and well-intended, brought the risk of an aggressive response.

With an end to the emergency apparently now in prospect, the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign will resume its work of restoring the natural beauty of the area, its biodiversity and its cultural legacy. It is to be hoped that many of those who benefited from these qualities during the lockdown will have come to a greater appreciation of the precious environmental heritage in their vicinity.

E McCamley

A Short History of Belfast Castle

The 3rd Marquess of Donegall, George Hamilton Chichester, was more thrifty than his profligate father and the building of Belfast Castle marked an upturn in the family fortunes. In 1865, Lanyon, Lynn and Lanyon drew up plans for a castle which Brett later described as “a rugged and determined exercise in the fullness of Scottish Baronial style”. It sat high on Cave Hill as if looking down on Belfast from a distance and perhaps this was fitting, for the family had effectively relinquished control of the town to the enterprising businessmen and merchants who engineered its boom era. With its great, square, six-storey tower and sparse decoration, it looked rather forbidding, made more so by a line of cannon installed on the garden terraces, pointing menacingly out over the estate. Various other buildings were erected at the same time - two gate lodges, a gamekeeper’s house, a groom’s house, a harness room etc., and a wall was built to enclose the Deerpark, parts of which can still be seen close to the paths which ascend to McArt’s Fort. The house had 30 bedrooms, salon and drawing rooms, morning, dining and billiard rooms, as well as extensive servants’ quarters.

The 3rd Marquess’s daughter, Harriet, and her husband eventually inherited the estate and raised their son, Anthony Ashley-Cooper, there. This son, the 9th Earl of Shaftesbury, was an exception to his ancestors in that he spent much of his youth in Belfast and this evidently created a bond, for he was Lord Mayor of Belfast in 1907 and Chancellor of Queen’s University from 1909 to 1923. He donated the litany desks and vestry wardrobe to the new church of St. Peter’s on the Antrim Road, only a stone’s throw from the gate lodge, and he was an important subscriber to the building list for St. Ann’s Cathedral. The castle grounds were frequently thrown open for public events and garden fetes and there is a sense that the distance between the family and the citizens of Belfast was lessened. Certainly, any austerity in the look of the building was considerably softened by the richly serpentine outside staircase which connected the rooms on the piano nobile to the gardens, installed in 1894 by the 9th Earl as a present for his mother. It strikes me that the castle was at its most alive and vigorous during the 9th Earl’s life. We can get some sense of this life and vigour by examining the census of 1901 and 1911.

The household on census day consisted of the young couple, twenty servants and three visitors. It is notable that all of the servants except one were English or Scottish; the one exception was Mary “McCure”, a 23 year-old housemaid from Antrim. Twelve of the servants were women and eight men. Only one, 50 year-old William Bullock, was married. Also notable is how young most of the staff were; only three of the twenty staff were over 33.

One can imagine the place as being full of life and energy with all these young people around, going about their tasks. There was a cook and a nurse, various housemaids, a nursery maid, a “still-room” maid (she made cakes, sandwiches, jams and jellies), a scullery maid and a kitchen maid. There were several footmen, a butler, an under-butler, a valet and a hall-boy. Also notable is the fact that all but four of these servants were Church of England; we can imagine them trooping down to the Chapel of the Resurrection on Sunday morning, following the Shaftesburys’ carriage. We can also imagine the high spirits of such a young group of people - even the earl and his wife were only 31 and 25 respectively. Unfortunately, a servant’s life was often incompatible with married life and it is significant that in the census of 1911 almost none of the 1901 staff are still there. The only exception is the aforementioned Mary, her surname now spelt “McCue”. This time, every single one of the castle staff are single and only four of them are over the age of 30. Of course, this pervading celibacy was restricted to house staff; there were other employees of the earl who lived on the estate with their families. Charles Newell, for example, was the gamekeeper in 1911 and he lived in a “house 5 in Antrim Road” with his wife and two children.

The fact that the castle staff were nearly all English or Scottish reminds us that many of them would have decamped with the family when they moved back to London or Dorset (the seat of the Shaftesburys) at certain times of the year. Eventually, during the 1920s, the family spent less and less time here and in 1934 they gifted the castle and its grounds to the Belfast Corporation. There was a grand opening to the public on the 9th of July 1937, with dancing and cabaret acts by artistes then appearing in the Floral Hall, and it was hoped that the castle would now acquire a new lease of life. Various proposals were made for the use of the castle, including one for an open-air theatre, but lack of money in succeeding years precluded their implementation. After the 1941 blitz attack, the flag officer of the Royal Navy was evacuated from the Custom House to the castle, where the ballroom became a signal office, and I imagine the rooms must have echoed again with the sounds of activity. As I write, we are emerging from the Covid pandemic and the castle has been closed for two years. By the time you read this, doubtless the building will be open to the public. I urge you to visit and make use of this public resource, and I hope that its rooms will welcome many thousands more Belfast citizens to make the walls echo once again.

John Gribbin

A Breaking and Entering at Daddystown

I was somewhat surprised to receive a phone call from Neill Cranston who was an ex-member of the 29th Scout Troop at Daddystown. His mother and father had acquired the cottage, third in the row, next door to my grandmother.

