



Exciting new developments are planned for the Venchie playground at Hailesland Place.

Chairperson of the Wester Hailes Adventure, **Annette Lillig** told us "We hope to have a new toddlers play area finished in the near future and we are patiently waiting for a hut to house playworkers and to provide a

base for the kids when it is raining."

The latest plans are by no means the last in an incredible play development which has spanned nearly six years. Originally disgruntled parents upset at the lack of play facilities in Wester Hailes clubbed together and began building "the Venchie" out of old rubble.

Despite being knocked down on numerous occasions the adventure playground began to take shape and proved to be extremely popular with children.

Children like these type of play areas better than the more regimented type of swing park because they can use their imagination on the structures.

"These type of adventure playgrounds are in fact far safer than the other kind because they are supervised all the time," points out Annette.

If these playgrounds did not exist children because they are naturally inquisitive and adventurous would be playing somewhere else which could be extremely dangerous.

"Children are always going to be bumped or bruised no matter where they are," maintains Annette.

The regular playworkers get to know the kids well and vice versa which creates a type of family atmosphere on the playground. Together they plan out activities. Recently a questionnaire was organised to find out what everyone would like to do or try. From that fishing trips are now being organised for those interested. Already they have organised four weekend trips to Dunsyre and they have spent a holiday week in Dunbar.

"The building of the Workshop extension has af-

ected the playground badly. It is difficult to marry the interests of workmen and bureaucrats together with those of the children," says Annette.

She goes on: "Now the extension work has nearly finished and with a toddlers area coming, the playground will hopefully continue to flourish."

The Committee is looking for people, especially parents, to become involved in the organising committee.

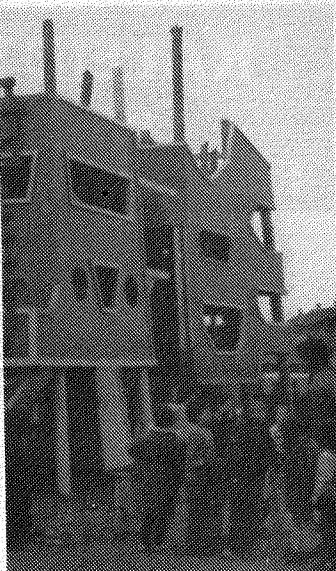
"We are looking for anyone who likes to level with kids and is willing to help out a little."

"You can't always sit in the house and say nothing is done," says Annette who has three children, aged 6, 5 and 1.

"With a toddlers and play area, people like me don't have to get stuck in the house. It gives you a feeling of security because of the safe environment and supervision," points out Annette.

UNDER-16 COMMITTEE

The Venchie has an under-16 committee who came up with ideas for things to do and they also help organise many events. We spoke to committee members **Lorraine Watson** and **Michelle Johnston**, both from Murrayburn Place, who have been on the committee since it started.



"If we want to go camping we sit down and discuss it before putting it forward as an idea, and then we help organise it," Lorraine told us.

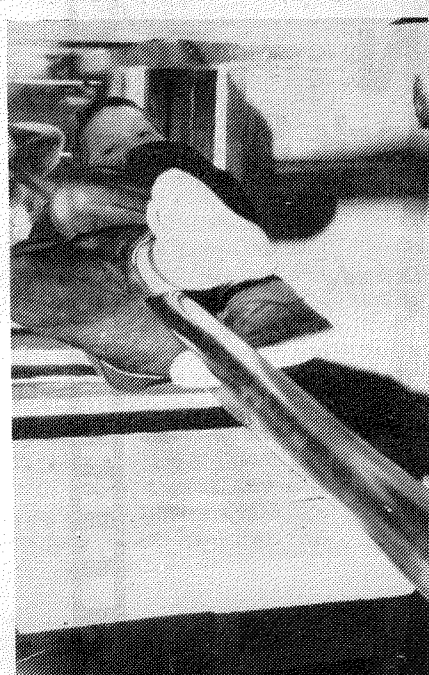
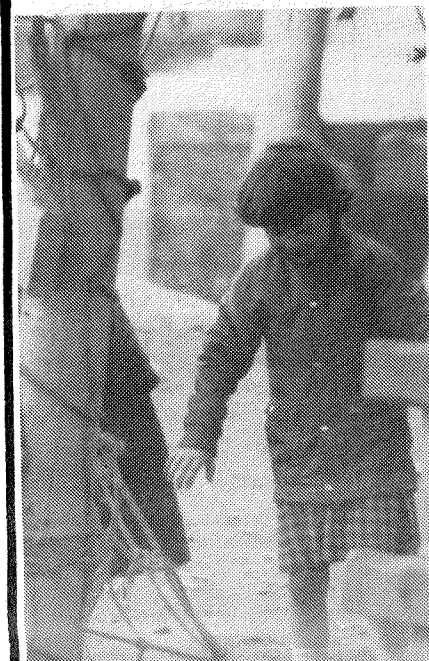
Committee members are voted on by the rest of the children at the Venchie and they become a kind of kids' representative for the playground.

Michelle said: "It is really good because it gives us something to do and its better than sitting at home."

The committee has been instrumental in starting up disco and video evenings for children. They help out at school holiday playschemes for the under 12's and organise swimming outings.

The committee is already firmly established and their varied ideas and careful organisation bode well for the future.

**Pictures by
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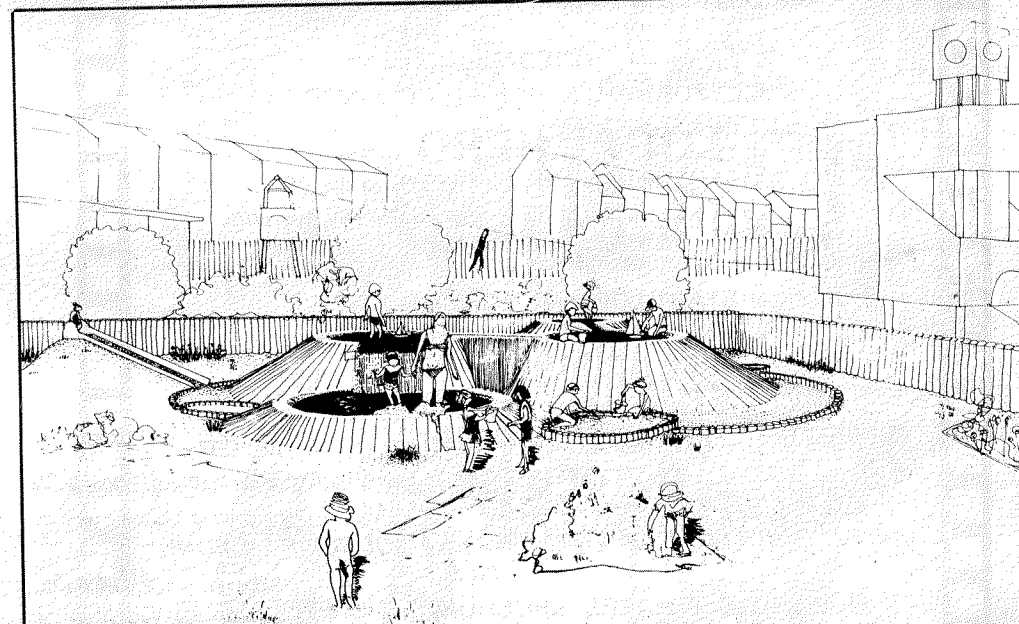


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An artist's impression of the finished toddlers play area.

ARTIST'S IMPRESSION