



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

SPRING FORWARD SAVING ENERGY & SAVING DAYLIGHT

March is a most welcome month. Spring officially arrives on March 20th – the date of the Spring Equinox. This is when, after six long months of shorter days and longer nights, our daytime and nighttime hours are equally split with 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness. From this date forward our days gradually get 'longer' and the nighttime 'shorter' – until the Summer Solstice on or around 21 June, midsummer's day.

But something else happens on the last Sunday in March each year – we all *spring forward*. At 2am the nation's clocks advance by one hour effectively making March 26th a 23-hour day. While we've all grown used to 'losing an hour' at the end of March and then 'getting the hour back' at the end of October, 'changing the clocks' is a relatively recent phenomenon. It first started in the UK in 1916 and was then called 'Daylight Saving Time'. The government's decision to move the clocks forward by 1 hour a few days after the Spring Equinox meant that the latest the sun would rise for the next 6 months would be 7am but, more importantly, it wouldn't set before 7pm. Moreover, with each passing day, the hours of daylight would gradually increase until the Summer Solstice (around June 20th or midsummer's day) before getting shorter again. Then, when we reached the date of the Autumn Equinox (around September 23) daytime and nighttime hours would once again be equal.

However, the main reason for putting the clocks forward was that from the end of March to almost the end of September a typical working day (of up to 12 hours) could then both start and finish during the hours of daylight. So, this wasn't so much about '*saving daylight*' as *saving energy* in the factories, offices, and other workplaces by reducing the need for artificial lighting and heating during the working day. And if you're wondering why the clocks were changed at 2am well, back in the day, 2am was the quietest time on the nation's railways and so the least disruptive to the timetable.

These days we no longer talk about 'Daylight Saving Time' when the clocks go forward, instead we use the term *British Summer Time* (BST) – or, more accurately GMT+1 (Greenwich Mean Time +1 hour). Lobby groups are still unconvinced about the need or indeed the benefits of changing the clocks twice a year. In March 2019 the European Parliament got as far as voting to get rid of the biannual clock changes altogether, but then bureaucracy reared its head. Now, some four years later, all the countries across Europe are still expecting to move their clocks forward by one hour on 26 March. *Plus ça change* as the French might say.

Although we might not be so concerned about *saving daylight* these days, most of us are very exercised about *saving energy* in this period of high inflation. Your trustees

are no exception and if you look at the recent photo of the Hall above, you'll see that the south-facing roof is now covered with solar panels. 25 of them to be exact. And what you can't see are the storage batteries we've also installed to maximise the use of all the solar energy produced. Although the panels have been fully operational since only the 8 December, by the end of January they had already generated just over 600kWh of electricity – and that's in the darker winter months. We estimate that in a full year the panels will generate up to half of our costly energy needs, helping us to keep hire costs down and still keep the building warm and inviting.

It must be working because since the start of the new year, in addition to the regular group meetings we have, and despite the cold snaps we've endured, 12 local families have already held their young children's birthday parties at the Hall along with other hires being booked for quiz evenings and training events. We sincerely hope we can look forward to welcoming you and your guests to the Hall in the lighter months that lie ahead.

AN INVITATION TO JOIN OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

As our next financial year is about to begin, we are seeking to recruit up to two new trustees to join our Hall Management Committee. This is an opportunity to use your skills, your life experience, and your fresh ideas, whatever your age, to make a positive contribution to the Hall's future and help to maximise and widen the part it can play in the life of our community. We meet as a committee 6 times a year, for two hours in the evening on the third Tuesday in alternative months. From time to time, we also share a few voluntary tasks to ensure the building stays vibrant, safe, welcoming, and up to date – but they are mutually agreed individually depending on the time commitment people feel they can make.

If you're curious and feel you can give us some of your time and energy, we'd love to hear from you. You can email me at j_e_gamble@hotmail.com or call on 07776 225408 to find out more about what being a trustee for the Hall entails, with absolutely no obligation to take things further if you then feel it's not right for you. You don't even need any special qualifications or previous experience in helping to run or manage a charitable going concern. All you need is the energy and the desire to make things better for your community. I do hope that some of you will '*spring forward*' into action so to speak!

Jon Gamble, Chair of Trustees