



The Cave Hill Campaigner

Published by
The Cave Hill
Conservation
Campaign
Summer 2014
No.18

Another Busy Year!

This last year has been busy and productive. There have been a number of changes in the Park that we have been involved with in one way or another: a new path, tree-felling, a new junior orienteering course and a joint tree-planting with mountain bikers. More details are given in separate articles in this Campaigner.

We are reaching more members of the public than ever. This has partly been achieved through this Campaigner magazine. Last year we published our first sixteen page edition with lots of photographs which appealed to people and this year we also have sixteen pages. We also had a stall at the Council-

organised Big Lunch in June and at the Christmas Antrim Road Traders' Fair. Our programmes of Saturday walks drew bigger attendances than ever (details of this year's walk programme are elsewhere in this magazine). I also addressed the AGM of a conservation group interested in volunteering on Cave Hill.

We finally got our butterfly survey running last year. Details are in a separate article. We organised our own clean-up of the Hill in May and we helped Belfast Royal Academy in their clean-up in September.

Continued on next page.



In This Issue:

Another Busy Year	1
Butterflies on Cave Hill	3
A Wise Old Soul	4
'Under Cave Hill'	7
Changes in Cave Hill Country Park in 2013 & 2014	8
Three archeological finds from Cave Hill in the late 1950's	11
Inspirations	13
Cave Hill Looking Back: - <i>The Volunteer Well</i>	14
- <i>The Ulster Volunteers at Belfast Castle</i>	15
Guided Walks in 2014	16
Membership Form	16

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

Chair: Cormac Hamill
Editor: Martin McDowell

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

Our Facebook site is working well. People who use the hill are posting interesting photos and these are provoking discussion. I would encourage more to join this on-line community. All our main documents are on our website, including all back-issues of the Cave Hill Campaigner. These are a useful resource for anyone who wants to learn about aspects of the Hill.

We are also engaged in discussions about two of the buildings associated with Cave Hill. Last year we carried details about the Chapel of the Resurrection: since then we have learned that a feasibility study is being carried out by a local business, prior to putting a funding package together to try to bring the Chapel back into public use. The issue of finding a use for the Floral Hall has come to the Parks and Leisure committee of Belfast City Council. We have sought assurances about the Council's plans and they have said that they are only at the start of a long process fraught with difficulties. There are certainly no sources of finance waiting in the wings. We would expect to be involved in the consultation process if or when this project gains momentum.

None of what we do would have been possible without the support of our members and the energy and time of our committee. There are sixteen of us on the committee and we meet every month to plan and monitor our activities - I owe all of them a



People gather for our Annual General Meeting.

heartfelt thanks. We are also grateful to Belfast City Council who recognise us as a Friends organisation and who provide a room in the Castle for our meetings. And finally we are grateful to the Belfast Hills Partnership for providing not just funding for the new path but for organising volunteer activity within the Park.

Cormac Hamill

CAVEHILL
dental care



everyone smiles in the same language :)



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Dental Implants
- Aesthetic Crowns, Veneers & Bridges
- Periodontology (Gum Treatments)
- Intravenous or Gas & Air Sedation
- Orthodontics (Tooth Straightening Invisible Braces)
- Denture Stabilisation using Mini Implants (1hr)
- Removal of Wisdom teeth
- Hygienist service
- Anti-wrinkle injections

Professional Tooth Bleaching
Using Custom Trays
Only £169
(for a limited period)
Tooth Bleaching Gift Vouchers Now Available

We register New HNS, Denplan and Private patients



Denplan, Private, NHS accepted. Finance packages available for dental care.

www.dirtycarswanted.com
Car Care Provider
1989 - 2014
25 Years and Counting
Full Range of Valeting Services available
028 9077 8890
(Behind Fortwilliam Shops)

Butterflies on Cave Hill

For the last century the numbers of butterflies in Ireland have been decreasing, due probably to changes in farming practices and increasing use of land for other purposes. But we cannot be sure of trends like these unless butterfly numbers are surveyed regularly. That only began to happen in Northern Ireland in the 1980s and now we are part of that process.

In 2013 Cave Hill Conservation Campaign became involved in a continuous survey of butterflies on Cave Hill. We report to Butterfly Conservation Northern Ireland (BCNI) and through them to the U.K. Butterfly Monitoring Service.



