

# CAVE HILL CAMPAIGNER

Issue 27  
Summer 2024

# From the Chairman

I am thrilled to be writing once more the annual Chair's update for this year's Campaigner. Spring is a time of growth and new beginnings so I welcome this new beginning for our revamped magazine. I am proud of the hard work and dedication that our Conservation Campaign has delivered over 2023/24 with it being a busy year for us on Cave Hill. We organised 10 guided walks and 12 volunteer work parties on the hill as well as 11 monthly meetings of our board of directors in the Castle.

As part of our outreach programme I gave talks on Cave Hill to the congregation of St Peter's church on the Antrim Road and to the public in Chichester library: I also gave the local National Trust a talk in Belfast Castle on the Donegall family. We also participated with Belfast City Council (BCC) on European Heritage Day with our volunteers engaging with visitors, telling them about the Donegalls and showing them our work in the maze and herb garden.

We had a table at three public events: two events in Girdwood for senior citizens and Ballynature – an environmental fair held in Ballynure in South Antrim. To help our presentation at public events we created two pop-up banners highlighting our Cave Hill connection. We also continued our butterfly survey work, monitoring weekly the numbers on a particular route on the hill from April to October and reporting these numbers to Butterfly Conservation.

Our Facebook page is proving popular; it allows its members – all 4,300 of them – to post pictures and videos taken on Cave Hill. It also acts as an ongoing record of our own activities. Our webpage [www.cavehillconservation.org](http://www.cavehillconservation.org) is a repository of what we have produced over the last 34 years. All 26 issues of our magazine – The Cave Hill Campaigner – are there in electronic form as are details of all our 2024 events for the public.

Although maintenance will always be required at the restored maze, we reached a point this year where we felt that it should be opened to the public. Accordingly, BCC organised a formal opening in August by the Lord Mayor Ryan Murphy. In the autumn, we organised a geophysical survey of the maze in an effort to find the rest of the original 2002 maze mosaic which had been lifted and buried some years after its construction. Unearthing those remains is on our 2024 to-do list.



Cormac Hamill

Pg 1	From the Chairman
Pg 3	When the Cave Hill Chalk Formed
Pg 5	The official opening of the Maze and Herb Garden
Pg 8	Join us for an Organised Walk in 2024!
Pg 9	Cave Hill Kids
Pg 11	Boost Your Mental Health With Exercise
Pg 12	Volunteering is Fun!
Pg 13	Where are the Bats!
Pg 14	BallyNature Festival 2024
Pg 15	Ghost on Cave Hill
Pg 17	Mammystown, Daddystown and the Cave Hill Quarry, 1840-1896
Pg 19	Membership Form

Cover Photo by Martine Owens

We are very conscious that Cave Hill is part of the wider landscape of the Belfast Hills and we are keen to develop links across that range from Colin mountain in the west to Carnmoney. We do that by working along with, and as part of, the Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP). I am a director of that organisation and as such I can bring Cave Hill matters to that board and hear concerns expressed about other parts of the hills. That concern for linkage has produced a new activity this year from within BHP in partnership with the National Trust. We are calling it The Big Walk. Four times a year, three walks come together at Ligoniel; one down from Divis, one around Ligoniel and one from Cave Hill. Our contribution is to organise and guide the walk from Cave Hill. Our aspiration is that in the near future we will be able to link these walks into a continuous waymarked route across the Belfast Hills.

The Belfast Hills Partnership runs a Ranger scheme across the Hills and we are part of that. That involves reporting monthly on issues and concerns to the land managers, in our case to Belfast City Council. I have to say that issues raised in these reports are acknowledged promptly by officers of the Council and in many instances action is taken to address the concerns.

A growing issue across the hills is environmental crime. This can range from the horrors of badger

baiting to breaking fences and riding scramblers. BHP is developing a mechanism for recording these and we will be part of that. Luckily, Cave Hill suffers little, if at all, from wildlife crime but we do have a scambler problem. We have a prototype recording mechanism in place; anyone who witnesses or hears scramblers or any other form of environmental crime is encouraged to call the PSNI immediately but also to leave the details with us on: [ccc.incident.reporting@gmail.com](mailto:ccc.incident.reporting@gmail.com) We will then be able to feed our stats to BHP so that a wider picture can be made clear.

There have been personnel changes in 2023. I regret to record the death of one of our founder members Albert Dolan. He had been our treasurer for many years until failing health forced him to step down some years ago. Another long-serving member Eddie McCamley stepped down this year from his role as secretary but continues to serve on the board. And a new member Gerry Lynch has joined the board, bringing our board up to its maximum complement of 18.

I want to acknowledge and place on record our gratitude to all those who helped us in 2023. In particular our thanks are due to Belfast City Council who recognise us as a Friends of Cave Hill group (even though we have our own name!), provide us with a room in the Castle every month for our meetings and give us access to funds for recompensing those we bring in to lead our walks. Individuals within the Council, including the ground staff, the reception staff and staff located in BCC offices downtown have been invariably helpful and cooperative, friendly and proficient. We now have a cadre of regular volunteers who give freely of their time and energy once a month to carry out tasks within the maze, in the herb garden and in other locations throughout the estate and much thanks are due to them. And finally, there are our 18 trustee/directors; not only do they meet every month but they are heavily involved in our volunteering activities. They are a great team to have and I consider myself very lucky to be working with them.

