

# NEW PARK BUILT FROM OLD TIP

Report on the progress at Hailes Quarry

What can you do with an old refuse tip? Not very much, you may say, but an ambitious scheme to turn an old tip at the Hailes Quarry into a park with recreational facilities is well on its way to completion.

In the nineteenth century, sandstone from the area was quarried for the building of the New Town. 15 years ago it came into the hands of the District Council and it was used for dumping domestic and building refuse. In 1977 a £3m plan was hatched to turn the area into a sports and recreation area with changing rooms and pitches but this died due to lack of funds.

However, Councillor Petherick, the local councillor for Longstone, was convinced something could be worked out. Together with the Planning and

Architectural departments of the District Council they applied to the Scottish Development Agency for a reclamation scheme.

The S.D.A. agreed to finance the scheme in a three phase development. The first phase which was carried out by contract labour made the whole area safe by some tipping, earth work, adjusting levels and draining the area to a decent standard. Because the foundations were the remains of a rubbish tip the area was probe to subsidence.

For the second and third phases Wester Hailes Com-



Upgrading the towpaths beside the Canal make excellent walkways.

munity Enterprises began work on the site on 29 November 1981. Wester Hailes Community Enterprises was funded by the Manpower Services Commission under the Community Enterprise Programme which was set up by the Government to provide work opportunities for the long-term unemployed.

Councillor Petherick told us: "Not only was the project providing a park for the area but it was giving much needed work to local unemployed youngsters from the Wester Hailes and Longstone area."

The second phase involved building a footpath system, building towpaths beside the Canal, some tree planting, setting out benches and toddlers play structures, putting up fences and general landscape.

Work on this phase is well on schedule.

Jim Johnstone, the senior supervisor, for Wester Hailes Community Enterprises at the Quarry site told us: "We estimate that ¾ of the 6,000 metres of path laying is already done and when we finish we will move on to tree planting."



Miles of footpath have already been laid.

Enterprises successfully applied for this programme and in January 1983 three squads of approximately 40 workers (30% full-time, 70% part-time) started work in the Quarry. The Quarry Project was one of the first schemes to take up places under the new Community Programme in the whole of the country.

"We are well ahead with phase two at the moment," said Jim Johnstone.

Phase three plans include provision for swings, log type seats, informal or mini football pitches and further tree planting.

Councillor Petherick who is also chairman of the Recreation Committee on

the District Council said: "Although there will be an official opening, the park will never be regarded as finished, people will always have new ideas and put forward different things to do."

Everyone in the area will benefit from the public park which otherwise would have been a worthless eyesore.

Upgrading old refuse tips for recreational facilities is part of the District Council's overall policy for Edinburgh. Other projects include a walkway for the Water of Leith, facilities for Leith Docks and upgrading footpaths in the Hermitage.

Last year the Manpower Services Commission under instructions from the Government ended the Community Enterprises Programme and replaced it with the Community Programme which put more emphasis on part-time work. Wester Hailes Community



A view of the park from the Canal towards Longstone.



Stepping into the future — pathways are built and the new park begins to take shape.

## KNOW YOUR WRIGHTS

This month we focus our attention on the money problems of young Billy Wright and Diana Dunn — members of those two well-known (though imaginary) family clans. Having "lived in sin" together for some considerable time, they decided to get married a couple of years ago when they were offered a council house in Wester Hailes.

One of the first things they had to do, of course, was to get the flat furnished. They didn't have any savings but both Billy and Diana were working, so it seemed that the obvious thing to do was to get what they needed on credit. Many a happy evening they spent poring over

glossy mail-order catalogues...

"Oh darling, isn't that divine!" said Diana, putting on her posh lady-like accent. "That burgundy pouffe with the gold fringe and the embroidered butterflies would be simply exquisite with the turquoise deep-pile carpet and the velvety suite on move-easy castors. And...oh! I must have that — look Billy — a real mahogany coffee table with tough scratch-resistant finish and magazine-rack feature. And Billy, you know that micro-wave cooker — the deposit was only £9.95!"...

In fact, they resisted the temptation to be extravagant and they were managing quite well to keep up the payments on the items they'd bought. But then things changed dramatically. First of all, Diana became pregnant and had to give up her part-time job, then Billy was made redundant. Suddenly, they

found they had barely enough money to live on, and they began to fall down on their commitments.

One year after their marriage Diana was in hospital having her first baby and Billy was unemployed. Their suite had been repossessed and Billy had just received a recorded delivery letter, which he discovered to be a summons to court. He decided he had to get some help. So he collected together all the letters and other material he could find about his debts, then went down to the local Citizens Advice Bureau.

The CAB worker who saw Billy quickly found out that he had a total of six separate debts; three catalogue debts, a debt to a club, a red bill for his electricity, and rent arrears. He checked that Billy was getting his full income, then discussed what could be done about the debts.

"The golden rule is to negotiate with whoever you owe money to. If you explain your difficulty to the creditor, you may convince him that his best chance of recovering his money is to accept payment by small, regular instalments."

Putting this into practice, the CAB worker dealt with each of the debts in turn. The summons to court was for a catalogue debt of £60, which Billy had been told he had to pay off at £10 per week. The CAB worker phoned the creditor and managed to get an assurance that £3 per week would be acceptable in the circumstances. (Billy then made this offer on Form Q — attached to the summons — and sensibly went to the court hearing to make sure it was accepted.) Instalments were also arranged for the other debts, for example £1 per week towards his

rent arrears of £82, and the SSEB agreed to accept payment of his red bill spread over 52 weeks along with an estimated weekly account.

All this meant that Billy and Diana (like many people) had to live well below the official poverty line, but it could have been worse — if they hadn't paid their debts they could have had their belongings valued (pounded) and sold (warrant sale). (If a debtor is employed, nearly half his wages could be arrested.) It was a struggle for Billy and Diana, but one by one the debts were cleared, and when Diana got her old job back things became easier for them.

If you have a similar problem, be like Billy and visit the Citizens Advice Bureau. But don't wait till things get out of hand — come along this week. Our opening times on page 16.

CAN YOU  
WRITE?

CAN YOU  
DRAW?

CAN YOU  
TAKE  
PHOTOS?

IF YOU CAN  
THE SENTINEL  
WANTS YOU.

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WORDS OR  
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