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OPEN SESAME

FEARS MOUNT FOR PUBLIC SAFETY



HAILES QUARRY CRACKS UP!

By Mandy Rhodes

Huge 40 foot craters are appearing overnight in Wester Hailes. And fears for safety are mounting. Edinburgh District Council are using radar equipment to investigate the mysterious appear-

ance of rapidly widening holes in the ground of Hailes Quarry Park. Mark Lazarowicz, local councillor said: "I am very concerned and I am asking the Recreation Department to regard the public safety as first priority."

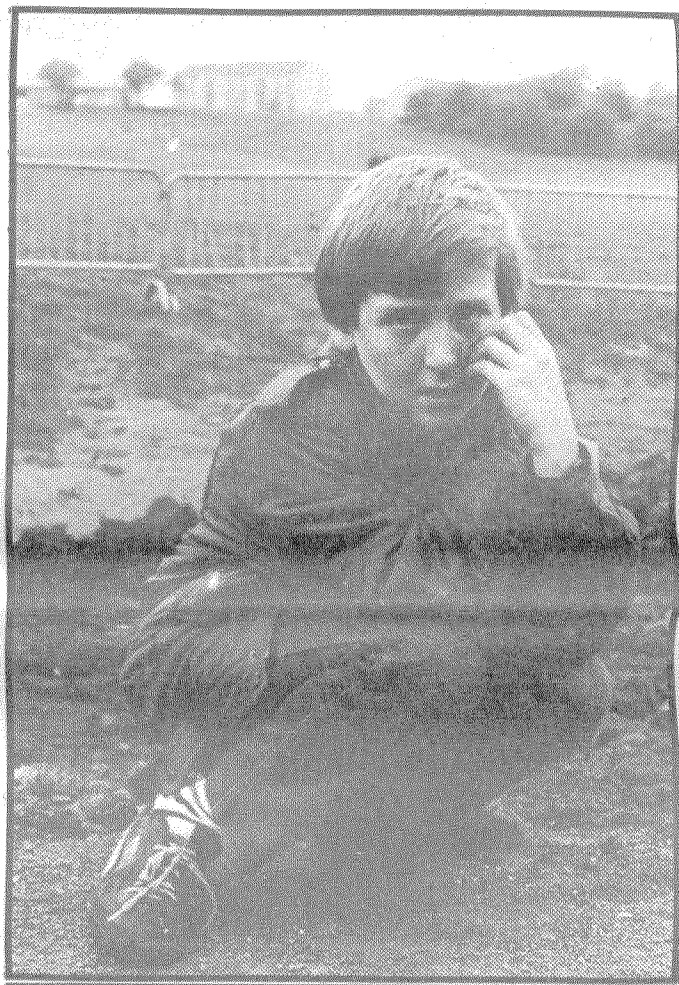
A crevice appeared overnight during the Easter weekend and Mr Angus McBean, Assistant Director of Recreation said: "The void appeared on the Sunday of the holiday weekend at 6.30am and we were there first thing putting up barriers."

Barriers surrounding the worst affected area came too late for Kenneth Beattie (11), 81 Dumbyden Gardens who fell down the mysterious hole on the previous Friday. He said: "If my pal had not been there to pull me out I may have been stuck for ages."

Kenneth had been unwittingly walking home when he fell down the hole which he said had not been there the previous day. Mrs Beattie, Kenneth's mother said: "It's disgusting, someone could be seriously injured", adding: "By now the council have had ample time to get it fixed, it's terribly dangerous."

All current recreation work has been forced to a standstill at the Park until all the 'safety checks' have been completed. Mr Robertson, a representative of the firm Caledonian Geotechnics, the company carrying out the checks said: "The Park is definitely not safe in the immediate future and the council will undoubtedly cordon off the specific areas."

Local youngsters play next to the gaping hole.



Kenneth Beattie (11) from Dumbyden fell into the hole.

The Park is situated on the land reclaimed from the site of the old quarry which is believed to be 200-300 feet in depth. The Park, previously used as a refuse tip, has been progressively reclaimed to be used as a recreation park with plans for a sports centre and BMX track; a beneficial resource for a community sadly lacking in such provisions. "This is the last straw in the council's efforts to make the Park into a pleasant and safe area", said Angus McBean.

It is estimated that over £ half million has already been spent on the Park in efforts to make the land usable. £ quarter million was spent by the SDA and a local MSC scheme involving local people. Recreation workers at the site told the 'Sentinel': "There's all kinds of perishable rubbish dumped here which makes subsidence of this kind inevitable. Voids of some sort will always appear and there's already rumours of another two or three." They added: "Anyone walking in the Park is in danger of falling down a hole of perhaps 40 foot."

The cracks that appear overnight widen at an alarming rate.

In a small 'Sentinel' experiment an existing crack tripled in width within the space of 24 hours and representatives of the Recreation Department who have been carrying out surveys on the land said: "We have been monitoring a hole for the past 3 weeks and it has grown about a metre in that period."

Recommendations drawn up by the department suggest that: "...in the event of daily inspections and levelling revealing continued movement, to ask the public to keep either to the path or to use other parts of the Park."

In view of the dangers and mystery surrounding the appearance of the craters Henry Kinloch, councillor for Longstone said: "I am very concerned due to the possible dangers to the public, especially children. I have asked officials who are also worried to investigate. They should take whatever action is needed to fix the Park."

