

An early history of St Catherine's Church Heald Green

In 1889 a mission service was held in a cottage next to a blacksmith's shop on Finney Lane with 29 people attending and, from this, the seed was sown for a local church.

Services were held by the Vicar of St. James, Gatley in Long Lane Congregational Chapel, the Social Institute in Finney Lane, Cheadle Etchells School and at Shadow Moss School, to meet the needs of those who lived in the small but growing community.

Eventually, land was donated by the builder Thomas Dale Neal, in memory of his mother Catherine, initially on Finney Lane where the Heald Green Hotel stands, but a more central site was asked for and so the Outwood Road plot was offered and accepted.

The construction was started in 1933 by the builders, L. Brown of Wilmslow, costing £1,600 and there is a foundation stone, now in the Foyer, dated 10 June 1933 which commemorates this. This original building is now the main hall part of the Church Hall and, later, this was extended at the front to bring in a kitchen and toilets for all the social occasions for which it was also used.

On 16 September 1933 our first building was officially dedicated to St Catherine of Alexandria and also to the memory of the benefactor's mother Catherine Neal.

The next step was the building of the actual church at a cost of £23,000 with the foundation stone being laid on the 16 July 1955 and then the consecration of the building itself by the Bishop of Chester on 19 May 1956.

In the 1960s, during Rev. Michael Culliford's incumbency, the side extension was added to give more meeting rooms.

The West Window of the Church includes the Coat of Arms of the Archbishop of York as we are in the Province of York; of the Bishop of Chester as we are in the Diocese of Chester & the badges of St. James, Gatley & St Thomas, Stockport from whose parishes St. Catherine's Parish was born.

2010 has seen the completion of the Project to join the Church & Hall by creating an attractive Foyer Area giving us extra facilities for our Church & the Community. The money was raised by donations from parishioners, past & present & local benefactors.

The first Priest-in-Charge was the Rev. James Stanley Leather, followed in 1935 by the Rev. E. H. Christopher, until 1940, when he left to join the Navy. Next were the Rev. W. Grimwood (1941-1945), the Rev O. A. Waller (1945-1951) and the Rev. E. A. J. Mercer (1951-1953), all were curates at St James, Gatley.

On 24 May 1953, the Rev. Peter Lucas was licensed to St. Catherine's and later became its first Vicar. (BH April 2010)