A Meadow Brown butterfly on the Cave Hill.

Though we did some trial runs in 2012, we produced our first full set of results last year.

Fourteen species of butterfly were recorded with the ringlet the most common species and the greatest numbers of butterflies were detected in August. There were no real rarities but the small copper and the dark green fritillary are certainly noteworthy.

Due to environmental factors, the United Kingdom has fewer species of butterfly (59) than the continent of Europe (482) and Ireland has fewer still. 34 species have been seen in Ireland and 25



A photo of a colourful Peacock butterfly.

Two years ago, we spent a lot of time along with personnel from BCNI in selecting a route on Cave Hill which takes in a variety of landscape types. This is known as a transect. The technique is to walk this route once a week between eleven o'clock in the morning and four o'clock in the afternoon between April and September, noting any butterflies which appear inside a 5 metre 'box' around you.

Our transect begins at the Castle, taking in the parkland, the woods, the path up from the Upper Cavehill Road, along to the top of Carr's Glen, up to the big Wallace limestone quarry, through the bottom of this quarry and back to the Castle.



A male Orange-Tip butterfly.

of these in Northern Ireland. We have only found 14 so we have hopes of increasing our Cave Hill species numbers this coming year.

During the preliminary work in selecting the survey area in 2012, we did find a rarity. Near the caves is a small colony of grayling butterflies, a species only found in small numbers along our coastline and very rarely inland. They are very difficult to see as they are so well camouflaged when they bask on the rocks. But so far this species has not turned up on our particular transect.

The value of survey work such as ours increases with time when trends become discernible. So we intend to continue this survey over many years to come. If anyone is interested in helping with the survey, please contact us via our website.

Cormac Hamill

On the 19th of March last year I met up with Cormac Hamill and Jack Johnston for a walk over the hill. Jack is a man who will be familiar to many in North Belfast as the headmaster of St. Patrick's Primary School, where he worked for 43 years. Born and raised in Carrick Hill, his family moved to the New Lodge area during the war. He has known the Cave Hill intimately for nearly 80 years. I was keen to meet Jack and try to glean from him what the hill has meant to him, what it was like when he first explored its trails and thickets, and how it has changed. However, as a man of singularly humble character, rather than be interviewed so that the focus was on himself, he insisted on taking us for a walk, so he could share with us the places he has frequented and the discoveries he has made in the course of seventy-odd years of walking and running through the country park and beyond.

We set off up the hill, heading for the path

SPAR 

CAVEHILL

325 Cavehill Road, Belfast, BT15 5EY

It's where you can get everything you need!

Tel: 028 9039 1500

CAVEHILL CHIROPODY 

166 Cavehill Road

Mr D Muise
D.Pod.M., M.Ch.S., S.R.Ch., Hcpc
Health Professions Council Registered

Special Rates for Pensioners

Tel: 028 9039 1411

A Wise Old Soul

above the castle which runs north-south. Near the southern end of this path, where there is a new seat, we followed a trail off the main path which led to a small sunken reservoir which was built to provide water in case of fire at the castle. It is now empty and is one of the few easily recognisable remnants of the built heritage on the hill. (Others which are fast disappearing are Mammystown and Daddystown, the Gamekeepers Cottage and the Volunteer's Well. Anyone interested in these and other vestiges of another era should read Ben Simon's book *Voices from Cave Hill*). As anyone familiar with this trail knows, if you follow it northwards it runs roughly parallel with the main gravel path which leads up to the area below the caves. It's a more challenging route than the gravel path, but, for my money anyway, it is much more interesting. Not least interesting is the clearing you encounter not long after the reservoir, which from March to May can steal your breath away with a glorious display of bluebells. On this particular March day we were

lucky and already there was a waving carpet of blue to greet us as we emerged from the undergrowth.

We moved on up and Jack pointed out some badger setts. We marvelled at the feat of engineering these represented and Jack was keen to point out how the badgers had dug a separate latrine at a distance from the sett. Further along the trail there is a bit of dodging and clambering to be done, wherever trees have fallen across the path. At this point I have to admit that, despite having recently begun a new fitness regime, I was breathing heavily. However, the occasional glance in Jack's direction revealed no signs of breathlessness, only a constant steady rhythm and an easy gait, punctuated by sudden moments of excitement when he spotted something worth commenting upon. I imagined that not a lot has changed in Jack from the time when he was a boy, running and climbing among these same trees. Although he never mentioned it, I knew that Jack had been a runner long before jogging became the popular pastime it is now, and that as a fifty-something he had begun running marathons, completing sixteen in impressive times.