Speciality coffee  
Artisan Bakes  
Brewing equipment



160 Cavehill Road  
[workscoffeeroasters.com](http://workscoffeeroasters.com)

## 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](http://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 and  
implant clinic

# WHEN THE CAVE HILL CHALK FORMED

*'In all things of nature there is something of the marvellous.'*

*Aristotle (384 - 322 B.C.)*

*by Patrick Gaffikin*

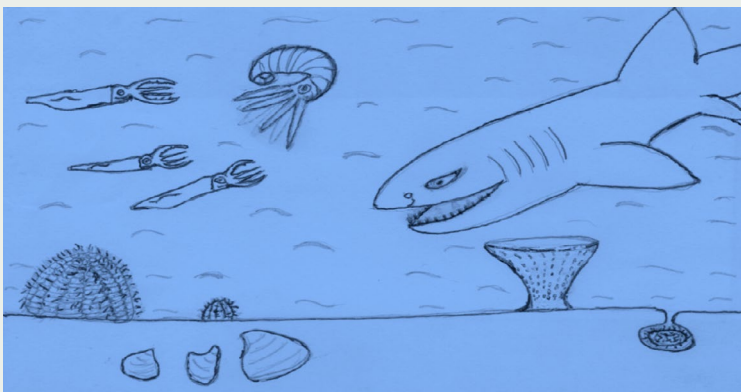
## The Cave Hill Chalk

Of all the different rock-types occurring in Ireland, chalk is the most recognisable. There are several places in the Cave Hill region where the rock-type chalk can be seen. It is a sedimentary rock composed of almost 100% pure calcium carbonate ( $\text{CaCO}_3$ ) and is characteristically bright white in colour although it can be darkened due to weathering and soiling. Officially known as the Ulster White Limestone, the chalk is around 80 million years old. That is, it formed in the Late Cretaceous. The Cretaceous geological period lasted from between 145 to 66 million years ago and, in fact, most of the Earth's chalk formed at this time. When the chalk of Cave Hill (and that of N.E. Ireland) formed, Ireland was covered by a warm sea and it is thought a layer of this sediment formed over all the island but, with the exception of a small exposure near Killarney, is now only present in the north east. This is probably because the chalk in the N.E. of Ireland is overlain by basalt, which was extruded over the chalk around 60 million years ago, and prevented erosion. Chalk is a type of limestone and, like all limestones, it formed under water. Because of the purity of the chalk, the sea in which it formed would have been free from sandy, muddy or silty sediment. When the chalk was forming, it would have been warmer than today; it is thought at this time there would have been little or no ice at the poles and, because of the higher temperatures, sea-levels world-wide were hundreds of metres higher than today.

## The Chalk Sea

Around 80 million years ago, photosynthetic microscopic algae, called coccolithophores, were abundant in this sea. (They evolved around 220 million years ago and still live in seas today.) Their abundance in the sea would have probably resulted in the sea having a milky appearance. When these algae died, they shed their calcareous shells, called coccoliths, which fell to the sea bed to form a soft, white, limy ooze; subsequently this was compressed by overlying pressure and eventually formed the rock we call chalk.

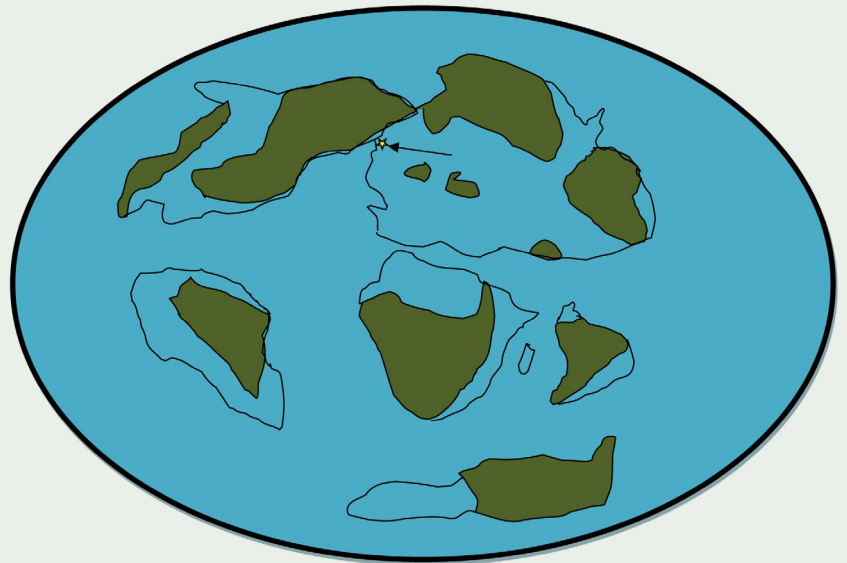
During the Late Cretaceous, Ireland was situated a bit south of its present position. At this time, as the diagram illustrates, a map of the world would have looked somewhat different than today.



*A drawing of the fauna in the Chalk Sea covering Ireland.*



*A sample of the Cave Hill Chalk*



*Diagrammatic representation of the Chalk Sea in the Cretaceous world-wide. (Blue = sea; Green = land.)*

*The star would indicate the approximate position of Ireland.*

## The fauna in the Chalk Sea covering Ireland

The sketch shows belemnites (cuttlefish-like marine molluscs), an ammonite (a nautilus-like mollusc), a shark, a large echinoid, a small echinoid, bivalves, a sponge and a burrowing echinoid in the Chalk Sea. How do we know these marine animals were present? The simple answer is that their fossils occur in the Ulster White Limestone. Although macrofossils are uncommon in the Cave Hill Chalk, fossils of belemnites (fossilised cuttlebones of cephalopods) and the other marine animals

mentioned have been found in the chalk elsewhere in County Antrim; some examples are illustrated here.

### Finally...

Rocks can't talk, but they can reveal a lot about the prevailing conditions when they formed. The Cave Hill Chalk is not an exception. For example, besides the points already alluded to, we can say, in this instance, because it lies below the basalt, it formed before the basalt and it, with the rest of the chalk in N.E. Ireland, offers us a window into the warm sea that covered Ireland millions of years ago – long, long before humans appeared on Earth.



*Fossils of sharks' teeth, which can turn up in the Co. Antrim Chalk. (The teeth of sharks are typically their only parts that are preserved.)*



*Left: Fossil of a belemnite. These are the most likely fossils to be found in the Co. Antrim Chalk. (Belemnites are now extinct.)*



*Fossil of a bivalve from the chalk in Co. Antrim. This type is now extinct.*

*Fossil of a sea urchin (echinoid) from the Co. Antrim Chalk. In life it would have been covered in spines for protection. This particular species is now extinct.*



**BEN** BAR & KITCHEN  
ESTD 2019  
**MADIGAN'S**

Your new local

FOR BOOKINGS AND ENQUIRIES CALL  
028 9692 2009

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

EMAIL  
info@benmadigansbar.com

WEB  
www.benmadigansbar.com

## TAX & PAYROLL BUREAU LIMITED

ACCOUNTS, PAYROLL & TAX RETURNS  
FOR ALL TYPES OF BUSINESS AND INDIVIDUALS

Located in BT15

07588480637 (text)

barry\_corr@hotmail.com

# The official opening of the Maze and Herb Garden

## by Ajay Mirakhur

The Maze and Herb Garden at Belfast Castle were officially opened by the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Ryan Murphy, on 22 August 2023. The opening was attended by representatives from Belfast City Council, Belfast Castle and Cave Hill Country Park, Directors and Members of the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign (CCC), and invited guests.

