

# BLACK MOUNTAIN

**EXCLUSIVE**

# MYSTERY UNEARTHED

**ROBIN  
LIVINGSTONE**

Conservationists planning a booklet on the Black Mountain have stumbled upon a long-forgotten tale of a sinister triple murder which may have given the mountain's famous Hatchet field its name. And now Dermott Hill's genial Green, Terry Enright, is appealing for more information about the brutal slayings which rocked the burgeoning Belfast of 1753.

"The Falls Community Council hope to publish a pamphlet in the New Year which will trace the history of the Belfast hills and examine the latter-day desecration of the mountain by the digging of quarries.

"During research we came across a news item from the News Letter of 1753 which reported the murder on the Black Mountain of William Cole, his daughter Elizabeth and family friend or servant, Mary Maguire. The trio were hacked to death with an axe by an unknown attacker who then set their cottage 'near Whiterock' - the large cliff face above the Mountain Loney - on fire. According to the report, neighbours rushed to the family's aid but arrived too late to save their lives. A Coroner's Inquest two days later ruled that the three were the victim of robbers but rumours persisted that a jealous boyfriend of Mary Maguire was responsible for the outrage."

Terry added: "Though the son of William Cole put up a reward for information leading to the arrest of the killer no more was heard about the culprit." However, the new book will bring together the different strands of the mystery in a bid to cast new light on the spine-chilling incident. "We have carried out a series of interviews with families whose ancestors lived on the Mountain and we think their comments on the Cole murders will provide interesting reading."

Meanwhile this week, the Newhill Community Centre-based Black Mountain Environmental Group, organised a mass bulb planting along the bottom of the Mountain Loney. Children from local schools laid tulip, crocus and daffodil bulbs which - vandals permitting - will bring a splash of colour to the top of



■ Mountain man Terry Enright (centre) leads his youthful band of volunteers in a mass plant-in.

The 'plant-in' is part of the group's plan to create a community garden at the bottom of the Black Mountain.

Also this week the Black Mountain Action Group

- set up to oppose quarrying on the hill - have announced their next meeting will take place on Thursday 8 November at 7.30pm in the Work West complex on the Glen Road