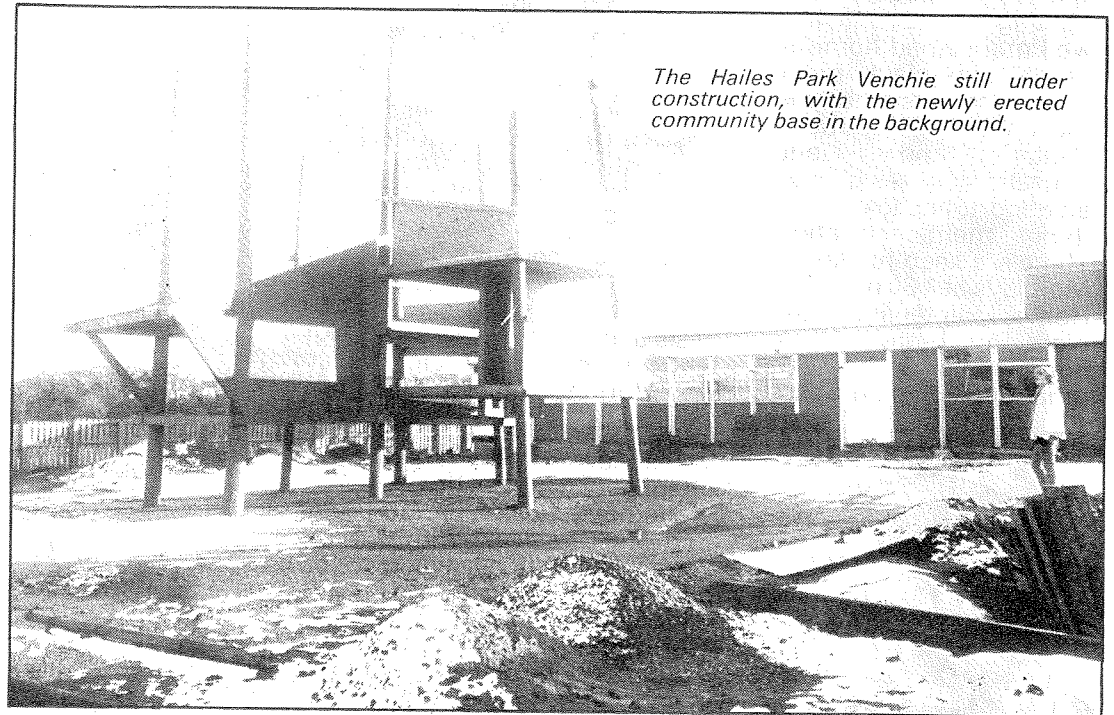


HAILES PARK ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

Permission to use the land at the top of Hailes Quarry next to the Cleansing Department Depot in Dumbryden, to erect a neighbourhood centre and build a playground, was obtained from the Recreation and Leisure Department of Lothian Regional Council. Work started on the new site at the beginning of August, the first job being to mark out and erect a stout palisade fence, thus defining the area of the new playground. The bright green fence was what first made local children, adults and passersby aware that changes were taking place. A 40 foot container provided ideal storage for tools and materials for a while, but then unfortunately had to go. Holes were dug for 6 telegraph poles, which soon dominated the skyline and the air was full of the sound of sawing and hammering as the team started to construct floors and platforms on different levels to join the poles together.

During the fine weather of late August, September and October there was much activity and enthusiasm from local children for the new playground, and no instances of deliberate systematic vandalism. The foundations of the hut were set out, the concrete poured and some local bricklayers called in to complete the foundation. Once this was done, it was felt that the site needed a watchman, and a rather dilapidated hut was acquired which has since served as a watchman's hut, workers toolstore, and children's bothie in the evenings.

The majority of the team, under a new supervisor, moved down to Sighthill to start dismantling the temporary classrooms unit at Murrayburn Primary School. The dismantling work went ahead swiftly during the middle and latter part of October. Meanwhile back at the



The Hailes Park Venchie still under construction, with the newly erected community base in the background.

playground site, excitement among the children was mounting as Bonfire night approached, and on two weekends, trips were arranged to Dreghorn Ranges at the foot of the Pentlands to collect wood for a Bonfire. This very busy time culminated on November 5th, when the hut was finally started in its sections on the site, and a very successful bonfire party and firework display was organised by the management committee and the STEP Workers, with well over 100 local people attending.

During the last month, the bad cold weather and the realisation that erecting a hut is harder than dismantling one have caused progress to be slow. Now, however, despite being blown down by the wind, the walls are going up fast, the roof should be on by Christmas, and after that there will be much finishing work, plumbing, draining, wiring etc. to be done.

A patch of previously derelict ground has gradually come alive with people, and plans and play. Even now in the middle of winter, a group of children

regularly use the playground and the watchman's caravan as their meeting place. It has become an important part of their lives, and they have given much of their time and effort to the slow renovation of the caravan.

When the T.U. hut is up there will be increased scope for various social activities. The spring and summer of 1981 should see a great expansion of activity both on the site and with the increased use of the hut as a social base and activities such as hiking, camping, canoeing, sailing

and outings of all sorts for all ages can be arranged. What is badly needed now is for local residents, parents of children (who are the playground people), who have seen it take shape over the last few months, to come forward and involve themselves in deciding what uses to make of the new resource that has come into being. It is after all, your neighbourhood centre, and belongs to no one else. Those interested should contact the Community Workshop, 5b Hailesland Place.

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