This event has been the culmination of two years of unwavering commitment and backbreaking work.

*"If you want a monument to Cave Hill Conservation Campaign and the wonderful people who worked on it, look around you"*

Cormac Hamill

In September 2021, work began on cutting back dense overgrowth of the 1,800 beech trees that originally constituted the Maze, but that had not been attended to for more than 20 years. This was followed within a few months by planting of more than 1,000 willow trees in between the beeches, accompanied by replacement of the fence posts, and planting of fruit trees (apple, pear, cherry and damson) within the Maze enclosure as an additional community resource. Similar to the Maze, the Herb Garden had suffered from a lack of maintenance, with particular overgrowth of the bay shrubs, until a determined team of volunteers set to cutting back overgrowth, weeding and planting with new herbs, pollinators and bulbs over the last year. To date, the Maze and the Herb Garden have been the most

successful of CCC's Millennium projects.

At the opening, both Cormac and Cllr Murphy paid tribute to the volunteers who had worked exhaustively on the restoration of the Maze and Herb Garden. Cormac highlighted the diverse and inclusive profile of the volunteer group, with men and women of all ages and backgrounds, children as young as 10, and members of our ethnic European and Indian communities: "With a totally unbiased eye (!), I think it's a great improvement here, because if you'd walked into here two years ago, the trees that you see here were huge." If you want a monument to Cave Hill Conservation Campaign and the wonderful people who worked on it, look around you."

The Lord Mayor commended CCC's work in promoting biodiversity, and thanked CCC on behalf of the Council. He described the Belfast Hills, including Cave Hill, as a "jewel of the city" and highlighted his own north Belfast roots. Unveiling the plaque on the main gate to officially open the Maze, Cllr Murphy said: "It's a shining example of that volunteerism that takes place within the city of Belfast. I was delighted to meet Cormac and speak to some of the volunteers within CCC. They were the real driving force behind this project today - they're the guardians, pretty much, of the

*"It's a shining example of that volunteerism that takes place within the city of Belfast"*

Cllr. Ryan Murphy

rest of Cave Hill Country Park, so it's fantastic to actually see some of their hard work bearing fruit today. It's one of those areas where we can encourage people to come out and take ownership of it, enjoy the outdoors, and get more attached with nature and everything that's around them, and also to try and encourage new visitors and tourists to come and enjoy this part of the city." Cormac described how a strong relationship with the Council has developed over the last 5-6 years, and highlighted Mark Turner's work as outreach manager in progressing the redevelopment of the Maze, contributing to CCC Board decision-making, and creating



The unveiled plaque at the entrance to the Maze

an effective two-way conduit between the Council and CCC. The Council do not always get a favourable press, so CCC feel it is especially important to acknowledge the Council's achievements in making this vision of the Maze a reality.

The Cave Hill Scouts had participated in the redevelopment work, for example, by clearing branches and picking up litter, both helping CCC and fulfilling some of the requirements of the John Muir Award. They graced us with their presence today, and had a chance to see the results of their lab

We welcomed Anne Crummey, a former pupil of Park Lodge Primary School whose design was chosen for the cat mosaic, together with her parents Sheila and Pádraig. Anne was one of a number of pupils from Cave Hill Primary, Ben Madigan and Park Lodge schools who were invited to submit drawings of the future mosaic



A younger Anne Crummey with the original mosaic

in a competition – ultimately it was her design that was picked.

Proceedings then moved to the Herb Garden where three of our Board members, Jawine, Ann and myself, took the Lord Mayor around the variety of herbs (marjoram, rosemary, thyme and sage, to name but a few) and bulbs (such as hyacinth and snowdrop) growing there. We explained about a recent project we had undertaken, which was the installation of information signs for each of the plants. The signs give the common and Latin names of the plants, their uses and mythological significance and were created from Bangor blue slates resting on short wooden stakes in the soil; the idea for them came from the herb section at Botanic Gardens. The slates are there to give visitors a taster of just how complex and interesting the world of plants is, to stimulate visitors' curiosity about plants and inspire them to go and find out more about them



Herb Garden in Winter

**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**

**FORTWILLIAM  
GARDEN CENTRE**

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

575 ANTRIM ROAD  
**TEL: 028 9077 1013**

and even consider growing some plants in their own gardens at home. Whilst it was flattering to hear that Cllr Murphy would consider using some of our herbs in his mojitos, we would probably not recommend it! Those of us looking after the Maze face a number of challenges, including protecting it and its surroundings from vandalism, and the problem of mud arising from ground damage by scramblers and electric bikes, compounded by heavy rain. Several years' worth of maintenance of the willows and beeches will be required too. The 'Herbies', as we have affectionately become known, also have a lot of work ahead of us (a point underscored by my breaking one of my own slates). But if there was a slight bizarreness in directors applauding each other as they arrived, it was because this was above all a day for cele-

bration, and for showcasing the hard work and ingenuity of this organisation. We were delighted by the number of people who came. It was a great social occasion and an opportunity to meet members' families and members we hadn't known were members. Even the weather gods were merciful to us for once, with the rain mostly staying away. People really appreciated the Lord Mayor's time and generosity and we were pleasantly surprised by his joining us at lunch. The food itself got top marks from some of the children (no mean feat there). On an emotional level, perhaps what we most took away from the day was a profound sense of validation of our efforts in redeveloping the Maze from the Lord Mayor and the Council as a whole, which will stay in our memories for years to come.