We emerged out of the trees near the "camel humps" and enjoyed the view of the lough as the sun made one of its infrequent appearances before

retreating in the face of oncoming rain clouds. Jack has since pointed out to me that he remembers a time when there was a large board erected at this spot with the names and dates of people killed on the hill; a warning against imprudence which would still be timely today. We made our way downhill from here and further north towards the zoo.

As we skirted the zoo perimeter, Jack pointed out places where animals had been digging under the fence. We wondered if these animals were getting into or out of the zoo! Cormac and Jack traded anecdotes about various escaped zoo creatures that had been spotted at various times on the hill – stories no doubt embellished in the telling! On that particular day I have to report that there was nothing to be seen other than the animals in their enclosures visible from outside the fence; some alpacas and monkeys, an elephant and some goats. Just then the light drizzle turned to hailstones and I felt sorry for these exotic animals removed so far from their native environment. We pushed on.

That afternoon we ranged from one end of the hill to the other and back again. We visited a "secret valley" and a hollow fitted with boards and corrugated iron that Jack thought might well have been a shelter built by people who fled the



Jack Johnston with Cave Hill in background.

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

Blitz during April and May 1941. He told us about a man whom he used to see regularly on the hill feeding the red squirrels until they came to feed out of his hand; he came by tram or trolley bus every day from East Belfast throughout the fifties and would sit for hours at the foot of a tree watching the squirrels doing acrobatics among the branches. Jack showed us the place he believed Naoise O’Haughian, the notorious highwayman, had a hideout, and remembered how he told the tale of this incredibly athletic hero/villain to generations of schoolchildren he brought onto the hill from St. Patrick’s Primary School. We passed the place where the American bomber crashed during the Second World War and Jack remembered how the sight of G.I.s practising their mountaineering skills at the caves sparked off an interest in rock climbing among the young men of the area.

Much more was seen and said before we went our separate ways and I believe we were all the richer for the experience. It made me marvel at the richness of potential the hill holds for “re-creation” and rejuvenation of the spirit, for surprising us and teaching us, thrilling and amazing us. And I thought of all the thousands of people down through the years who have come to the hill for sanctuary from the stresses and strains of daily life in Belfast in the twentieth century; sanctuary from, at best, the drudgery of the daily grind and, at worst, the awful grinding litany of maimings and killings. Sean O’Connell, in the recent publication, *Belfast 400* (Liverpool University Press, 2012), comes back again and again to North Belfast for examples in his study of life in Belfast from 1914 to 1968. He focuses most particularly on the area Jack Johnston would have known particularly well – the New Lodge and lower Antrim Road. He draws a picture of desperate times, especially around the early 1920’s and in 1935, when sectarian violence broke out and families were intimidated from their homes – how housing shortage, overcrowding and unsanitary conditions were rife and were a significant factor in the same intimidation. He tells the story of the

3,200 houses destroyed in the Blitz and the Glenard estate squatters, of poor planning and the break-up of communities in the sixties and seventies, of the movement of families into “safe” areas during the Troubles and the consequent intensification of segregation, of the disastrous consequences of building high-rise flats and suburban estates without providing the necessary amenities that might have made them habitable. He makes clear the cycle of boom and bust that has bedevilled Belfast over the last hundred years; how war work brought relative prosperity only to be followed by depression and mass unemployment.

Down all the years of terrific hardship for working class people, the Cave Hill remained a place of refuge, somewhere beauty and calm could be relished. Jack Johnston is one of many who found sustenance there to help him survive through difficult times. Speaking to Jack recently, I asked him what he felt had changed about the hill since he was a boy. He mentioned that peregrine falcons used to be common around the area of the caves and that kestrels were to be seen everywhere, whereas they now tend to be seen only at the top. He recounted how he frequently saw foxes on his walks, but rarely saw them now. Likewise, he described how pellets regurgitated by long-eared owls were to be seen all over the hill, whereas now they were a rare find. He told me other stories about encounters with stoats and buzzards, foxes and crows – stories that are still very vivid in his telling. Maybe some day he’ll write these down and we can add them to our on-line archive! However, I don’t want to end on an elegiac note; wildlife behaviour changes and always has done – but with change comes new discoveries and encounters. I’m convinced that these pages will carry stories of such marvels for years to come. And I’m convinced that there will be keen-eyed lovers of the hill around to observe them and live to tell the tale.

