

CENTRAL AREA NEWS 9

SALFORD CENTRAL

Salford Central Church celebrated its Centenary in October and is looking towards the future as it becomes part of a major international charity, Oasis UK.

Oasis was founded in 1985 by Steve Chalke MBE, with the vision to build a hospital, hostel and school. It is now a significant voluntary sector provider, delivering educational, health and housing services. Members past and present joined with local residents for the celebrations. All weekend the church building, one of Salford's major landmarks, hosted an exhibition of memorabilia, from photo's of the first church members, to videos of the Boys' Brigade parades and costumes from annual community festivals.

The church was established as Salford Central Mission. It not only thrived but played a key role at the heart of the local community. In 1937 alone, more than 1000 local people received treatment through its on-site medical facilities whilst more than 1500 benefited from the free legal support it offered. With a five-a-side football pitch, a gym, and a range of other facilities and events on site, it served as a true community hub.

Now, at the start of a second century, under Oasis leadership in partnership with the U R C, the journey towards recapturing the church's role at the hub of the community has begun. This was marked by the opening of the new 'shop front', including what will be known as the Hub Café and a drop-in centre as well as office space.

Rev. Mark Greer, who has recently been appointed by Oasis as church leader, works alongside other team members including Jessie his wife, Brian Leitch and Rev Janet Sutton, who is the U R C minister.

"It was great to see reunions of people who hadn't seen each other for more than 50 years," said church leader Mark. "It was a wonderful opportunity to gather together a crowd, the likes of which hasn't been seen at Salford Central for many years, to celebrate the past and look forward to the future. It was a fantastic weekend, during which we made lots of good contacts with members of the wider community."

Patricroft In September this year Jeff Pearce, a member of Patricroft, embarked on a motorcycle trip from Eccles to Southern France. The purpose being to cross the highest highway suspension bridge in the world – **The Millau Bridge**. Jeff set off from church and travelled to Rotterdam and onwards to Paris. From there it was a straight run southwards to Millau. The trip was just over 2000 miles and Jeff managed to raise over £1100 towards Francis House Children's Hospice in Manchester. Jeff visited them to hand over the money and was moved and inspired by the work they do to help families of children whose lives will be short. Jeff said he found the journey a bit lonely and with difficult weather conditions a bit hazardous, but, on visiting Francis House he understood why he did it.

Hollinwood U.R.C. / Beulah Baptist In November eight of the congregation became Church Members and a further five became Baptist Church Members by believers baptism.

The receipt of a SRB6 Grant has allowed work to be done on the roof, to the heating system and in the ladies toilets. Some flooring work will be done during the Christmas holiday.

As usual the church will be sending 1,500 Christmas cards to those living around the church, the theme this year being 'Jesus light of the world for every generation' the card carrying a photo of 2 families with 3 generations in the church at present.

Radcliffe U.R.C. The Church drama group will perform the pantomime 'Aladdin', at the Civic Hall, Radcliffe early in the New Year. Watch out for dates!

Macedonia Failsworth still seeking a Guide Leader. If there is a redundant Leader somewhere or a Leader who wishes to reintroduce Guiding to Macedonia she will be made most welcome. Please apply to Church Sec. M. Akin 0161 683 6452.

Trinity Audenshaw The old Red Hall church has now gone and at the time of writing the steel work for the new building is rising high above the builders site screens. Exciting times!

Hyde United Church
Rev. Robert Edwards was inducted as minister on 24th November. This is the first time in 50 years the church has had a minister to itself, previously being part of a joint pastorate. We all send our best wishes as this busy town centre church enters a new phase in its history.

Central Area News We are sending 6 representatives from our Area to Fury Assembly. James Wickens (Albion) is this year's Fury Chairman.

Our new Moderator Richard has been travelling around the areas visiting the churches and meeting our people. Reports coming in say he was warmly received and the visits were well appreciated.