The Lord Mayor and CCC directors and members in the Herb Garden



## Castle Locksmiths & D.I.Y.

WE CAN SUPPLY AND PROGRAM REMOTES  
OR CAR KEYS FOR:



Audi



RENAULT



VAUXHALL



SEAT



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



# 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



## Join us for an Organised Walk in 2024!

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
20 April	Sat	10:00-13:00	<b>The Rocks of the Cave Hill.</b> Kirstin Lemon is an enthusiast for her geology profession and she will delight in explaining the geological origins of Cave Hill on this walk over the hill. Meet at the Castle. Grade M
18 May	Sat	05:00-07:30	<b>Dawn Chorus.</b> Aaron Kelly, an enthusiastic naturalist with a particular love for the Black Mountain, will lead a dander around the Park to hear and identify birds. Specially designed for early risers! Meet at the gates to the Park at the top of Innisfayle Park. Grade E
25 May	Sat	10:00-13:00	<b>The Birds of Cave Hill.</b> Get up close to some of our native birds. Licensed bird ringer Aidan Crean will catch, ring and release them and allow us to see them in beautiful detail. Meet at the Castle. Grade E.
15 June	Sat	10:00-13:00	<b>Botany Walk.</b> Ballyaghagan, at Judy Meharg, an officer of the Belfast Hills Partnership, will walk us through and show us its wonderful variety. Meet at the car park off the Upper Hightown Road. Grade M
22 June	Sat	03:30-06:30	<b>Solstice Walk.</b> Greet the sun at dawn on a summer solstice morning before most of Belfast has stirred. Meet at the Castle. Grade M.
20 July	Sat	10:00-13:00	<b>A Bug Bonanza.</b> 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.
17 August	Sat	10:00-13:00	<b>Forage on Cave Hill.</b> Phil Simpson has a fund of practical knowledge and plant lore. We'll walk in his company see what useful plants we can find. Meet at the Castle. Grade M.
6 Sept.	Sat	20:30-22:30	<b>Bats of Cave Hill.</b> Aidan Crean will introduce us to these enchanting nocturnal animals during an evening dander. Meet at the Castle. Grade E.
28 Sept	Sat	10:00-13:00	<b>Fungal Foray.</b> 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
19 Oct	Sat	10:00-13:00	<b>The Archaeology of Cave Hill.</b> 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.

### 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.

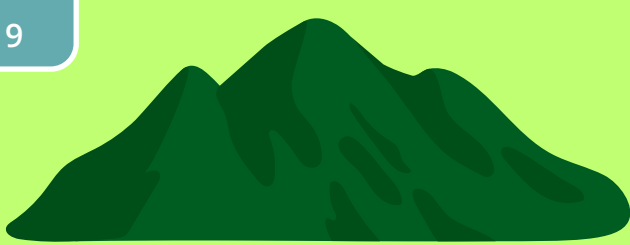
It is very important for your own safety and that of the

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](http://www.cavehillconservation.org)
- Facebook page for Cave Hill Conservation Campaign
- [cormachamill47@gmail.com](mailto:cormachamill47@gmail.com)



# CAVE HILL KIDS

Welcome to our first Cave Hill Kids' page!



## What we do

Here at Cave Hill Conservation we want to preserve the Hill for the future and we need your help to do this!

We meet twice every month at the Maze and the Herb Garden. We also do litter picking and help removing weeds to keep the Hill tidy.



## Can you be a Cave Hill Kid?

If you are over age 12 and would like to come along with an accompanying adult to help with our conservation work we would love to see you!



Every month on the second Saturday we gather at the Maze and Herb Garden. Why not join us?

## CAMPAIGNER UPDATE

The magazine is printed once a year in the Spring. Already we are seeing signs of new life on the Hill and in our own gardens.

Days are getting longer, the weather is improving, plants are beginning to grow again after Winter and you can hear the singing of the birds.

At Ballynature in February we handed out free sunflower seeds to the kids who came along. We also let them make their own bird feeders with pine cones, fat and bird seeds.



# CAVE HILL CREATIONS

Here are some step by step instructions for you to make your own bird feeder!

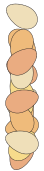
## What you will need:



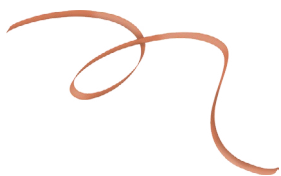
Pine cone



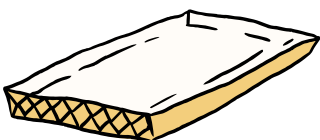
Lard



Bird Seed



String



Tray x 2

## Instructions

Tie a long length of string around your pine cone so that it can be attached to a tree branch

Soften your lard into a tray

Spread the bird seed into your second tray (there should be enough to cover the pine cone later)

Roll your pine cone in the tray of lard until the cone is fully covered

Dip the covered cone into the bird seed tray

Now you have your own natural bird feeder which you can hang in your garden to watch the birds feed!

## DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that Cave Hill is one of eight Belfast Hills along with Carnmoney, Squires Hill, Wolf Hill, Divis Mountain, Black Mountain, Colin and Slievenacloy?

## Boost Your Mental Health With Exercise

*by Gerry Lynch*

We are all aware that exercise is good for our physical health but equally important are the many benefits of physical activity for our mental health.

Exercise in general is associated with better mood, better sleep, and improved quality of life. Aerobic exercise, including jogging, cycling, walking and gardening is particularly beneficial. These improvements are thought to be caused by exercise induced increase in blood circulation to the brain, influence on the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis and, thus on the physiological reactivity to stress.