John Gribbin

Under Cave Hill

*Between the last storm and the next,
A full moon is washed in the Waterworks.*

*A dog barks on a bridge;
A swan lifts its restless wings.*

No human voice in this

*Neither dark or light time;
No evil act or horror.*

*Below an icy path,
Words are barely visible;
All is still and eerie.*

*From Queen Mary's Gardens
All is glint and quiet.*

*No sign of swift, martin, tufted duck.
Trees on an island are breathless.
Coot and golden eye as distant as Luftwaffe.*

*From basalt Cave Hill
To lights over the city,
The lough rests, shores in darkness.*

*My mind is full of violins,
Water, moon, mountain;
The light and dark of absent family
And liquid stars overhead.*

*A poem by local poet
Tom Morgan.*



'Cavehill from the Waterworks' by Brendan Ellis

Fresh Fruit & Local Vegetables

Healthy Start Voucher Accepted

168b
Cavehill Road
Telephone:
078 7621 2903



**fresh
"garbage"**

Specialists in:
• Incense • Perfumed Oils • Oil Burners • Tiger Balm •
Belfast's **ORIGINAL** Alternative Store
for over 40 years!

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

24 Rosemary Street, Belfast

Tel: 028 9024 2350

**SAN
MAR
UNISEX
SALON**

**SPECIALISTS
IN
COLOURING**

Also:

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

640 Antrim Road

**Tel:
028 9077 7002**

Changes in Cave Hill Country Park 2013 – 2014

New Quarry Path

Last autumn, a wide programme of improvements was carried out by The Belfast Hills Partnership with funding from the Landscape Partnership Programme of The Heritage Lottery Scheme facilitated by Belfast City Council. On Cave Hill, path improvements were made to the area around the limestone quarry at a total cost of £40,000. There is now a new path along the steep slope leading up to the quarry, running along the length of the quarry, and then turning up towards the main path between the Hightown Road and McArt's Fort. The paths were built by Euro Services who have extensive experience building paths and trails across Northern Ireland, including new paths on Divis Mountain, and mountain bike tracks at Castlewellan and Rostrevor.

Euro Services build paths to the highest specifications using a combination of techniques such as culverting, building cambers into the paths,

and by not allowing paths to run straight downhill (this causes erosion due to formation of mini-rivers in heavy rain). As a result the paths were virtually unaffected by heavy rain in January and February, and they should endure for many years.

Where the path is steep, steps have been added, made from quartz sandstone mined by hand from Liscannor quarry near the Cliffs of Moher in Co. Clare. A unique feature of Liscannor stone is the interesting patterns which look like Celtic designs - they are in fact tracks of prehistoric animals which were making their way through the sand as it slowly solidified millions of years ago. These patterns as well as providing interesting designs, provide a natural anti-slip surface on wet and muddy days,



Patterns created by prehistoric eels.



Euro Services at Work

Euro Services have thought of everything!

David Scott, Belfast Hills Landscape Project Officer said that the new routes were a great boost for the people of the city. «This is a gift from the Belfast Hills Partnership to the people of Belfast, these paths will entice people into the Belfast Hills to make the best of what these public sites have to offer in terms of wildlife, views, health and wellbeing, and first class trails to walk along».

Reaction to the new paths has been very positive, as a result of the new paths, this area of the Cave Hill has become safer and more accessible, especially to some older walkers who had started to avoid the quarry. The new paths have also made shared use between bikers and pedestrians much safer, as there



The top end of the new path.

are better lines of sight, the paths are wider, and the paved steps reduce the chance of collisions on the steeper sections.

A circular viewing point with explanatory panels has been built where the new path meets the upper quarry edge thereby enhancing our enjoyment of the hill even more.

