**Liverpool’s iconic Strawberry Field to officially dedicate its new bandstand**

The Salvation Army’s iconic Strawberry Field attraction in Liverpool is to publicly thank benefactor and music icon, Cliff Cooper, in a dedication ceremony to officially mark its opening attended by Commissioners Anthony and Gill Cotterill, Territorial Leaders of The Salvation Army.

Strawberry Field’s eye-catching bandstand is a striking new addition to the south Liverpool visitor attraction, shaped as a giant bass drum inspired by The Beatles’ iconic album cover, ‘Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band’, and referencing The Salvation Army and its marching bands. The bandstand’s floor is covered by a circular mosaic inspired by the ‘Imagine’ mosaic in Central Park’s Strawberry Fields in New York, with its interior walls decorated by a large mural by renowned pop artist, James Wilkinson, depicting the legacy and importance of The Salvation Army’s work, John Lennon and the legendary song, ‘Strawberry Fields Forever.’

The Strawberry Field Bandstand was built thanks to the generosity of Cliff Cooper, CEO and founder of Orange Amps, who is an honorary patron of Strawberry Field. As is common with a dedication ceremony, the event will see Strawberry Field recognise Cliff’s importance to the visitor attraction. Cliff founded Orange Amps in 1968, and its range of bright orange guitar amps marked a revolution in guitar amplifier design and sound technology, endorsed by music legends such as Fleetwood Mac, Stevie Wonder, Led Zeppelin and Iron Maiden.

At the dedication on September 2, Cliff will be joined by Commissioners Anthony and Gill Cotterill, Territorial Leaders of The Salvation Army, and the Liverpool Walton Salvation Army Band for a special celebration. The Liverpool Walton band have a long history of playing at Strawberry Field and used to perform at The Salvation Army children’s home garden parties in the days when John Lennon visited the grounds.

**Major Kathleen Versfeld, Mission Director at Strawberry Field, said:**

"Thanks to Cliff and his generous donation, live music in the Strawberry Field gardens - the place where John Lennon once sought sanctuary and experienced one of his earliest musical moments hearing The Salvation Army band play - has been taken to a whole new level, on a bandstand that is like no other in the world. This is a new platform for emerging talent to shine and established artists to support our good work, building on both the legacy of John Lennon and The Salvation Army at this special place.”

**Cliff Cooper, CEO of Orange Amps and honorary patron of Strawberry Field, said:**

“As a patron, I thought of ideas of how I could help, and how building a bandstand would bring music back to Strawberry Field - the place where John had some of his first musical experiences. It took three years to build and already the bandstand is bringing much joy to visitors of all ages.

“I look forward to seeing the continuance of John Lennon’s legacy, promoting peace and love in the world, an ethos which also reflects the selfless dedication of The Salvation Army, whose people devote their lives to helping others who are in need and less fortunate than ourselves.”

**Commissioner Anthony Cotterill, Territorial Commander of The Salvation Army in the UK and Ireland, said:**

“Many people will think of a Salvation Army dedication service as a way to give thanks to God for the birth of a new baby. This dedication is about giving thanks to God for the generosity of our Strawberry Field patron, Cliff Cooper, who gave birth to the idea of the bandstand, and has managed the project to create what is now a unique visitor attraction.

“We ask that God blesses all who have contributed to the Bandstand, the visitors old and new who will enjoy this new addition to Strawberry Field, and our staff who tirelessly work to help young people with significant barriers to employment to find and stay in work.”

Strawberry Field is a visitor attraction in Liverpool, located at the iconic site immortalised by John Lennon in The Beatles' hit, ‘Strawberry Fields Forever’. Telling the story of The Salvation Army’s children home which opened here in 1936 and the connection to John Lennon's childhood, as well as the writing and recording of the iconic song, the attraction is home to an interactive visitor exhibition which includes the actual ‘Imagine piano’, the original red gates, and the peaceful gardens where John played, climbed trees and dreamed as a child.

For more information about Strawberry Field, visit the [**website**](https://www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com), and on social media - [**Twitter**](https://twitter.com/strawberryfield)**,** [**Facebook**](https://www.facebook.com/StrawberryFieldLiverpool/)and [**Instagram**](https://www.instagram.com/strawberryfieldliverpooluk/?hl=en).

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[**Image bank**](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1na0PBr4AHSi5Fb-iybgrTOqyT6dtGFI2?usp=sharing)

**Editors notes**

**Strawberry Field**

Strawberry Field is an award winning new visitor attraction located in Woolton, south Liverpool, located at the iconic site immortalised by John Lennon in The Beatles' hit, ‘Strawberry Fields Forever’.

Strawberry Field was purchased by The Salvation Army in 1934. The organisation opened the site as a children’s home in 1936 and for nearly 70 years the site supported some of Liverpool’s most vulnerable children until it closed in 2005.

Telling the story of John Lennon's childhood and the writing and recording of the iconic song ‘Strawberry Fields Forever’, the Strawberry Field attraction is home to an interactive visitor exhibition which includes the original ‘Imagine’ piano, the original red gates, and the magical gardens where John played, climbed trees and dreamed as a child.

Through archival footage, photographs, timelines and specialist media guides, visitors to Strawberry Field can experience where John Lennon played and what happened behind the famous red gates.

Profits from the visitor experience and commercial operations go towards keeping the gates open for the good of the local community; and to help fund Steps at Strawberry Field, a series of programmes aimed at those with learning difficulties or other barriers to employment.

**Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army is an international Christian church and registered charity which has been transforming lives for more than 150 years. Working in 132 countries worldwide, The Salvation Army offers friendship, practical help and support for people at all levels of need. In the UK and Republic of Ireland this work includes more than 750 community churches and social centres. Registered Charity Nos. 214779, 215174 and in Scotland SC009359, SC037691. For more information visit the website [www.salvationarmy.org.uk](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/)

A young John Lennon lived nearby and played in the grounds, eventually inspiring him to write the song Strawberry Fields Forever.