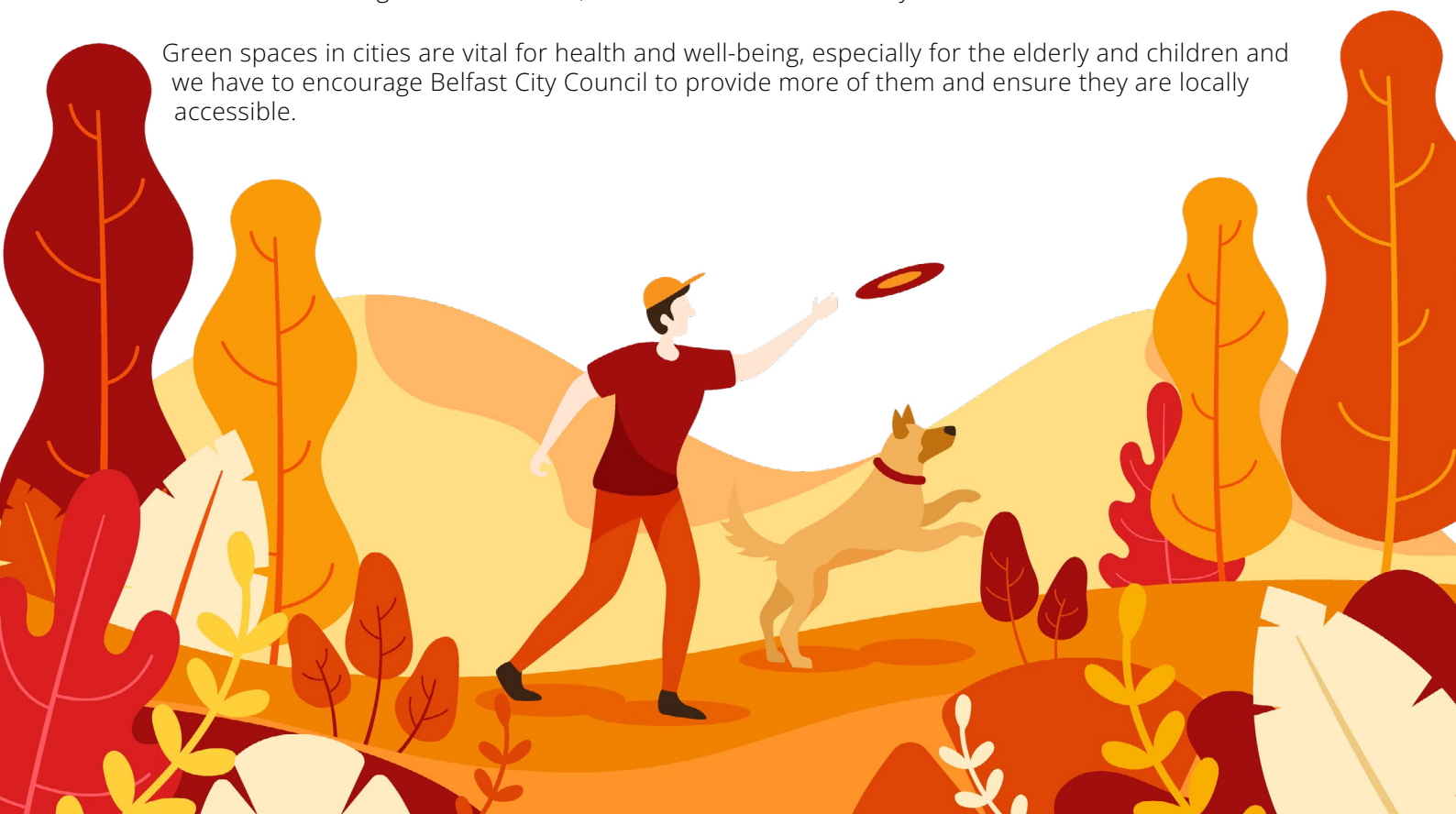
All exercise is good for you but, interestingly, outdoor exercise is more beneficial for mental health than indoor exercise. Two recent research studies have shown:

- Physical activity is extremely beneficial for improving symptoms of anxiety, depression and distress, as effective as counselling or medication in some cases.
- That students randomly assigned to walking outside felt more positive and calmer than those walking inside
- That physical activity done as a group activity has a greater effect than engaging in physical activity alone

It's time to change how we view physical activity - not seeing it as something we must do, but as something we like to do and because we value its positive benefits for our physical and mental health.

We are truly blessed to have access to Cave Hill Country Park and other green spaces here in North Belfast. We will only do physical activity regularly and consistently if we enjoy it, and what could be more enjoyable than exercising in the beautiful surroundings of the Cave Hill, even better if it's with family or friends?

Green spaces in cities are vital for health and well-being, especially for the elderly and children and we have to encourage Belfast City Council to provide more of them and ensure they are locally accessible.



# FORTWILLIAM

## GOLF 1891 CLUB

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

VERY REASONABLE OFFERS AVAILABLE

EMAIL: [OFFICE@FORTWILLIAMGC.CO.UK](mailto:OFFICE@FORTWILLIAMGC.CO.UK)

TEL: **02890 370770**  
(BETWEEN 10AM AND 1PM)

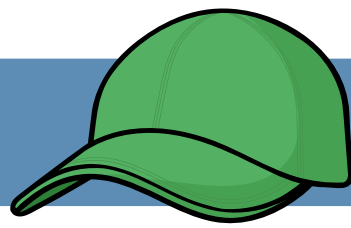


*"Green spaces are important to mental health. Having access to green spaces can reduce health inequality's, improved well-being, and aid in treatment of mental illness. Some analysis suggests that physical activity in a natural environment can help remedy mild depression and reduce physiological stress indicators."*

World Health Organisation

# Volunteering is Fun!

by Ann Marrion



Over the past two years cave Hill conservation campaign has organised regular volunteering work parties. These take place on the second Saturday each month from 10 am to 1 pm. There are always jobs to be done on the hill and for environmental improvement. We've done Tree Planting, litter picking, clearing of invasive species and much more.

Our large ongoing projects are the restoration of the Maze and the maintenance of the herb garden at Belfast Castle. So each month groups of dedicated people meet up at the castle or the maze side.

It has been great fun to meet other people who care for their surroundings and are willing to spend a few hours in the outdoors in all sorts of weather.

You don't need to come every time or stay for the full three hours. Some enjoy, the heavy work and some the more detailed lighter tasks. All enjoy seeing the progress over the months, nature never fails to reward. Teamwork has developed there are jobs for folk of all ages and ability levels.

Maybe just as important is the social interaction and new friendships which have developed. The coffee break with home-made cakes are often as important as the sledge-hammering and branch sloping. Some volunteers have purchased and wear the trendy Cave hill CC clobber with that signature bottle green colour. This not essential and your presence is more valuable than what you wear!

At first we thought November, December January February would not be viable or practical, but the volunteers kept coming and the work party last over all the year.