Junior Orienteering Course

As part of the Landscape Partnership Scheme, the Belfast Hills Partnership canvassed local schools to see what facilities they would appreciate in the Belfast Hills. One strong response was for an orienteering course and one has now been put in place around the Castle. Orienteering involves using a map or a GPS and running around to locate particular points in the landscape. These are the posts and slabs – there are around 30 of them – at various places in the woods and parkland around the castle. They are fairly easy to find and are designed especially for schoolchildren. The course was launched this Spring. There are also plans for a more testing course, taking in a much larger section of the hill and aimed at seniors.

Tree Felling

There was a lot of unease among regular park users last year at the nearly continuous activities of a tree-felling contractor. We contacted Belfast City Council and Alan McHaffie, (Senior Woodland &

Recreation Officer) attended our December meeting and gave us a briefing. Three years ago the Council embarked on a survey of its trees. As part of that, a tree expert spent from February to October 2013 surveying all the mature trees in Cave Hill Country Park and classifying them as priority 1, 2 or 3, depending on how urgent the required work was, Priority 1 being dead, diseased or dangerous trees requiring immediate action. Proximity to a path is also taken into account. Under health & safety legislation the Council needs to be proactive in its tree management. Cut wood is often left lying as a habitat for insects and various other decomposers, particularly away from paths. Such cut wood belongs to the Council and its removal by visitors to the park is not authorised. The Council budget for tree surgery is £300,000 and the tree surgeons, Clark Cunningham are on 24/7 standby if needed.

He emphasised that decisions to cut down or prune trees were taken seriously and were subject to checks. Ivy is often removed from trees, not because it endangers the tree itself but because it can hide cavities and decay which indicate the health or otherwise of the tree.

Alan stated that Belfast City Council is now putting a proper tree management strategy in place, after many years when there was no such strategy. He is working to a five year plan. After the work



The stump of a Monterey Cypress tree near the Castle. This tree was diagnosed as dying and was felled last year for safety reasons.

planned for these five years is complete, the trees will be resurveyed and reassessed. Tree surgery and replacement planting will be a part of the overall plan.

He appreciated how members of the public who use the Park can become concerned at tree surgery and that absence of information can give rise to unfounded rumours. He indicated his willingness to put up informative notices at a central location when work was to be carried out but also pointed that sometimes the necessity of urgent ad-hoc work would make prior notice impracticable.

Alan provided us with a copy of the current tree management plan which can be found on our website.

Tree-Planting With The Mountain Bikers

Mountain biking is a feature of Cave Hill Country Park. There are no bye-laws prohibiting it; the only condition is that the bikes must be ridden with due care and attention. There have been instances of conflict between walkers and bikers within the park and we are of the opinion that one way to reduce such tensions is for both sets of users to work together. To that end, we had a preliminary meeting with two biker representatives in the Castle in November and agreed two things; we would meet once a quarter in future and we would mark the beginning of this process by holding a joint tree-planting event. We sourced trees from the Woodland Trust and Belfast City Council supplied the rest; in all we planted about 600 trees on 30 November. This chosen patch was beside the footpath going up to the Castle from the top of Innisfayle Park on the left-hand side just above the little steep section. The trees are whips – small bare-rooted native species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, oak and willow. But most will grow and will add to the future tree-cover in the park.

Donal McDaniel
&
Cormac Hamill



Bernard McClure, Councillor Gareth McKee, chairman of the Parks & Leisure committee of Belfast City Council, Cormac Hamill and two of our younger planters

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



Stanley's Family Butchers
569 Antrim Road, Belfast

Tel: 028 9077 4615



Over 50?
Need help with benefits or form filling?
Free confidential advice
Home visits can be arranged

151 Cliftonville Road Tel: 028 9075 5894
Email: olaf@northbelfastseniors.org

Three archaeological finds from Cave Hill in the late 1950's

The artefacts shown in the photographs below were found in the late 1950s on the Cave Hill, Belfast. They were then brought to the Ulster Museum where they were identified as a very fine bronze-age flint arrowhead, a piece of unfinished worked flint, and a pierced loom weight.



