



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

CELEBRATIONS AND FESTIVALS

Over the past 104 years, the Memorial Hall has played an important role in the lives of countless individuals who have attended joyful occasions, celebrations and festivals held here. For example, every year the hall and field are hired for *children's* and *'significant age'* parties, *family reunions*, and of course, *wedding receptions and anniversaries*. In December, some of you celebrate Christmas at our *Carols Round the Tree* outdoor event, while others attend *christenings* or *naming ceremonies* as well as *celebrations of the lives of loved ones* who have passed away.

More recently we are now welcoming different local churches and other faith groups who choose to hold their annual *Family Weekends* at the Hall. It's good to see that the Hall remains true to its original charitable purpose to "*work in the interests of social welfare in our wider community without distinction of political, religious or other opinions by providing facilities for all for recreation and other leisure-time occupation*".



And so it was with great pleasure that we were able to welcome Fahad and his wider family in mid-June so they could celebrate together their faith's important festival of *Eid ul Adha*. In all about 150 people across 4 generations attended the day-long celebrations. That's Fahad in the photograph above on the Hall field with his wife Mehvish and their children Amina (2 years old) and Yusuf (9 months).

Fahad told us that the *Eid ul Adha* festival celebrates the end of the period of sacred

pilgrimage that millions of Muslims make each year to the holy city of Mecca. The background to this pilgrimage, he also explained, is linked to the Prophet Ibrahim (referred to as Abraham in the Christian Bible) and his sacrifice before God.

Though this is a traditional festival, there can be a real difficulty when trying to organise a family gathering to celebrate it – because the actual *day* of *Eid* is determined by the sighting of the new moon the evening before. This year, *Eid* fell on Monday, 17 June, so for working family members getting a day off in the working week can sometimes be tricky.



Once the new moon is sighted, however, preparations begin in earnest: lots of cooking, new clothes to be ironed, haircuts to be organised for the men and henna 'tattoos' for the women.

Following prayers at the mosque, Fahad's immediate family then have a very small breakfast comprising many traditional sweet desserts. And every year they book a big space where, as Fahad says "*our families can get together and spend the day eating, chatting and having the best time. Everyone brings a dish each, a Bouncy Castle is hired, the barbeque is fired up and games are played both inside and outside. It is just one of the days when most of us can take time off work and spend the whole day together. We really do have the most fun and loving day*".

Jon Gamble, Chair of Trustees