Neill informed me that after sixty and more years that he still has his Scout shirt which is adorned with the numerous craft badges that he had achieved during his time in the Scouts. He then went on to relate the story as follows for which I take this opportunity to convey my thanks and for his permission to put it in print. The story is largely true, although I imagine, possibly modified a little over the passage of time.

The story is as follows:

Many years ago there was what was termed, "The long weekend in September" when industry closed on a Monday and Tuesday towards the end of the month.

A number of the 29th Scout Troop, including Tommy Beattie and Gerry Nevin had decided to spend the short holiday break in the end cottage belonging to Sam Clyde.

On the first night after lights out, voices could be heard approaching the cottage and one was heard to say, "There's a window at the back, I'll make my way there and break in and open the front door". He then proceeded on his way to the rear of the cottage where he smashed the glass to make his entrance. Unfortunately for him, on his way through, he was grabbed in a headlock by Gerry Nevin, a black belt in judo who was awaiting his appearance.

At this point the second miscreant was frantically trying to make his escape as he scrambled up the grassy hill with Tommy Beattie, in hot pursuit. Tommy was a big man and very strong and the escapee was caught by the trouser leg and was soon divested of his trousers. Tommy then grabbed a bunch of stinging nettles and there were screams as he was given a dusting down with the said nettles.

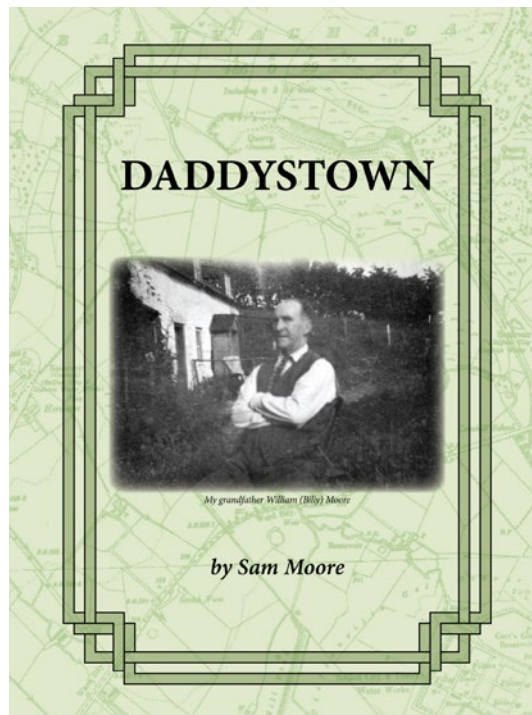
The two law breakers who had been apprehended were then frogmarched from there down through 'the glen', (as Carr's Glen is known to locals) to a phone box on the Ballysillan Road from where the police

were called. The two unfortunates were charged with breaking and entering. (One of them had not been able to retrieve his trousers).

A later incident occurred when youths were walking up the lane past the cottages when one of them smashed a bottle within sight of Gerry Nevin. Gerry quickly upended him and had him by the ankles. The lad was then made to pick up the pieces of broken glass.

I have made many visits to the site of the Daddystown cottages. I have gone on my own and at times with family members. A few years ago, my cousin and I went there with our families for a special

occasion and we had a very pleasant time celebrating the visit with a barbeque. My cousin John and I then went in search of the spring in the well field. It took us some time to locate it as the place had become largely overgrown but, eventually I homed in on it when I heard the water flowing from a piece of spouting which had been put there many years ago but had suffered the ravages of time and had a few holes in it. We had taken bottles with us with which we filled for the rest of the party to partake of the water. The surrounding area was thick with watercress which reputedly tends to grow in pure water conditions.



Just prior to this visit, my wife and I had been to France in our camper van and we stayed in a site where there was a large oak tree and around the base were many little seedlings which had started to grow. I took one of the seedlings and put it into a carton and brought it home. On the day of our visit to Daddystown, I took the seedling and a spade with me and planted it close to the tall tree opposite to where the cottages had been. A short time ago, on my last visit with my cousin John, I suddenly remembered having planted the tiny seedling in an overgrown patch of ground. After a quick search, lo and behold, there it was, now an oak tree of some feet tall.

Sam Moore
Author of "Daddystown"

*Sam's book on Daddystown is available through
The Cave Hill Conservation Campaign.*

CCC BRANDED MERCHANDISE

We have a range of Cave Hill Conservation Campaign branded (and other) items for sale:

Polo shirts - (members only) available in sizes S,M, L, XL - £13

Eugene Dunphy CD - £3

Daddystown Booklet - £5

Cave Hill Rights of Way Booklet - £5

Cave Hill Ordnance Survey Map - £5

Contact us by email at
cavehillconservationcampaign@hotmail.com

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)



Printed on recycled paper

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



CALLING ALL MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS!

If you are a member wishing to renew your membership for 2022, 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

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

Chair: Cormac Hamill
Editors: Maeve Holly & Martin Donaldson

Please visit our website at:
www.cavehillconservation.org

Facebook Page: 'Cave Hill Conservation'.

Correspondence welcome by email to:
campaignerccc@hotmail.com

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.