So if you have a few spare hours come along on the second Saturday of the month. You will enjoy and help nature, your community and yourself!!

*"In 1 million years. I didn't think that I'd find myself volunteering at Cave hill. But life is funny that way in the last few years I've made great friendships which led to me joining the campaign. I can honestly say that I feel very proud and grateful to be working alongside such a great bunch of people and also a great sense of achievement for all the work. We've done so far".*

Martine Owens



**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

**CAVEHILL CHIROPODY** 

166 Cavehill Road

**Mr D Muise**

D.Pod.M., M.C.Pod., Hcpc  
Health Professions Council Registered

Special Rates for Pensioners

**Tel: 028 9039 1411**

## Where are the Bats!

by Ann Marrion

In September 2023, as dusk was falling we had our 8th annual Bat walk in the grounds of Belfast Castle and surroundings. There were over 40 people, including 10 enthusiastic children. Debbie Nelson and Aidan Crean were the leaders. Both volunteer for the British Trust for ornithology and they're very experienced & familiar with the bats on the Cave Hill. They brought electronic bat detectors. These can be set to a frequency particular to each type of Bat. We were hoping to find some Pipistrelle and Leisler bats, the most common bats on the hill.

We learned there are 9 bats species in Ireland. 8 found in the North.

The children asked all sorts of great questions. Bumblebee bats are the smallest bats at 1inch long and weighing only 2grams!! and Flying Fox are the biggest with a wingspan of up to 5 feet. Bats are mammals. Baby bats are called pups and drink milk. Bat body temperature is approx 40° degrees and their heart beats a thousand times a minute when flying and hunting. Bats eat over 3 thousand insects each night. They are very important in the balance of nature. All bat species are highly protected under the Main wildlife Order as they are an endangered species.

The main 'predators' of Bats in N.I. would be cats and sadly humans who can disturb and destroy habitats or block them into building during renovation work.

They sleep by day and feed by night . Bats hang upside down by their feet in trees, caves and old buildings so that if a predator attacks they can fall off quickly & fly away. The bats have favoured places to stay called roosts. More than six bats is called a swarm.

Bats get a bad press, probably because they are creatures of the night. But they do not cause harm to humans and may do good for control of insects. Aidan told us

about a local woman who has 500 bats in her roof space and copes well with them! He told us that the female bat will go out scouting for food and then come back to the roost to communicate if the feeding is good or not. She communicates using clicks. Bats use echolocation to get about in the dark. They can fly great distances.

By Halloween if the temperature drops below 6° on three consecutive nights, the bats hibernate for the winter.

To prepare for this, they need to almost double their weight from about 9 g to 15 g. At this time they will also find the resident male to mate. When they waken up in March they're very hungry and all the females are pregnant. They have one pup each and take the pup with them when feeding.

Cave Hill Conservation Campaign erected 10 bat boxes near the castle. They look like bird boxes with no holes but they have a small gap at the bottom for the bats to enter. Alas the bats have not started to use the boxes that we could see.

On the bat walk, we picked up the sounds of the bats, but didn't see very many. It was very exciting when their bat detectors started to click furiously and when we caught sight of bats. We also heard one male bat calling to the females! Someone told us there are loads of bats to see in the car park at the zoo. Someone else had a recording of bats in her garden - clicking audibly.

Debbie and Aidan pointed out that there is a global decline in insect numbers and this has affected the population of bats. They thought, maybe if we had a wet land somewhere in the Castle grounds we could get more bats. Something to think of for the future maybe?

All in all, it was a very enjoyable and informative Bat walk. And we look forward to the next one.



Pipistrellus pipistrellus



A bat box on the Cave Hill

WWW.DIRTYCARSWANTED.COM

**DCW**

DIRTY CARS WANTED

Full Range of Valeting Services available

**028 9078 1380**

22 Glanleam Drive, Belfast, BT15 3FW

# BallyNature Festival 2024

## Ballynature Day

Saturday 24 February 2024  
Ballynure Presbyterian Church Halls



February saw another colourful gathering of visitors to the increasingly popular nature and conservation gathering sponsored by the Ballynure and District Community Association. Families, friends, and nature enthusiasts gathered to enjoy the range of exhibitions, displays and environment-based activity groups spread across the grounds of Ballynure Presbyterian Church. This is one of Northern Ireland's biggest nature events.

Bee-keeping, wood-turning, face-painting, and story-telling shared the floor space alongside hands-on environmental science activities. There was lots to discover. Over thirty colourful stands and displays

### *Our nature and conservation event*

drew visitors into a network of information about native flora, wildlife, birds and insects. For those keen on deepening their awareness of ecology there were authoritative talks on bird-song, invasive species, and the threat from wildlife crime.

The Cave Hill Conservation Campaign's stand featured practical guides to making bird-feeders. Seeds, plant pots and compost were available to those who, after a long dark winter, wanted to brighten up their gardens and balconies with sunflowers and geraniums. Our volunteer group engaged in animated discussion with those keen to know about the importance of Cave Hill in the history, geography and ecology of the area.

As before, behind the welcoming atmosphere of the BallyNature Festival, there was a more sombre awareness. Many of those present would have been aware of the recent United Nations assessment that more than 20% of the Earth's

migratory species under protection are threatened with extinction. Many of the ecosystems to which they migrate and live temporarily are not adequately protected. And our homeland is not immune to these dangers. Britain and Ireland are the two most nature depleted countries in Europe. Not far from Ballynure, Lough Neagh, which provides 40% of Belfast's water supply, is in danger of becoming an ecological disaster. If, in addition to providing a stimulating nature experience for all age groups, this festival reminds of the threats to the natural world, it will have served a wider purpose.



## Ghost on Cave Hill by Martin Donaldson



Of all the many stories which have been recounted concerning Cave Hill, perhaps one of the most strange is that which emerged at the beginning of the last century claiming that a ghostly apparition had been witnessed on the Hill.

In 1913 the local Belfast police force received numerous calls from individuals which all had the same pattern.

People reported that in the area below the Castle, in the thickest part of the forest, a man's voice was heard, lamenting and wailing. Some individuals who believed that this may be a call for help from a person in distress, followed the call, only to find that when they got near to the scene where the crying was loudest, the wailing abruptly ceased.