The bronze-age arrowhead and accompanying piece of worked flint found on the ruined cairn on the summit of Cave Hill, Belfast

Finds 1 and 2:

The bronze-age flint arrowhead and accompanying piece of worked unfinished flint

These two artefacts were found by my brother Tim and I when we were walking on Cave Hill in winter following a period of alternating hard frost and rain. We had gone to the ruined cairn on the summit of Cave Hill that overlooks McArt's Fort to the east. Standing on the cairn/mound, and looking northwards towards Carrickfergus, we noticed that a small gully on the northern edge of the cairn had partly broken down and soil debris had fallen from it. It was in this spoil that we noticed the arrowhead and the other piece of worked flint. There did not appear to be any other pieces of flint in the immediate area of the spoil or in the side of the gully that had given way.

The juxtaposition of the arrowhead and the accompanying piece of worked flint on the cairn might be a matter of chance, or (more probably) could be evidence of a subsidiary bronze-age cist burial inserted into the side of the mound.

Belfast

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



**BELFAST
CASTLE**

**Weddings
Conferences
Restaurant
Fine dining**

Antrim Road, Belfast
Tel: 028 9077 6925



www.belfastcastle.co.uk

Find 3: The pierced loom-weight

This artefact was found in the ditch of McArt's Fort by my brother Tim, my father and I when we were walking on Cave Hill on a spring day in the late 1950s. There was then a considerable amount of small loose stone in the ditch, particularly at those points where tracks leading to the top of McArt's had been eroded by walkers or by the motor cyclists and their/scrambling bikes that wrought so much damage to the hill at that time.

The loom-weight was lying among the loose stones at the bottom of one of the tracks along the eastern section of the ditch and a short distance from the path on the right side of the hill that currently provides access to the top of McArt's.

Anything I have read about the archaeology of McArt's (and there does not appear to have been a lot written about it) registers uncertainty about its origin and function. Indeed, information boards on the hill suggest a probable ceremonial purpose rather than a habitation site. The loom-weight might instead represent evidence of habitation. It is difficult to think of another reason why such an object would be found on McArt's.

A comment about loom-weights in archaeological contexts in Ireland and Britain is set out below. This has been extracted from Irish Archaeology – a blog about archaeology in Ireland dated 25 May 2011 and focuses on an unusual prehistoric artefact (identified as a loom-weight) recovered during the archaeological excavation of one of a pair of Middle Bronze Age structures at Knockgraffon, County Tipperary.



Loom-weight found in the ditch of McArt's Fort, Cave Hill, Belfast

The commentary notes:

“These artefacts are generally described as loom-weights and are a common find on British sites from the Bronze Age onwards. A loom-weight is a heavy perforated item used to maintain tension on the threads during weaving of cloth or fabric on a warp waited loom. In Britain loom-weights come in many shapes and sizes with cylindrical, triangular and pyramidal being some of the most common forms. A provisional dating suggested by Needham and Longley (1980) places the majority of cylindrical-shaped weights in the middle Bronze age, the pyramidal weights in the Late Bronze Age and the large triangular types in the Iron Age.”

Based on the above, and the identification by the Ulster Museum of the triangular object found

THE BLUEBELL
Bakery & Coffee Shop
OUTSIDE CATERING FOR ALL OCCASIONS
Cut out this ad for a free drink with every fry!
180 Cavehill Road Tel: 028 9039 2905

Cavehill
Accountancy Services Ltd
Chartered Accountants
636 Antrim Road
Phone: 028 9028 8635
Email: peter@cavehillaccountancy.com
Website: www.cavehillaccountancy.com

in the ditch of McArt's Fort as a loom-weight, it is possible that the object we found may date from the Iron Age.

One other matter: on a Cave Hill walk in 2012, the accompanying archaeologist commented that the large oval-shaped area just beyond McArt's (and facing Divis) is listed as a possible-probable archaeological feature.

I do not think that this explanation is correct. In the mid-late 1950s, my family walked the hill on a regular basis and my father took strong exception to the significant damage that a group of motor cyclists (using dirt-track machines) were doing to McArt's Fort itself and to the open area just beyond the deep ditch – the very area where the archaeologist identified what he said was a listed archaeological feature.

The dirt-track bikers created the feature now

FORTWILLIAM GARDEN CENTRE

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

575 ANTRIM ROAD
TEL: 028 9077 1013

listed as a potential archaeological site. They used this area as an oval track and churned it up to such an extent that the damage remained obvious for many years. They also cut deep tracks into the side of the fort and were a danger to anyone on the fort as they raced up the side of McArt's oblivious to the risk they posed to people already there.

