



APRIL UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES OF THE LEIGH AND BRANSFORD MEMORIAL HALL

“Time in a Bottle”

Some of you may well remember back in the early 1970s listening to the song *“Time in a Bottle”* written and sung by Jim Croce. Essentially the song is about cherishing the precious time we spend and the memories we make with those we most want to be with – for there *“never seems to be enough time”* in our busy lives to be with friends, family and loved ones; certainly not as much time as we would like. And I suspect many of us, like Jim Croce, wish that we could relive all those happy and good times again and again by keeping them safe in a bottle

Well, in many ways, the Memorial Hall is our very own “Memory Bottle” – for it’s been a living part of our community for 106 years now, and over that time how many of us have made memories there? If only those walls could speak.

The Hall unites generations. It welcomes people of all ages, backgrounds, and beliefs. Last year alone (2025) the Hall was hired over 440 times, and already this year by the end of March we have hosted 99 events.

And many of our hirers are returning to make even more memories. For example, we had a welcome return visit from *Monkeys in Motion* over the spring half-term. The owner, Sophie, organises energetic, creative sessions for children aged 3–11, focusing on dance, theatre, and yoga to improve physical development, coordination, and confidence. After the session she emailed to say:

“It was absolutely wonderful to host our Dance and Musical Theatre Holiday Club with Monkeys in Motion at Leigh and Bransford Hall on the Monday of February half term. The venue was fantastic — offering great facilities that supported everything we needed throughout the day. The spacious outdoor area was perfect for breaks, games, and fresh air between sessions.

“Most importantly, the atmosphere created throughout the day was energetic, welcoming and full of creativity. The children threw themselves into dance, singing,

crafts, a disco and team games with enthusiasm, and it was fantastic to see their confidence grow as the day went on. We are so grateful to have been able to use such a supportive, well-equipped venue and look forward to hopefully returning in the future”.

What I particularly love about the “little monkeys” in the picture below *‘throwing their shapes’* is that they’re being ‘watched over’ by the names of our parishioners on the wall plaque who served in the Second World War. A picture that spans 81 years.



And since January we have been privileged to host 11 children’s birthday parties – that’s just about one a week. Birthday parties can be very special – I still remember my early birthday parties from 70 or more years ago and fondly recall a time of innocence and happiness. Interestingly, one of our ‘returning’ mums who has recently booked this year’s birthday parties for her children dropped us an email to say why those parties are so important:

“It really is a scary old world we are living in at times. We’re trying to keep our girls (5 & 8 years) children as long as possible. They really do keep us going”. The simple message being that there is time enough to grow up and face the dangers of the world in which we live today. Happy memories from our younger days may help to sustain us as we get older.

So, if you haven't heard "*Time in a Bottle*" before, then maybe now is just the right time to take a listen – or indeed listen again to a familiar song from your past. A deceptively simple song with a very powerful

message. The trustees can't promise to bottle your memories, but the happy memories you make at the Hall will hopefully last a lifetime.

Jon Gamble, Chair of Trustees