In spite of numerous searches in the area by the police, nothing was ever found and the mystery remained. Reports were still made to the police station to the Chichester Road Barracks, but by now, the police believed this was a crank, a practical joker, trying to scare individuals.

However, in 1915, a young couple, curious concerning the rumours, went to the area and were terrified by the sight of a man hovering in mid-air, amongst the branches. Apparently, they didn't stop running until they had reached the safety of the Antrim Road, both covered in scratches and scrapes from the undergrowth. Naturally, this gave rise to a plethora of amateur ghost hunters and the police had great difficulty in managing the crowds who thronged the Hill as a result of this encounter.

The next reported sighting was in September 1920 when two boys, who had been out on the Hill late in the evening, saw someone amongst the trees. They did not investigate but told the caretaker of the Castle who searched the area with his lamp but saw nobody. On his return towards the Castle, he noticed a man looking into the woods, and believing that he was a poacher, he ran towards him. However, when he got near, he realised that the man was floating about 2 feet off the ground

Belfast

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

**Weddings  
Conferences  
Restaurant  
Fine dining**

**Antrim Road, Belfast**  
Tel: 028 9077 6925





and in horror, he dropped his lamp and ran quickly back to the Castle.

Over the next few years further reports of ghostly visions were made with various accounts of sightings describing a dark clothed man who disappeared when approached. Some dog walkers described how their pets became agitated and frightened in that area. However, no logical explanation emerged.

This curious account took an interesting turn in the spring of 1922 when two men came upon a skull amongst the brambles on the path and, having initiated a police investigation, a full skeleton was discovered with remnants of clothing and personal effects.

Around one month later, on 13th April, a lady, Mrs Scott, came to Chichester Road Police Barracks and the long mystery was solved. She had recognised, from the description of the personal effects, reported in the newspapers, that the skeleton which had been discovered, was in fact, her husband who had disappeared some nine years previously. An inquest concluded that the unfortunate individual had taken his own life as there was an empty medicine bottle and cup alongside the remains.

# NORTHFIT

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

## PRIVATE PERSONAL TRAINING STUDIO

*GET IN TOUCH TODAY TO GET STARTED*

**MOUNT LENNOX BUILDING  
683 ANTRIM ROAD  
07703 557796**



**SPAR** 

**CAVEHILL**

**325 Cavehill Road, Belfast, BT15 5EY**

*Now with Post Office in store!*

**Tel: 028 9039 1500**



**fresh "garbage"**

Specialists in:

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

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

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

24 Rosemary Street, Belfast

**Tel: 028 9024 2350**

# Mammystown, Daddystown and the Cave Hill Quarry, 1840-1896

by Daniel McCall

Industrialisation, in the form of the rapid growth of the mill village at Ligoneil and the opening of the Cave Hill quarry and railway, brought significant change to north Belfast. The 1841 census listed 24 houses in the townland of Ballyaghagan; that almost doubled to 46 in the census of 1851. The population also almost doubled, from 122 in 1841 to 220 in 1851.

About 1841, two rows of quarry workers' cottages, now known as Daddystown and Mammystown, were constructed in Ballyaghagan close to the western end of the quarry: Daddystown with seven cottages, Mammystown with six. The cottages are not listed in the Irish census for 1841 but are listed in 1851. At about the same time, a third group of 16 workers' cottages was built where the present Cavehill Road meets the Ballysillan Road. Misinformation about all of these cottages exists on the internet; a current entry claims wrongly that Mammystown and Daddystown were two rows of houses on either side of the railway track that took limestone from the quarry to Belfast harbour.

How and when the Mammystown and Daddystown acquired their current names is unknown. "Daddystown" by Sam Moore, published by the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign in 2020, offers an account of life in Daddystown from the early 1930s to 1961. Sam Moore noted that "Mammystown ... consisted of only a few cottages. They were also inhabited at the same time as those at Daddystown were in use." This is partly correct but the six cottages at Mammystown were abandoned as early as 1867, some 20 years after construction.



Ballyaghagan, OS 6/1/56/2: by permission of the Deputy Keeper of the Records, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Surveyed 1833, revised 1857. The terraced cottages built for the quarry workers, and now known as Daddystown and Mammystown, are shown to the left: Daddystown (orange arrow) and Mammystown (blue arrow). The Cave Hill quarry is shown in the centre. A track leads from the quarry to Daddystown.

An online search of local newspaper archives from 1840 to 1900 failed to produce any reference to Daddystown or to Mammystown, nor are they named in the online catalogue of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

In 1861, Griffith's Land Valuation listed the lead tenant in each of the occupied cottages. Two of the seven Daddystown cottages were then unoccupied and remained so until at least 1867. The lead tenants in the other five were James Townsley, Woods Murray (who died in 1867), William Chambers, Richard Murray and Thomas Russell. Five of the six Mammystown cottages were listed as unoccupied in 1861.

A detailed picture of Mammystown and Daddystown can be found in the Griffith's Revision Books that chart occupancy changes from 1861 to the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Revision Book for 1867-1879 listed all six cottages at Mammystown as "dilapidated". A hand-written entry in the margin

provided additional detail: "Doors and windows taken out, house uninhabitable altho' walls and roof still standing." The return for 1880-1886 described the Mammystown site as "Waste".

There is evidence to suggest that, in the forty or so years after construction, Daddystown may have had a different name. Griffith's Valuation for 1861 shows that a Thomas Russell rented two adjoining cottages at Daddystown. Thomas was born about 1823 and died in 1902; his death is listed in the General Record Office (GRO) in Dublin. In an 1888 entry, he is listed as a "Foreman quarry labourer". He was the father of Mary Agnes Russell, a mill worker, born in February 1858 or February 1861. In October 1879, Mary Agnes married James Convery at St Mark's, Ballysillan and listed her "place of residence" as "Cave Hill Row". Cave Hill Row may have been the original name for Daddystown.

Tenancies at Daddystown remained stable until 1867 but the Revision Book entries for 1867 to 1879 record a more transient population: the Russell and Murray families were the only continuing tenants. The male residents almost certainly worked at the Cave Hill quarry but – in the absence of census data – only four are identifiable in GRO listings.