Dan McCall

Inspirations

*As the reddening sun sets behind Cave Hill,
Clive - weak and extremely ill,
is inspired and encouraged
with heavenly visions,
lifting his heart in praise
and thanksgiving to God;*

"When I get better, I'm going to stand at the top of Cave Hill on Napoleon's Nose, a little son at each side, with my arms wide open, looking skyward as I praise and thank the Lord for His grace and goodness to me."

*Clive McClinton
Level Ten, Tower Block,
Belfast City Hospital
Summer 2013*

Clive was hospitalised in November 2012, and remained in hospital throughout most of 2013.



Cave Hill Looking Back

The Volunteer Well

The earliest account of what became known as the Volunteer Well is that of Thomas Molyneux in 1708:

“We struck off from the Road which runs all Long the Sea, to view a Park here belonging to the Lords of Donegal. Here they carried us up a pretty high Hill, where is a very pleasant Fountain, well shaded with Trees, and from whence you have a very fine Prospect of Carrickfergus, the Bay, and Belfast, which from hence makes a very good shew.”

Nearly a century later the Cave Hill became a major training ground for the Irish Volunteers, a militia body formed ostensibly to protect Ireland from foreign attack, but also intent on securing additional rights for Ireland.

We have a detailed account of their manoeuvres in June 1782:

“The Belfast Troop of Light Dragoons and the Belfast Volunteer Company paraded in the morning in uniform, fully accoutred, the latter with knapsacks and every man a day’s provision: - After firing three volleys, they marched to the Deer Park, being joined in Donegall Street by the Belfast Artillery Company, who upon their arrival in the park, fired a Royal salute of 21 guns.”

The Belfast Newsletter was delighted:

“The effect... was amazingly grand, the report of each gun being so often reverberated among the rocks that it seemed, during the whole time of the firing, to be one continual peal of thunder.”

The business of the day was not quite done:

The Belfast Volunteer Company, having stacked their arms, pitched their tents on a fine flat on the mountainside, commanding a most beautiful and

wide-extended prospect, and then practised the plan of the ensuing review –

This ‘flat’ was beside what was still called the Tent Rock in the nineteenth century, and in the area below the caves. Certainly after their practice pleasure soon followed for the Volunteers:

The three corps, and a number of other gentlemen from the town dined together on the grass, eating their plain simple repast with a degree of pleasure and satisfaction not to be found from the more delicate viands served up at the tables of luxury.

If the food was simple the toasts, all 29 of them, were not! These were washed down by ‘*native whiskey diluted with water issuing from one of the finest springs in the universe.*’ No doubt the spring was what came to be known as the Volunteer Well and the last point on the march up the hill at which water could be obtained.

The Volunteers were to return to the Cave Hill in almost every year until their suppression in 1793, and the memory of their presence at the well was to re-surface in the famous rights of way trial of 1859. This arose because one James Magill had blocked the traditional path up the hill, and indeed had built his farm outbuildings over the well.

Now one of the principal witnesses against Magill, the 89 year old veteran James Grimshaw, remembered ‘the Volunteers assembled in old times at or near that well.’ Grimshaw described the later importance of the well as the last point which could be reached by a pony and trap, and an obvious resting point;

“I have frequently seen picnic parties at the Volunteers Well.... Those picnic parties generally had cars with them for the provisions. These cars proceeded as far as the Volunteer’s Well, where their stores were unloaded.”

A labourer, Patrick McHale, described how visitors to the well ‘*brought eatables and drinkables*

with them and many a time they gave me a share... Sometimes I did little kindnesses for them. I boiled water, peas and beans for them' while 'my mistress used to sell a little drop there,' ...and undoubtedly this was poitin!

According to Grimshaw the effect of Magill's depredations was that it was now 'impossible to find almost where the well is.' But thanks to the famous victory won in 1859 access to the well was once again secured, indeed all trace of Magill's outbuildings has long since vanished.

Today the spring (and it is a spring rather than a well) is obvious on the right hand side of the track leading up the hill above Gray's Lane. Visitors should not be confused by the pseudo-well made of stone on the left hand side. This is a misguided folly erected by Enterprise Ulster in the 1970s.

John Gray



U.V.F. training at Belfast Castle.

