

squatters take over

Playspace
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By Howard Hannah

FOR THE KIDS in the Tolmers Square area there'll be plenty to do during the Easter schoolbreak. They've a play-space to construct and it's the first one they've ever had.

Because at the weekend, the Tolmers community got tired of waiting, and acted. They took over a site at the corner of Drummond Street and Coburg Street and now they're going to make it into a long needed play-space for the kids and a community garden where the 'old folk can sit. The site, which has been vacant since the war, except for a few years when it housed temporary huts for contractors, is owned by Connolly's (Blackley) Ltd., — a Manchester firm.

In property terms, it's a valuable site — slap in the middle of one of London's biggest redevelopment areas. But in their terms, the community believe it is an even more valuable site. So on Saturday afternoon, members of the Tolmers Village Association moved in with shovels, wood and paint. As one group hammered in the stakes and nailed up a fence, another group fol-

lowed closely behind with the white paint. "What are you doing?" asked a passer-by. "We're making a play-space and garden," replied a man with a shovel. "If you've a spare one I'll give you a hand," said the passer by. Some thirty or forty locals worked into the late evening and finally the site was cleared of rubbish and fenced off. Meanwhile, from Manchester no word from the owners. Early last month, the Tolmers Village Association wrote to them asking if it could be used as temporary gardens and kid's play-space. On Saturday, they got sick of waiting.