



View from near McArts Fort

Cave Hill and Ballyaghagan

START: BELFAST ZOO CAR PARK OFF THE ANTRIM ROAD

FINISH: SAME AS START

DISTANCE: ABOUT 8KM/5 MILES

TYPE OF WALK: SOME QUITE ROUGH TRACKS, STEEP SECTIONS AND OPEN MOORLAND, BOOTS ADVISED.

CAR: PARK IN BELFAST ZOO CARPARK

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: METRO BUS 1 B/C/D STOP NEAR ZOO

This is a longer and a bit more adventurous walk than the Lower Cave Hill one although it can still be completed in about three hours. The start is the car park at Belfast Zoo and from there you follow the track round to the right of the zoo wall at the two information boards. Climb up the stone steps into the hazel woods, turning right at the top, up a few more steps and along a rough path with sort of big stone cobbles, mostly covered with soil now. The path becomes muddier as it winds

upwards, passing an oddly placed (there's no view!) carved wooden bench as it bends left. There has been a fair bit of work done here to clear invasive tree species leaving more room for the old long established hazels which, in the past, local people may have coppiced to provide fencing and firewood. There are plenty of wildflowers scattered through the woods; in the spring watch out especially for bluebells, delicate white wood anemones, primroses, ramsons, with their strong garlicky smell, and



Spring bluebells by the path

lesser celandine. Later in the year you often find nuts from the hazels on the path, dropped by the squirrels – grey ones unfortunately – or birds.

It's best to watch your step as you carry on past a slope with evergreen trees growing as there are some holes on the right of the path which used to be badger setts.. The path continues zigzagging uphill, climbing some more