The Ulster Volunteers at Belfast Castle

The 9th Earl of Shaftesbury was active in Unionist politics and served as Lord Mayor of Belfast in 1907. Come the Home Rule crisis of 1912 - 1914 and his commitment to opposition was natural.

Thus it was that on 5 April 1914 he permitted the Ulster Volunteer Force to drill at Belfast Castle. It was a matter of full public knowledge and was even celebrated with the publication of a postcard.

In welcoming the U.V.F. Shaftesbury did no more than many other grandees and 'big house' owners of the time, but his position was more delicate than that of most of them. As Lord Lieutenant of both Antrim and Down he was an officer of the crown.

John Ward, Lib-Lab MP for Stoke-on-Trent, angrily raised this apparent conflict of interest during question time at the House of Commons on 22 April. The Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, replied evasively:

'I am not aware that Lord Shaftesbury has been present at various reviews and inspections of the Ulster Volunteers. I have seen statements in the press that Lord Shaftesbury lent a training ground at Belfast Castle to the Ulster Volunteers, and I am informed that on the 5th instant a number of these Volunteers entered Lord Shaftesbury's demesne, but the police did not enter the grounds, and there is no evidence that any illegal drilling took place.'

It was a splendid example of turning the blind eye but Shaftesbury's misbehaviour had taken place immediately after the Curragh mutiny of the previous month. The government had proved impotent then and may simply have wished to avoid another field of embarrassment, and thus Shaftesbury's status remained intact.

John Gray

gapwines
Fine Wines, Speciality Beers & Spirits

LOG ON NOW TO
WWW.GAPWINES.COM
TO REGISTER FOR OUR NEWSLETTER
AND DETAILS OF ALL OUR
UPCOMING EVENTS & TASTINGS

FOLLOW US NOW
ON FACEBOOK
& TWITTER @GAPWINES

642 ANTRIM ROAD,
BELFAST - 02890781453
75A BELFAST ROAD,
CARRICKFERGUS - 02893362734

EMAIL
PETER@GAPWINES.COM
CONALL@GAPWINES.COM
DAVE@GAPWINES.COM

Guided Walks in 2014 – Come And Join Us!

We will be running a series of guided walks on Cave Hill. Most of these walks will be from 1000 to 1300 on the third Saturday of each month. Participants should be equipped for inclement weather and wear suitable footwear. Children and young people under 16 must be accompanied by a suitable adult.

Most walks will have a theme where an expert will talk about a particular aspect of the Hill.

All walks are free.

For more information, contact us: Website: www.cavehillconservation.org
Email: cormachamill@cavehillconservation.org Phone: (028) 9029 1357

Day	Date	Times	Meet at	Theme	Legend
Saturday	21 June	1000 - 1300	Front door of Belfast Castle	Butterflies and Beasties	Catherine Bertrand, regional officer for Butterfly Conservation will lead us to identify butterflies and whatever other mini-beasts we find.
Saturday	19 July	1000 - 1300	Hightown Road Entrance to Park	General Features of the Hill	Get to know Ballyaghagan Nature Reserve with Cormac Hamill and see a different side to Cave Hill!
Saturday	16 Aug.	1000 - 1300	Front door of Belfast Castle	An Autumn Woods Experience	This will reveal a different range of useful plants, again led by Phil Simpson
Saturday	20 Sept.	1000 - 1300	Front door of Belfast Castle	The history of Cave Hill	Complete a walk with John Gray over the top of Cave Hill, become familiar with some of the path network and find out the history of the hill.
Saturday	18 Oct.	1000 - 1300	Carr's Glen entrance to Cave Hill Country Park on the Ballysillan Road (below Boys' Model School)	Industrial History	Henry Bell will lead this rummage around the industrial ruins hidden in Carr's Glen and explain their significance in the history of Belfast. This is a repeat of last year's popular walk.



CALLING ALL MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS!

If you are a member wishing to renew your membership for 2014, or a new member wishing to join, it's never been simpler! You can either join at our Annual

General Meeting or attach a cheque to the form below and 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.)

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

The Cave Hill Campaigner 16



Guided walk at Ballyaghagan Cairn

Printed by Copycats, 537 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 3BU
Web: www.printing-belfast.co.uk Tel: 028 9077 6547 Email: info@printing-belfast.co.uk