

# FREEMASONS CELEBRATE FABULOUS FUN DAY

Ashton and Mossley District Freemasons are celebrating after a hugely successful Community Fun and Open Day.

Kevin Hall, District Communications Officer for the Ashton and Mossley District, explained that the Freemasons came up with idea exactly 12 months ago at a District Officers Meeting.

"Our District Chairman, Peter Douthwaite, first made the suggestion that we should hold a Community Fun Day and an Open Day to mark the Tercentenary of English Freemasonry," said Kevin.

"Originally, we were going to hold it over two days in July when the weather ought to be good enough to do things out of doors.

"We talked about the format it might take, who we could invite, what we might do and we hoped that we would succeed."

Although there were showers in the morning the sun shone in the afternoon with the day attracting good crowds.

"We are pretty sure that we had about 450 people attending," said Kevin.

"The whole of our site was packed, I've never seen so many people wandering about, asking questions, having a great time and just having fun.

"There can be no denying the fact that we had a real success on our hands. We even made a bit of money, and we never set out to do that, but, for instance, when we were asked how much it was to throw sponges at the Brother in the Aunt Sally, we said it was free. So a member of the public went into the bar and borrowed a glass to put on the floor and people just started

giving money. That's the sort of atmosphere we had all afternoon."

All of the money raised on the day from a cake stall, tombola and the Aunt Sally will be going to community groups supported day.

Kevin added: "The day really got going at

2pm when our Assistant Provincial Grand Master,

John Pearson, took the micro-

phone at the top of the steps and, after welcoming everyone to Ashton Masonic Hall, declared the event open.

"The Brass

Band started up

with a swing, the children gravitated almost universally to the two Bouncy Castles while the adults investigated the Classic Car Show and the Hand bell Ringing tent.

"A queue started outside the Grand Tombola stand that was so long that within 40 minutes all the prizes had gone and they were forced to shut up shop."

Inside the Hall were numerous stands representing local charities.

The Bar did a roaring trade selling drinks, burgers, sausage butties and even cream teas.

The Banqueting Suite was set aside for the big

indoor displays.

There were two separate Dancing Schools putting on displays, these being the Reforma Dance Theatre and the Aladdin Dance Team from Latin Steps Dance Studio.

In between there was a display from Marshall's Fencing Club, so there was something for everyone.

The Tameside Sea Cadets and the Marching Band from St Peters' Church Lads and Girls Brigade were all showing off what they do.

Meanwhile, upstairs, Frank Stansfield and Don Folwell from Lodge of Union had set up an excellent Museum showing artefacts from a number of Lodges.

In the Lodge Room a team from Waverley Lodge, the only brethren in regalia, performed a simplified Opening Ceremony for two packed audiences.

Alan D P Smith was in overall charge wearing his

Grand Lodge Regalia and ably answering any questions that were asked.

Other brethren of the Lodge took the principal offices and gave excellent explanations of what their purpose was in the Lodge.

Joining in the fundraising atmosphere in true style were local Councillor Brian Wild and Peter Douthwaite.

They both stripped to the waist to be pelted by wet sponges.

Members of Kershaw Lodge operated Victorian games for the amusement of the children, while a steady stream of adults attended the Provincial Trailer to find out more about Freemasonry, with a number expressing an interest in joining one Lodge or another.

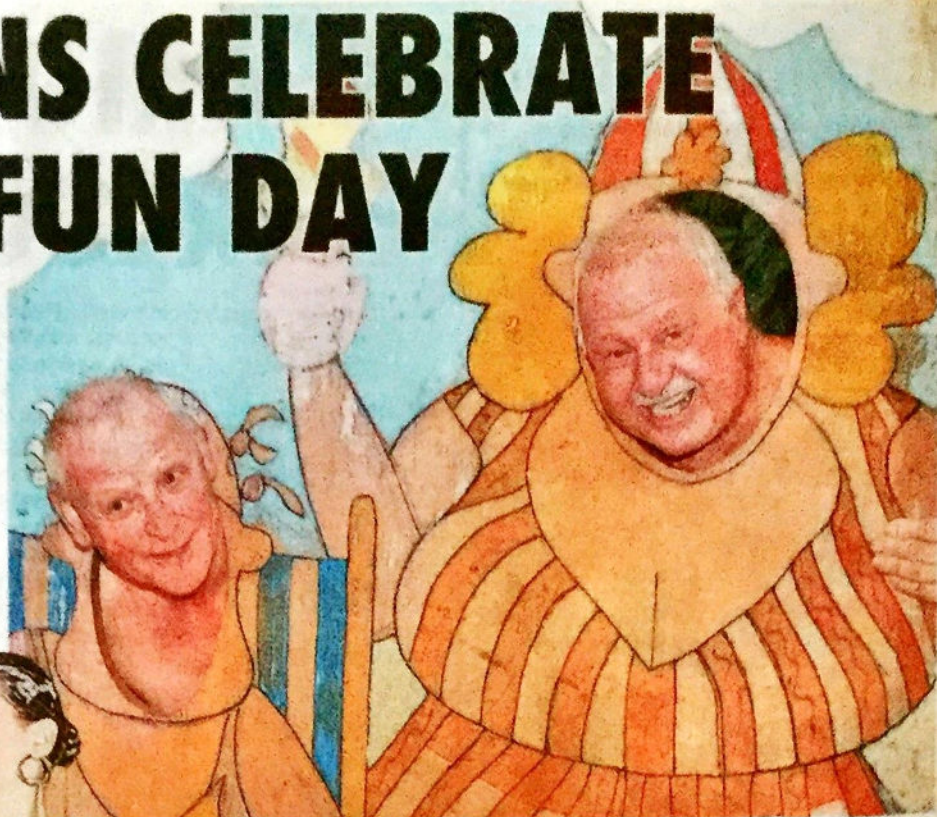
Following the success of the day, the Assistant Provincial Grand Master summed up the success of the day in a personal letter to Peter Douthwaite, stating: "It was a magnificent occasion with so many organisations and charities attending and I was truly moved to see our Freemasons bringing all the Tameside Community together."

Kevin concluded: "That was our aim from the very beginning, so many months before.

"Not to make this a Masonic Open Day with nothing else going on, but to hold an Open Day that was fun from beginning to end, that brought together some of the many groups that we have been so happy to work with and support over the last year.

"We are, after all, one community.

"I really rather think that we succeeded!



**BRAVE FUNDRAISERS: Peter Douthwaite and Cllr Brian Wild.**



**ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW: Hundreds attended the open day with a steady stream of visitors finding out about the Masons at their information stand. Above, two of the dancers who performed on the day.**