Thomas Russell, who rented cottage g at Daddystown from 1861 to the late 1860s,



The site of Mammystown (left) and Daddystown (right), July 2023.

before switching to cottage f, was the son of George Russell, a farmer, who, from at least 1827, rented a 13 acre holding at upper Ballyaghagan. Thomas, the "Foreman quarry labourer", also rented a 5 acre field immediately adjacent to Daddystown. His brother, Robert, who for a time also rented at Daddystown, was listed in GRO returns as a "stone quarry man" though he seems to have abandoned that work about 1873 when he joined his elderly father in the running of the family farm. Francis Hydes, also from a farming family in Ballyaghagan, is listed in a GRO record in 1866 as a "quarry worker". He rented one of the Daddystown cottages from at least 1887 until his death in 1904. Richard Murray rented cottage f from 1861 to about 1870. Richard, a widower, married Mary Heanny on 29 November 1870; his marriage registration described him as an "overseer of quarrymen."

Work at the limestone quarry on the Cave Hill began in September 1840 and ceased in February 1896. The investors included a solicitor John Wallace and the Marquis of Donegall, in whose estate the quarry lay. Their risks were mainly financial as were their potential gains. Those who laboured in the quarry and on its railway also ran risks, essentially of life and limb, in return for wages that were not generous. Initially, the business prospered: on 30 May 1849, the Newry Examiner and County Louth Advertiser reported that " ... for two years ... at least 3000 tons of limestone were raised and sold from the Marquis of Donegall's quarry in the Cave-hill most of it to be burned and used for agricultural purposes."

Quarrying was a dangerous occupation prior to the



Daddystown: a photograph probably taken in the 1930s. Three of the seven cottages were destroyed in a fire on 2 May 1961; all were abandoned soon afterwards. By 2023, apart from a few sections of stonework, nature has wholly reclaimed the site. Thomas Russell rented cottages 3f and 3g, the final two on the right. He rented cottage 3g prior to 1861 and 3f from the early 1870s. He may have amalgamated both to provide greater living space for his family.

Photograph: copyright of Cave Hill Conservation Campaign, 2020.

# PHOTOGRAPY CONTEST

#CaveHillCompetition



Can you be our next cover star?

Three themes:

- Landscape
- Animal
- Plant

To register your entry simply email: [CaveHillCompetition@outlook.com](mailto:CaveHillCompetition@outlook.com) with your contact details

1st Prize : Your photo used on our cover of the CaveHill Campaigner

Other winners will be featured in the magazine.

Also calling all young photographers! Send in your photos for a chance to be published in our CaveHill Kids article!

Entry Deadline  
31st August 2024

From an old poem written in the year 1822:

*An amphitheatre more grand,  
Graces no part of Europe's land -  
Where Neptune's elbow intervenes  
To help the variegated scenes.  
And over all the Hill of Caves,  
With what a bold majestic pride  
As if it heaven and earth defied,  
The Fort looks o'er the space between,  
To hills of yellow, red and green,  
Even to old Scotia's craggy hills,  
Chequered with sheep, cascades and rills,  
To Carrick strongly fortified,  
Defying French, and wind and tide,  
And to Slieve Donard's airy height,  
Which bounds the wearying southern height,  
-Like Nature's beautified demesne -  
Those waving hills - that chequered plain,-  
Thanks to thy stars, thou Queen of Towns,  
Confirmed success thy labour crowns.*

This poem came from a book printed in 1913 called "The Story of Belfast and its Surroundings", written by Mary Lowry



Cave Hill Limestone Quarry, operational 1840-1896, photographed July 2023. A tramline/railway carried limestone from the quarry to Belfast docks close to the junction of the present Limestone Road and York Street. The rising ground to the right is made up of spoil from the quarry workface.

introduction of regulatory legislation in 1894. In the following decade, some 1150 quarry workers were killed (most by rock falls) and over 12,000 were seriously injured. Casualty rates were almost always higher than for mining.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, limestone was used for a wide range of purposes including plaster, whitewash, fertiliser, roadstone and ships' ballast. The work was conducted with little or no mechanical assistance other than the use of steam-engines to help move the largest rocks. Horses and carts were also used extensively and, at the Cave Hill quarry, a railway line was constructed to carry the stone to Belfast docks. Work on the rock face involved heavy labour. Working in all weathers to split and move rock, the men lacked protective equipment and wore jackets, waistcoats, caps, heavy moleskin/ corduroy trousers and iron-shod clogs. Their tools included sledge hammers, picks, crowbars and chisels. Explosives were used to dislodge rock faces but the workmen also split large

sections of rock using only wedges, crowbars and sledge hammers. Quarrymen were vulnerable to silicosis, an often fatal lung condition caused by the inhalation of silica dust. Pay, often calculated at piece-work rates, was poor.

Initially, the quarry was known by different names. An advertisement for two salesmen and an apprentice, placed by the "Overseer of the Quarries" in the Belfast Newsletter on 27 January 1846, named it as "The Ballyaghagan and Deer Park Quarry". In the Belfast Morning News of 31 March 1860, it was listed as "The Cavehill Limestone Works".

Evidence of an economic downturn at the quarry came in 1879 with a workers' strike following a reduction in wages. On 8 July 1881, the Belfast Newsletter noted that output was in decline. James Turner, reappointed in September 1875 as manager of the "Cave-Hill Quarry Railroad", noted that the workforce had "shipped something like 80,000 tons of limestone a year but they have not done that lately." A decline in trade from 1883 and growing losses brought the company under additional economic pressure. Quarrying ceased in February 1896. The final limestone was taken in June 1896 to the docks in the waggons of the Belfast and Cavehill Railway Company. The quarry and railway experienced frequent accidents; from opening day in 1840, local newspapers reported a succession of accidents, at least 21 of which were fatal.



## CALLING ALL MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS!

If you are a member wishing to renew your membership for 2024, or a new member wishing to join, you can email [membershipccc@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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: ..... Martine Owens & Martin Donaldson

Please visit our website at:

[www.cavehillconservation.org](http://www.cavehillconservation.org)

Facebook Page: 'Cave Hill Conservation'

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

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