**Press Release**

**Unique Mike McCartney photographs go on display at Strawberry Field, Liverpool**

Strawberry Field Liverpool is excited to announce the opening of Mike McCartney’s photographic journey of the Strawberry Field redevelopment, ahead of his book launch later this year.

Known professionally as Mike McGear, Mike is an outstanding performing artist and rock photographer who was a member of the groups The Scaffold and Grimms.

Mike was persuaded by Lady Judy Martin to chronicle the redevelopment of Strawberry Field. This is his story:

"I was asked by the Salvation Army...well mainly by Lady Judy Martin OBE actually (or Jude as I affectionately call her) to record the demolition of the old Strawberry Field homes and the rebuild of a brand new facility on the same site. At first I was reticent, as it was my brother's group that made the Strawberry Field song famous...not my Scaffold comedy group, but when I discovered the amazing work that the Sally Army (as I affectionately call them) quietly get on with, I agreed to undertake the 2 to 3 year task! The trouble was how do you make the bashing down of old houses and the building of a new bricks & mortar one interesting to the public?! Well...here's a start ! with this mini-exhibition of images to whet your appetite...hope you(s) enjoy! and hope u enjoy the Cafe, and the  Shop...AND the gorge gardens with the original Red Gates! ps if you see a lone Scouser roaming round the grounds in a mask...it's not the Lone Ranger, or Donald Trump...it's ME! Don't 4get to say hello!”

said Mike \*McGear McCartney BEM

Kathleen Versfeld, Mission Director at Strawberry Field said:

“We are blessed to have the support of such wonderful people as Lady Martin and Mike McCartney. I know our visitors will be delighted to see Mike’s photographs. We can’t wait for the full collection to be made available in his planned book.”

A special exhibition featuring some of Mike’s photographs will go on display in the Strawberry Field visitor exhibition. The exhibition covers the interwoven stories of the Salvation Army, the children’s home, John Lennon’s childhood and the writing of Strawberry Fields Forever. The addition of the Mike McCartney photographs will offer a unique opportunity to visitors, with a never before seen insight into the redevelopment of the current site.

As a special offer to celebrate the re-opening, Strawberry Field’s visitor experience is priced at £7.00 per person until the end of September and under 16s accompanied by an adult go free. NHS workers and a guest can also visit free of charge. Visitors will be guided around the stunning interactive exhibition where “Nothing is Real” using interactive media guides. The tour continues into the magical gardens where John played as a child, allowing visitors the opportunity to explore, unwind and dream in the place, which inspired one of the 20th century’s greatest songwriters.

All funds generated by the visitor experience go towards funding a Steps to Work programme for young people with learning difficulties and other barriers to employment.

To ensure safety during this time of Covid, visits to Strawberry Field must be booked in advance on [www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com](http://www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com)

**-ENDS-**

Editor’s Notes:

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Salvation Army is an international Christian church and registered charity, which has been transforming lives for more than 150 years. Working in 131 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

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Location - Beaconsfield Rd, Woolton, Liverpool L25 6EJ

FACT SHEET

Visiting Strawberry Field

* The centre is a welcome addition to Beatles tourism in the city, with responsible tourism at its heart. It is home to a brand new visitor experience, complete with visitor exhibition, café, shop and gardens, as well as a Steps to Work programme, which aims to help young adults with learning difficulties and other barriers to employment into work.
* Tickets to the visitor exhibition must be booked in advance and are currently on sale at a reduced price. More details available at www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com
* The site is a short walk away from John Lennon’s childhood home in Menlove Avenue where he lived with this Aunt Mimi.
* Strawberry Field is open and accessible to everyone, thanks to its Changing Places toilet facilities please see our recent release: <http://www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com/news>

Visiting during Covid-19

* Strawberry Field is running a special offer through August and September, all tickets must be booked in advance online <https://www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com/tickets>
* Visitor Experience Adult entry is just £7.00 at this time
* Under 16’s go FREE with paying adult
* Free admission with ID for NHS worker and guest – Strawberry Field is participating in Britain Unites – A nationwide initiative to thank our NHS, from the UK travel & tourism industry <https://www.britainunites.co.uk>
* Imagine More Café\* is part of the Eat Out to Help Out scheme on Tuesdays/Wednesdays through August
* The popular Imagine More Café at Strawberry Field is open but with a difference. Tables must be booked in advance by calling 07407088968.

Health and Safety

* We’re GOOD TO GO - Strawberry Field has been awarded Visit England & Visit Britain’s industry wide health & safety standard for visitors known as “GoodToGo”
* Visitors must book ahead to enable the team to control capacity across the exhibition, garden and shop.
* Social distancing of 2m must be adhered to on site. The site is currently operating limited visitor numbers.
* Temperature checks are being conducted upon entry.
* In line with the current UK government guidelines regarding wearing of masks, all visitors to our exhibition and retail store are kindly asked to wear a face covering in these areas.
* Media guides are disinfected before each use and touchscreen bags and disposable ear covers are available.
* Sanitising towers are available throughout the building.
* All facilities including toilets undergo strict cleaning throughout the day.
* Full details of health & safety standards can be found on the website <https://www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com/visiting-us-during-coronavirus>

The Salvation Army and Strawberry Field

* 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.
* A young John Lennon lived nearby and played in the grounds. It eventually inspired him to write the song Strawberry Fields Forever.
* The Salvation Army is a church and charity, working in 131 countries around the world, demonstrating Christian principles through practical support and friendship to people of all ages, backgrounds and needs.

The grounds and interactive exhibition

* Visitors through the exhibition learn about the site’s history and connection with The Salvation Army, including exclusive insights into the former Salvation Army children’s home, John Lennon's childhood and the writing and recording of the famous song, as told by John’s close friends and family.
* The Imagine More Café offers a tempting menu including breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea, sourced from local producers.
* The shop stocks a wide range of exclusive Strawberry Field memorabilia. An online shop is also available <https://store.strawberryfieldliverpool.com>
* The gardens, where John Lennon used to play as a child, offer a calm space for reflection and a place to explore spirituality.

Responsible Tourism

* Profits from the Visitor Centre help to fund the Steps to Work programme, which supports local young people, aged 18-25 with learning disabilities and other barriers to employment. The programme aims to remove barriers and support trainees into employment. The 12- 18 month employability programme includes an 8 week ‘work readiness course’ followed by 3, three month work placements with a local employer, which could include the Strawberry Field shop, visitor exhibition, café or garden. These work placements include two days a week at work and two days a week at The City of Liverpool College.